



22 National Disability Organizations Call On Texas Education Agency to Respond in Good Faith to U.S. Department of Education in Response to Claims of Special Education Denials by Houston Chronicle Investigation

November 2, 2016 – Today, twenty-two national organizations have called on the Texas Education Agency (TEA), to issue a full and complete response to the U.S. Department of Education regarding any violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the nation’s special education law.

The U.S. Department of Education’s October 3, 2016 letter to the TEA comes on the heels of a six-month investigative report published in the Houston Chronicle, *Denied: How Texas Keeps Tens of Thousands of Children Out of Special Education*, which alleges the TEA established policies and procedures that prevented children with disabilities from receiving special education services. Part of this investigation compared national data which shows approximately 13.1 percent of children receive special education services, with Texas’s data which has shown 8.5 percent of children received special education services, in 2015.

The TEA must respond to the U.S. Department of Education’s letter by November 3, 2016.

“Recognizing our historic commitment to IDEA and our advocacy on behalf of children, youth and adults with disabilities, and as we look to a brighter future for students with disabilities, we encourage the TEA to respond in good faith to the October 3rd letter from USED,” the letter signed by 22 national organizations states.

“We view the recent events as an opportunity to learn from the past and make a commitment to ensuring all students identified as having disabilities and those suspected of having disabilities receive the special education services they need. This is also an opportunity to demonstrate to students and families that they matter and their needs are a priority for the TEA. Additionally, it is a chance to ensure that educators and administrators who are dedicated to properly meeting the needs of students have the resources and knowledge to do so,” the letter concludes.

The 22 national organizations are members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities-Education Taskforce, the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. In its letter to the TEA, the CCD member organization’s reiterated its commitment to key tenets of IDEA, including the right for children with disabilities to a *free appropriate public education* (FAPE).

The 22 organizations include:

Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Speaks
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America
Council for Learning Disabilities
The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
DC Advocacy Partners
Disability Power & Pride
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Easterseals

Institute for Educational Leadership
Learning Disabilities Association of America
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
School Social Work Association of America
TASH
The Advocacy Institute
The Advocat Group
The Arc

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