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Protect the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

NASN Position

NASN urges Congress to protect the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by preserving its home and administration within the U.S. Department of Education.

Why It Matters

- Congress enacted IDEA 50 years ago and it was a pivotal moment for people with disabilities, who had long been denied access to public education.
- IDEA guarantees more than 7.5 million children with disabilities access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
- IDEA is a foundational law focused on academic access, inclusion, and accountability within public schools.
- Moving IDEA away from the Department of Education would weaken oversight and disrupt school-based implementation.

Why School Nurses Are Essential

- School nurses, as qualified examiners, are integral members of the Pupil Appraisal Team, responsible for conducting health assessments for students suspected of having disabilities.
- School nurses deliver health services written into Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- They manage chronic and complex medical conditions that affect school attendance and learning.
- They remove health-related barriers so students with disabilities can access classroom instruction.

What Could Happen

- On November 18, 2025, the Administration announced six interagency agreements transferring management of several K-12 and postsecondary education programs from the Department of Education to other federal agencies.
- Several bills have been introduced in Congress to move education programs, including IDEA, to other agencies.
- IDEA would most likely be sent to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), even though IDEA is an EDUCATION law!

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED

- OPPOSE any effort to move IDEA out of the U.S. Department of Education.
- PRESERVE and PROTECT federal education oversight to ensure consistent implementation nationwide.