



PRESS RELEASE

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**District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Announces Public Briefing on Access to Special Education and Transportation Services
for Students with Disabilities in D.C. Public Schools**

The District of Columbia Advisory Committee (Committee) to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Commission) is examining access to special education and transportation services in D.C. for students with disabilities. It has been reported that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education may overly rely on administrative complaints and lawsuits when apportioning such services in D.C. public schools. The Committee will examine if policies, practices, and procedures limit access to these services on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.

The Committee will conduct a series of briefings to take testimony, inviting a broad range of subject-matter experts including individuals and their families who have direct experience with this issue; academics and researchers; advocates representing civil rights and community-based organizations; and federal and D.C. government officials.

On Wednesday, March 20, 2024, the Committee will host a briefing to hear from Maria E. Blaeuer, Esq., Director of Programs and Outreach at Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc., and the families she works with who have direct experience with special education services in D.C. More details about this and future briefings will be shared [here](#).

Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Time: 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/482hfGZ>

Telephone Access (Audio Only): 1-833-435-1820, Webinar ID: 161 633 8268#

Chair Wayne Heard said, “The District of Columbia Advisory Committee looks forward to hearing diverse perspectives on the efficacy of current policies, practices, and procedures that affect access to special education and transportation services for students with disabilities in the District of Columbia. The Committee’s report will advise the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights about an important civil rights issue in support of the Commission’s mission to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws.”

After the Chair announces that the briefing has concluded, he will invite members of the public, if any, to make brief oral statements on the topic, with each statement not exceeding five minutes. Closed captioning is available by selecting “CC” in the Zoom meeting platform. Individuals requiring additional accommodations should contact Sarah Villanueva at svillanueva@usccr.gov at least 10 business days prior to this briefing.

Members of the public are encouraged to submit written statements within 30 days of the virtual briefing to be included in the briefing record. **Kindly email any written statements to svillanueva@usccr.gov, using the subject line: DC Special Education.**

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the 1957 Civil Rights Act, is the only independent, bipartisan federal entity charged with advising the President and the Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Its 56 advisory committees offer broad perspectives on civil rights concerns in their jurisdictions. For more information, please visit www.usccr.gov.