



PRESS RELEASE
January 28, 2026

Contact: Mallory Trachtenberg
mtrachtenberg@usccr.gov

**District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Announces Addendum to its Report:
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) [released a report](#) in December 2024 regarding access to special education and transportation services in D.C. for students with disabilities. In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Committee developed this [addendum](#) to examine the public response to its 2024 report and also assess potential impacts of updates to the U.S. Department of Education and its oversight of special education initiatives on the recommendations and strategies outlined in its report.

Through testimony gathered in developing the report addendum, the Committee learned that the DC Council shares many concerns regarding the need for early identification and adequate funding for special education related staffing and services. The Committee also learned that research around innovative supports and funding may be helpful in supporting students with special education needs.

As updates to the U.S. Department of Education's oversight of IDEA are ongoing, the Committee encourages policymakers to consider supporting a strong federal role in ensuring students across states have access to the services and supports they are entitled to under IDEA. The Committee hopes its efforts will support forward progress in supporting children with special education needs.

Chair Wayne Heard said, "Since 1975, the full promise and intent of the IDEA has at times gone unrealized in education across the United States. Here in our nation's capital, this is evidenced by the District of Columbia Public School system historically receiving more due process complaints than any other state or jurisdiction. The current practices effectively place the burden of accessing special education services guaranteed under the law on students and their families. Thank you to the stakeholders that contributed to our initial report and this subsequent addendum. We are optimistic that local government, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and Congress will accept this baton and apply their power and resources to finish this race in a manner that realizes a sustainable solution for students, parents, caregivers, and teachers."

#####

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.