



PRESS RELEASE

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Utah Advisory Committee Releases Report on Civil Rights of Students with Disabilities in K–12 Education

Washington, D.C. — The Utah Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights [has released a new report](#) examining whether students with disabilities in Utah’s public schools are receiving an equitable education consistent with federal civil rights protections.

The report presents findings based on testimony from educators, parents, advocates, policymakers, and subject-matter experts, as well as written submissions. The Committee evaluated the implementation of key federal protections and new developments in state legislation and administration.

The report finds that students with disabilities in Utah continue to experience disparities in academic outcomes, discipline, and access to general education classrooms compared to their nondisabled peers. The Committee also identified gaps in data collection and reporting that limit transparency and hinder targeted policy responses.

While Utah has taken steps to promote inclusion, such as developing a statewide definition of “meaningful inclusion” and related guidance, the Committee found that implementation challenges persist. Testimony highlighted ongoing barriers, including persistent shortages of special education teachers and paraeducators, compounded by chronic underfunding of IDEA and reliance on state and local resources that have not kept pace with need.

Based on these findings, the Committee issued recommendations to federal and state policymakers. These include increasing federal IDEA funding, strengthening data transparency and oversight, clarifying the relationship between state law and federal disability protections, investing in the special education workforce, and expanding support for parents navigating the special education system.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. The Commission, by Congressional mandate, establishes Advisory Committees in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Committee members conduct reviews and produce reports and recommendations concerning local civil rights issues, including justice, voting, discrimination, housing, education, and other important themes. For information about the Commission and our Advisory Committees, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.