

GIVE TEACHERS A BREAK: Cutting Red Tape to Unleash the Potential of America's Great Teachers

TOP TAKEAWAYS *Federal Solutions*

A CRISIS OF DISCIPLINE

Over the past decade, federal guidance and Dear Colleague letters from the Department of Education have swung wildly back and forth between presidential administrations, leaving schools in the dark about what they are and aren't allowed to do to discipline students.

Empower Schools to Make Their Own Decisions: State and federal policymakers should step away from writing legislation that takes away schools' and teachers' abilities to suspend or expel students appropriately.

Insofar as the government has any interest in discipline, it should deal primarily with concrete allegations of discrimination rather than assuming discrimination if there is any disparity, and use the standard of disparate treatment rather than expanding the definition of discrimination to include disparate impact

Clarify Existing Guidance: Rather than giving states binding guidance or confusing and non-binding guidelines, as have been the approaches of the Obama and Biden administrations, respectively, future federal guidance should simply leave schools to discipline students as they know best, under the supervision of their state and local jurisdictions.

STOP SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

End Taxpayer-Funded Grants for SEL: By cutting all SEL-promoting grants, Congress can disincentivize schools from investing further in SEL. But, seeing that federal funding is only about 10% of the entire education budget, state and local governments will also have to eliminate SEL grants.

REFORMING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children with special needs deserve special education: nearly everyone agrees on this, which is why we have federal laws that protect the right to education for children with special needs.

Nevertheless, the definition of “disabled” has expanded dramatically to include students with relatively minor problems that don’t impair their learning in general education classes, compared to those with larger problems that do.

Enforce IDEA’s Original Intent: Federal policymakers should reevaluate how they define disability under IDEA and clarify the law to ensure that special education is reserved for students who have severe and discernible disabilities that require specialized instruction.

Crack Down on 504 Plan Misuse: Federal policymakers should clearly define reasonable accommodations to prevent accommodation creep and ensure that students are not given a free pass just because they have a 504 plan.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full report.