

Feb. 18, 2025

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

For today's update, I am sharing:

- [Feb. 14 US Department of Education "Dear Colleague" Letter](#)
- [Council of Chief State Schools Officers \(CCSSO\) Update on RELs and Equity Assistance Centers](#)
- [CCSSO information on Department of Homeland Security Directive on Sensitive Locations and Protected Areas](#)

Feb. 14 US Department of Education "Dear Colleague" Letter

The US Department of Education [released a "Dear Colleague" letter last week](#) intended to "clarify and reaffirm the nondiscrimination obligations of schools and other entities that receive federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education." In case you missed it, [Chalkbeat released an article](#) that summarizes the new Dear Colleague letter well.

As always, please confer with your legal counsel regarding any steps that should be taken in response.

CCSSO Update on RELs and Equity Assistance Centers

We received the following updates from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) on Friday, Feb. 14:

On Feb. 13, the U.S. Department of Education announced it has cancelled over \$350 million in contracts and grants to Regional Educational Laboratories and Equity Assistance Centers. The Department terminated 10 contracts totaling \$336 million with the Regional Educational Laboratories...According to the news release, ED "plans to enter into new contracts that will satisfy the statutory requirements, improve student learning, and better serve school districts, State Departments of Education, and other education stakeholders."

CCSSO information on Department of Homeland Security Directive on Sensitive Locations and Protected Areas

Friday's update from CCSSO also included the following:

Last month, the Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rescinded federal guidance that deemed schools a "sensitive location" or "protected area" federal immigration authorities should avoid or must obtain prior approval before conducting immigration activities. (See 2021 guidance [here](#).) DHS issued a statement on the directive [here](#). As a reminder, the previous Administration released a [Dear Colleague](#) letter on [Resources for Ensuring Equal Access to Education for Immigrant Students](#) on January 8, 2025.

We will share an update again on Thursday afternoon.