



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

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December 13, 2021

Victoria Glick

Division of Elementary, Secondary, and Specialized Education

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

810 First Street NE, Eighth Floor

Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Glick,

This letter is to file a formal complaint against the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) for failing to implement and provide equitable special education and related services to children with disabilities who have been designated to receive those services, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et seq.* and regulations promulgated at 34 CFR §300 *et seq.* We are aware of at least ten students not receiving speech services, per their individual service plans (ISPs), including three students at Sacred Heart School, four students at St. Francis Xavier School, one student at St. Thomas More School, and two students at St. Anthony School. This complaint is submitted on behalf of those impacted schools and families.

Special education services are normally provided from the beginning of the school year, in September, until the end of the school year, in late May. Since September 2021, DCPS has stated that services for these children could not occur due to delays with the DCHR credentialing and clearance process for speech and language therapists (SLPs). The startup of services issue is further complicated by DCPS' announcement that they must move to a new contractor, starting in January. Therefore, regardless of the clearance process for the SLPs that DCPS is currently working on, the lengthy clearance process will have to start over again with a new group of SLPs under a new vendor, as of January 1st. This will cause even further delay in starting educational services for these students. DCPS should not change contracts for these vital student services in the middle of the school year.

DCPS has promised that once SLPs are ready to begin services, they will make up the missed services that students should have been receiving since September. While we appreciate the desire to compensate for the lost time, from an educational perspective, you simply cannot make up months of missed speech services for students with disabilities. Those missed services will significantly and negatively impact these disadvantaged students. DCPS must propose an immediate solution to address this failure in the timely provision of special education and related services according to these students' service plans.

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In summary, DCPS has failed to provide equitable services to eligible private school students, as required by law. DCPS claims that there are several layers of issues with teacher clearances, contracts, and procurement that are preventing it from implementing special education services for parentally-placed private school children. However, DCPS must provide an immediate solution to these issues so that these children can receive their services, as soon as possible.

For additional information, please feel free to contact Brian Radziwill at radziwillb@adw.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Branaman', written in a cursive style.

Kelly Branaman
Secretary for Catholic Schools
Superintendent of Schools