December 7, 2023 Office Hour Topics:

2015 Dear Colleague Letter

On January 7, 2015, the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) released a joint guidance to spell out the legal obligations of state and local education agencies to English Learners (ELs).

> "The Departments are issuing the enclosed joint guidance to assist State Educational Agencies (SEAs), school districts, and all public schools in meeting their legal obligations to ensure that EL students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services. The guidance provides an outline of the legal obligations of SEAs and school districts to EL students under the civil rights laws. Additionally, the guidance discusses compliance issues that frequently arise in OCR and DOJ investigations under Title VI and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) and offers approaches that SEAs and school districts may use to meet their Federal obligations to EL students".

Link to the 2015 Dear Colleague Letter
(www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf)

Related Resources and Links

The Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) develops the English Learners Tool Kit (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.htmlis), a companion to support the 2015 Dear Colleague Letter. The Toolkit contains 10 chapters offering numerous checklists, tools, and resources to help state and local educational agencies in fulfilling their obligations for English learners.

Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them Fact sheet (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf) that answers common questions about the rights of parents and guardians who do not speak, listen, read, or write English proficiently because it is not their primary language.