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Qui publiera les chiffres ? Les données sur l'éducation des Sourds après l'accord entre le ministère de l'Éducation et HHS

Heather Grizzle · October 8, 2026

L'accord spécial sur l'éducation entre ED-HHS couvre les travaux de données de Gallaudet, NTID et IDEA, mais ne précise jamais qui continuera à publier les fichiers de la Section 618.

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The agreement that moved special education's daily work to HHS also covers Gallaudet, NTID and the Helen Keller National Center, and it never says who will keep publishing the numbers

EN BREF

- On June 15, 2026, the Education Department and HHS signed an agreement under which HHS provides services to run IDEA's grant programs, monitoring, state performance determinations and data work.
- Le même accord couvre les programmes de l'Education of the Deaf Act, y compris NTID, ainsi que Gallaudet University, le Helen Keller National Center et l'American Printing House for the Blind.
- It splits data between the two agencies, with the Education Department keeping "data collection" and HHS providing services to support "the collection, reporting, and analyzing of data." It never names the IDEA Section 618 data, the EDFacts system, or the Annual Report to Congress.
- Ces fichiers fédéraux sont la seule source qui comptabilise les élèves sourds et malentendants de la même manière dans chaque État. Personne n'a publiquement indiqué qui continuera à les publier.

Every state file in the National Deaf Education Data Index starts in the same place: a school district's own website, a state agency's own reports, and a federal spreadsheet. The first two vary wildly. Some states publish a careful count of deaf and hard of hearing students by district every fall; others publish nothing a parent could find. The federal spreadsheet is the constant. When NDEDI built its Nevada file in September, the clearest picture of where deaf and hard of hearing students actually learn came from that federal file: of 518 students aged 5 to 21 served under the hearing impairment category in 2024-25, 307 spent at least 80 percent of their day in a regular classroom, and none were reported in a separate school or residential setting. The state's own count could be checked against it. Without it, there would have been nothing to check against.

Cette feuille de calcul fait partie des données de la section 618 de l'IDEA, les décomptes que chaque État transmet chaque année au gouvernement fédéral sur les enfants qu'il prend en charge au titre de l'Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, par catégorie de handicap, âge, cadre et autres. Les États la soumettent via un système fédéral appelé EDFacts. Le ministère de l'Éducation la publie sous forme de fichiers au niveau des États sur sa plateforme de données ouvertes et la résume dans un rapport annuel au Congrès. Pour quiconque cherche à comparer la manière dont les en-

fants sourds sont scolarisés au Kansas et au Kentucky, c'est la seule source qui comptabilise chaque État de la même façon.

Ce qui a changé en juin

On June 15, 2026, the Education Department and the Department of Health and Human Services signed an interagency agreement on special education and rehabilitative services, announced the next day alongside a separate agreement moving civil rights enforcement to the Justice Department. The agreement is short, eight pages, and plain about what moves. Under section 3.A, HHS commits to provide services, "in coordination with and at the direction of ED-OSERS," supporting the administration of IDEA's grant programs under Parts B, C and D; enforcement, compliance and monitoring; the "annual performance determinations" that rate each state; fiscal audits; and "the collection, reporting, and analyzing of data for monitoring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and for improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, youth, and adults with disabilities."

The Education Department keeps statutory responsibility for IDEA. Under section 3.B, it retains "Management and leadership of OSERS' programs and activities," which the agreement says includes "but not limited to enforcement, compliance, monitoring, fiscal management and data collection," along with representation before its Data Governance Board, the Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office. The agreement took effect on the date of the last signature, has no end date, and can be terminated by either side on 90 days' written notice. The contact named for HHS sits in its Administration on Disabilities.

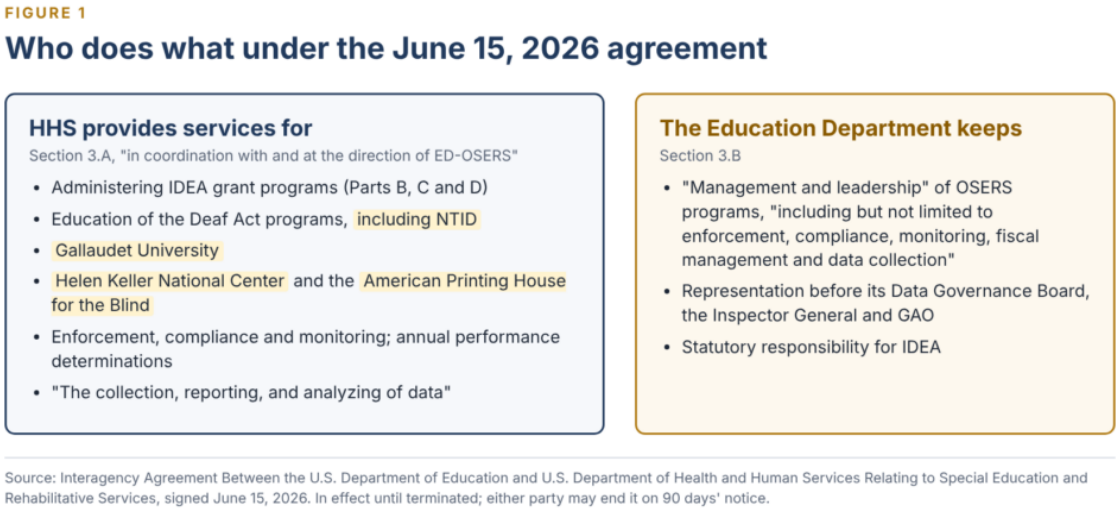

Figure 1. Qui fait quoi dans le cadre de l'accord du 15 juin 2026. Les éléments surlignés sont ceux les plus proches de l'éducation des Sourds et des sourds-aveugles.

La partie de la liste que les lecteurs Sourds ne devraient pas ignorer

Most coverage of the agreement has focused, reasonably, on IDEA and on what it means for students' individualized education programs. Further down the same list are four items that bear directly on Deaf and DeafBlind education. HHS will provide services supporting "the administration of program components authorized under the Education of the Deaf Act of 1986, including the National Technical Institute for the Deaf"; supporting "the administration of Gallaudet University," described in the agreement as "intended to provide education and training to individuals who are deaf and otherwise to further the education of individuals who are deaf"; supporting the Helen Keller National Center Act programs; and supporting the American Printing House for the Blind.

The agreement does not change what any of these institutions are, and it does not say what "services supporting the administration" of a university means in practice. It does mean that the federal relationship with the two national institutions of Deaf higher education, and with the national center for DeafBlind adults, now runs in part through a health department rather than an education department. In the coverage NCG reviewed, that has drawn far less attention than it deserves.

Là où les données se taisent

Read closely, the agreement splits the data work between the two departments without saying how. The Education Department keeps "data collection" as part of its management and leadership. HHS provides "services to support the collection, reporting, and analyzing of data." Who designs the collection, who runs EDFacts, who checks the states' submissions, who publishes the state-level files, and who writes the Annual Report to Congress are not stated. The agreement never uses the words "Section 618," "EDFacts" or "Annual Report to Congress," and it contains no commitment to keep publishing the data at its current level of detail or on its current schedule.

Cela peut simplement être la manière dont les accords interagences sont rédigés. Ils décrivent des services et des financements, pas chaque produit. Mais l'écart compte à cause de ce qui s'est passé avant l'accord. En octobre 2025, pendant la fermeture du gouvernement, des avis de licenciement collectif ont balayé le ministère de l'Éducation, et K-12 Dive a rapporté que les responsables des associations d'éducation spécialisée pensaient que la majeure partie de l'Office of Special Education Programs avait été licenciée. En novembre, un projet de loi de financement provisoire a temporairement rétabli le personnel de l'Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Sept mois plus tard, le travail quotidien est passé à HHS. Un système de données peut survivre à beaucoup de choses, mais il survit grâce aux personnes qui le connaissent, et le dossier public ne dit pas où se trouvent désormais ces personnes.

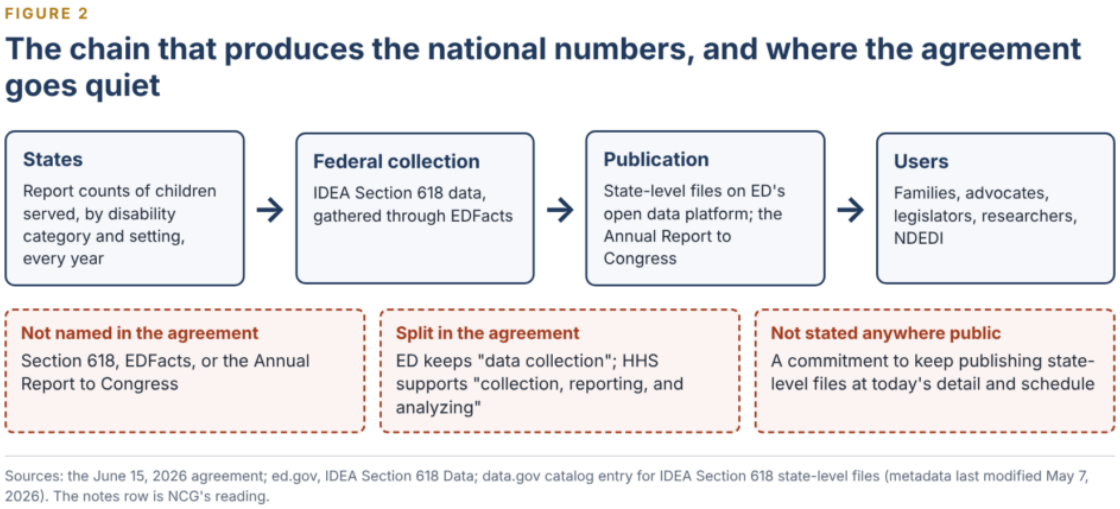

Figure 2. La chaîne qui produit les chiffres nationaux, et l'endroit où l'accord se tait. La ligne du bas est la lecture de NCG.

Ce qui a été publié depuis

The record since June is mixed, not alarming. The Office of Special Education Programs held its annual conference in August, with sessions on "high-quality section 618 data." Its September 9 bulletin announced that the 47th Annual Report to Congress on IDEA had been released, with a companion fact sheet, and a panel at the conference said IDEA rights "cannot and will not change through our partnership." The federal catalog entry for the state-level 618 files was last updated on May 7, 2026, before the agreement was signed. Nothing NCG located says the next files will be late, or thinner, or published somewhere else. Nothing says they won't be, either. And K-12 Dive's reading of the agreement in June found that states and districts were still asking which HHS office would oversee the work and who would send them guidance.

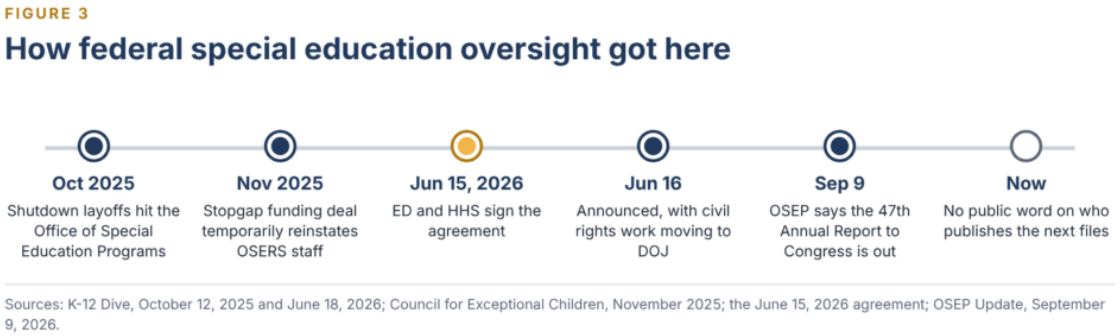

Figure 3. Comment la supervision fédérale de l'éducation spécialisée en est arrivée là.

Pourquoi l'éducation des Sourds ressent cela en premier

Chaque catégorie de handicap dépend de ces fichiers, mais l'éducation des Sourds en dépend d'une manière particulière. Les élèves sourds et malentendants constituent une population à faible incidence, une petite part d'enfants dispersés dans de nombreux districts, ce qui est exactement le type de population que les rapports des États et des districts ont tendance à laisser de côté. Les petits effectifs sont supprimés pour des raisons de confidentialité. Les districts qui scolarisent deux élèves sourds via une coopérative ou un programme régional ne publient souvent rien du tout. Dans ce paysage, le fichier fédéral est fréquemment le seul endroit où existe un chiffre à l'échelle de l'État, et le seul endroit où un État peut être comparé à un autre. Si les données de la section 618 faiblissent, les élèves les plus susceptibles de disparaître du dossier public sont ceux qui étaient déjà les plus difficiles à voir au départ.

Ce qui devrait être mis par écrit

Rien de tout cela ne requiert de présumer de la mauvaise foi de qui que ce soit. Cela requiert quelques phrases que l'accord ne contient pas. Le ministère de l'Éducation et HHS pourraient régler publiquement la question en déclarant :

- That the IDEA Section 618 collection through EDFacts will continue on its existing schedule, at its existing level of detail, including disability category by state.
- Which department, and which office, publishes the state-level files and the Annual Report to Congress from now on, and where.
- That historical files will stay available at their current addresses.

- Who to contact with questions about the data, now that the HHS contact for the agreement sits in the Administration on Disabilities.

Families, state special education directors, state deaf commissions and legislators can ask for exactly that, in writing, through the Education Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. NDEDI's state files cite the federal data by school year and source, so any change in what is published will show up in the record rather than disappearing into it. NDEDI's state release schedule is at ndedi.org.

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TIPS

Know something about a sign language AI system that the public should know? Send it to tips@novaracg.com. Every tip is read by me and kept confidential. If you work in the UK, writing to us is not by itself a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, so before you share employer information, check your options with Protect (protect-advice.org.uk), the free whistleblowing advice line.

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