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Quem Vai Publicar os Números? Dados de Educação Deaf Após o Acordo do Departamento de Educação com o HHS

Heather Grizzle · October 8, 2026

O acordo de educação especial ED-HHS abrange o trabalho com dados da Gallaudet, NTID e IDEA, mas nunca diz quem continuará a publicar os ficheiros da Secção 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

EM RESUMO

- 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.
- O mesmo acordo abrange os programas da Education of the Deaf Act, incluindo o NTID, bem como a Gallaudet University, o Helen Keller National Center e a 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.
- Esses ficheiros federais são a única fonte que conta os alunos surdos e com dificuldades auditivas da mesma forma em todos os estados. Ninguém disse publicamente quem continuará a publicá-los.

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.

Essa folha de cálculo faz parte dos dados da Secção 618 da IDEA, as contagens que todos os estados comunicam ao governo federal todos os anos sobre as crianças que atendem ao abrigo do Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, por categoria de deficiência, idade, ambiente e outros fatores. Os estados submetem-nos através de um sistema federal chamado EDFacts. O Departamento de Educação publica-os como ficheiros ao nível estadual na sua plataforma de dados abertos e resume-os num Relatório Anual ao Congresso. Para quem tenta comparar como as crianças surdas são edu-

cadas no Kansas e no Kentucky, é a única fonte que conta todos os estados da mesma forma.

O que mudou em junho

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.

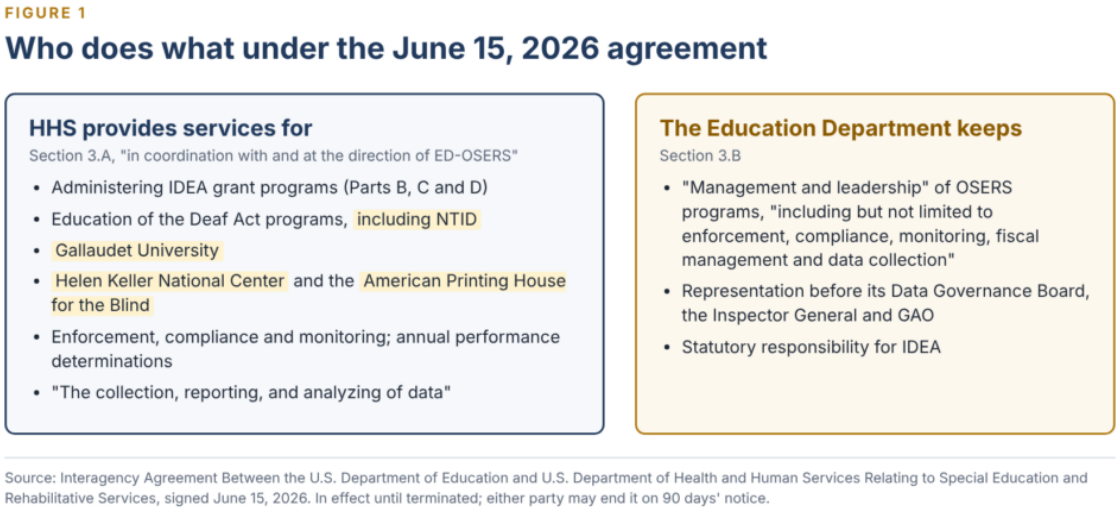

Figura 1. Quem faz o quê ao abrigo do acordo de 15 de junho de 2026. Os itens destacados são os mais próximos da educação de surdos e surdocegos.

A parte da lista que os leitores Surdos não devem saltar

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.

Onde os dados ficam em silêncio

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.

Isso pode ser simplesmente a forma como os acordos interagências são redigidos. Descrevem serviços e financiamento, não todos os produtos. Mas a lacuna importa por causa do que aconteceu antes do acordo. Em outubro de 2025, durante o encerramento do governo, avisos de redução de pessoal varreram o Departamento de Educação, e o K-12 Dive reportou que líderes de associações de educação especial acreditavam que a maior parte do Office of Special Education Programs tinha sido despedida. Em novembro, uma lei de financiamento provisória reintegrou temporariamente o pessoal do Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Sete meses depois, o trabalho diário passou para o HHS. Um sistema de dados pode sobreviver a muita coisa, mas sobrevive graças às pessoas que o conhecem, e o registo público não diz onde essas pessoas estão agora colocadas.

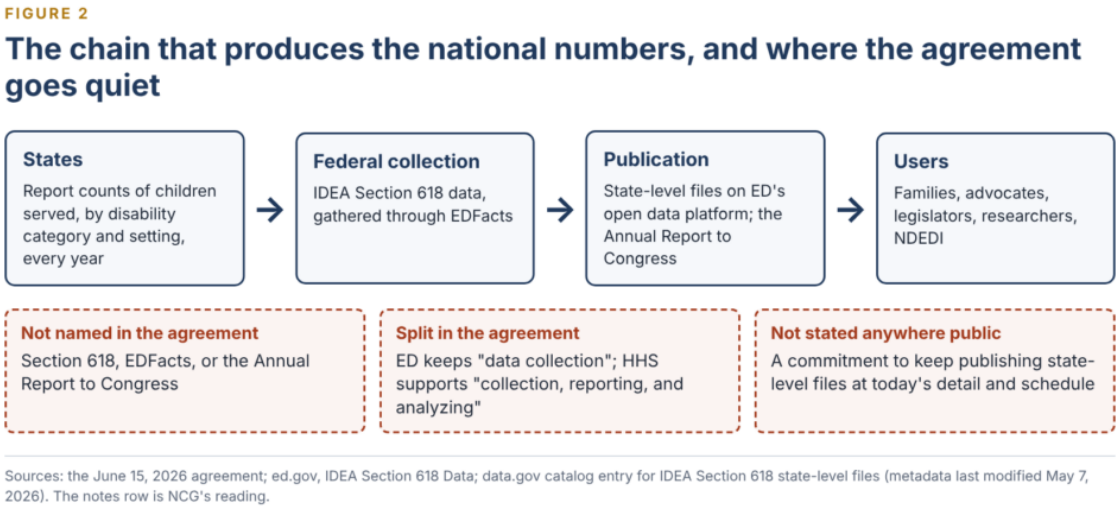

Figura 2. A cadeia que produz os números nacionais, e onde o acordo fica em silêncio. A linha inferior é a leitura da NCG.

O que surgiu desde então

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.

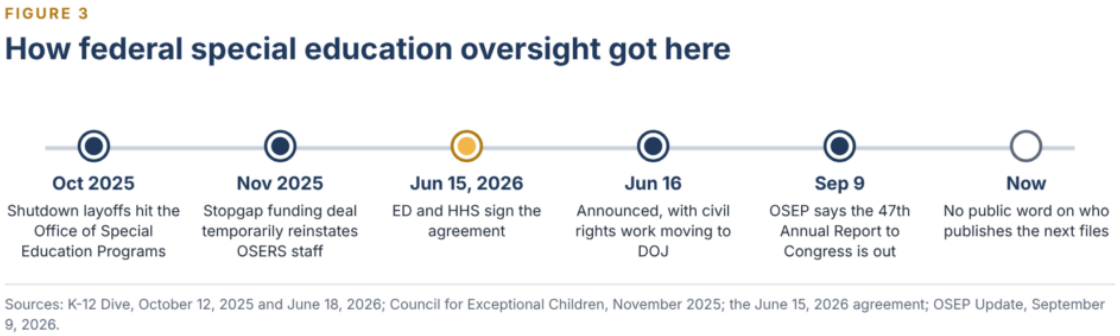

Figura 3. Como a supervisão federal da educação especial chegou a este ponto.

Por que a educação de surdos sente isto primeiro

Todas as categorias de deficiência dependem destes ficheiros, mas a educação de surdos depende deles de uma forma particular. Os alunos surdos e com dificuldades auditivas constituem uma população de baixa incidência, uma pequena parcela de crianças dispersas por muitos distritos, que é exatamente a população que a comunicação dos estados e distritos tende a deixar cair. As contagens pequenas são suprimidas por razões de privacidade. Distritos que atendem dois alunos surdos através de uma cooperativa ou de um programa regional frequentemente não publicam nada. Nesse cenário, o ficheiro federal é com frequência o único lugar onde existe um número a nível estadual, e o único lugar onde um estado pode ser comparado com outro. Se os dados da secção 618 falharem, os alunos com maior probabilidade de desaparecer do registo público são precisamente os que já eram mais difíceis de ver.

O que deveria ficar por escrito

Nada disto exige que se presuma má-fé. Exige apenas algumas frases que o acordo não contém. O Departamento de Educação e o HHS poderiam resolver a questão publicamente, declarando:

- 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.

Fontes

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- Data.gov, IDEA Section 618 State Level Data Files, metadata last modified May 7, 2026, retrieved October 8, 2026.
- National Deaf Education Data Index, Nevada state file, September 2026, using the IDEA Section 618 Part B educational environments file for 2024-25.

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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