Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Justice (DOJ) Student Privacy Protection Partnership

What is the nature of the partnership? ED and DOJ are deepening their partnership to ensure that state and local education agencies, and institutions of higher education, protect student privacy and parents' access to information about their children's education records and curricula, properly secure information collected from students by education agencies and institutions, and safeguard parents' rights to determine whether their children participate in certain school-administered surveys.

Why is this partnership being launched? ED and DOJ are establishing a partnership to coordinate federal privacy rights compliance and activities. The two agencies commit to utilizing available statutory authorities to empower families and students to protect student privacy rights, inform education agencies and institutions on student privacy rights obligations, and investigate and remedy privacy rights violations.

Under what authorities will this partnership be launched? The ED-DOJ partnership follows a commonly utilized Interagency Agreement (IAA) framework, set forth under the Economy Act (*see* 31 U.S.C. § 1535). ED has broad authority to enter into contracts with other agencies for such agencies to provide services to ED.

What will each agency do as part of this partnership? Primarily, DOJ will review complaints alleging privacy violations, conduct necessary investigations and recommend potential resolutions.

ED will continue to perform the management and leadership of SPPO, and will have final authority over the resolution of matters, including making final determinations with respect to any enforcement decisions, programs, policies, practices, and personnel decisions.

Is there precedent for such partnerships? IAAs are a tool commonly used by government agencies to share services, collaborate, and ensure efficient service delivery. Agencies frequently rely upon these agreements, so much so that the government has standardized forms to facilitate agencies' use of them. IAAs have been used by both large and small agencies in Democrat and Republican administrations alike. IAAs serve many purposes, and they are often used for administering grant programs.

For example, in 2022, the Biden Administration's Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons signed an IAA designating the Department of Labor (DOL) to administer grants under the First Step Act. More recently, ED and DOL successfully implemented an IAA to streamline the adult education and family literacy programs funded under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and career and technical education (CTE) programs funded by Perkins V. As of May 2026, ED's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) has processed over 4,900 payment requests totaling $1.3 billion and has onboarded all grantees to DOL's GrantSolutions (GS) and Payment Management System (PMS). In summary, for many years ED has entered into IAAs with other Federal agencies when doing so has been in the best interest of the U.S. government — for example, when such agreements are cost-effective or provide enhanced or more efficient program support.

Likewise, the Economy Act has been used by Federal agencies in the past to enter into contracts with other agencies to perform services. These contracts are commonly used to implement IAAs through a contract for services. ED will continue to perform all statutorily required duties and responsibilities.

Who should educational agency or institution staff contact if they have questions or need technical assistance? State and local educational agencies, and institutions of higher education should not expect to experience any disruptions in accessing technical assistance due to the partnership. Such entities should continue to direct such requests to SPPO's Privacy Technical Assistance Center through https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/.

Announcements of any additional process-related transitions will be made available through known channels of communication via SPPO and DOJ programmatic staff.