

# How to Use the So-Called “End DEI Portal”

## **We Must Reject McMahon’s Effort to Hide Discrimination Through Redefinition and to Scare Educators Away from Supporting Students**

### **Introduction**

On Thursday, February 27, the Department of Education [announced](#) the release of a form (called their “End DEI’ Portal”) for “parents, students, teachers, and the broader community” to “submit reports of discrimination based on race or sex in publicly-funded K-12 schools.” It is very clear in the language of the announcement and the web address that the **goal of this reporting is not to meaningfully ensure equal access to an education** or for compliance with federal civil rights laws and that it is instead about advancing **their agenda to close doors** to opportunity and limit what students are allowed to learn.

The Trump administration — like every other presidential administration — is responsible for following the law and protecting students from *real* discrimination, not weaponizing the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to sow fear, censor curriculum, and shut students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ students out of educational opportunity.

### **What the portal is NOT:**

- The portal is not a useful way to submit individual complaints of discrimination in the hope of receiving support or a local change. OCR maintains a separate system for receiving complaints.<sup>1</sup>
- The portal is not safe for individual people to share information about themselves, their families, or their communities that could make them a target. It is very likely that privacy will not be respected or that people would be protected from harassment.
- The portal is not a good venue for sharing great examples of schools proactively working to protect students and provide for inclusive education. Because the goal of this portal is to shut down positive efforts, it does not help to create easy targets.

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<sup>1</sup> OCR’s system for receiving complaints is available here: <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/file-complaint>. Given the Trump administration’s effort to upend well-established interpretations of civil rights law, it may or may not be helpful to file a complaint with the expectation that there will be a thorough investigation and resolution that meaningfully supports civil rights.

## **How should people use the portal?**

The form is a useful opportunity to uplift evidence that discrimination is ongoing and requires action. Share data showing how educational opportunity is *still* not equal, what REAL discrimination looks like, and what the actual problem is.<sup>2</sup>

### FOR EXAMPLE:

- Approximately 35 percent of schools with high enrollments of Black and Latino students offered calculus, compared to 54 percent of schools with low enrollments of Black and Latino students.
- Compared to White students, American Indian or Alaska Native students were 3.4 times more likely to attend a school with a sworn law enforcement officer or security guard, but without a school counselor, social worker, nurse, or psychologist. Black students were 1.4 times more likely; and Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students, and students of two or more races were 1.2 times more likely.

These data points (both from the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#)) demonstrate that unequal education persists. Instead of closing doors and limiting opportunity by cutting funding and weaponizing civil rights enforcement, the Department of Education should be funding student supports and investigating unequal opportunities.

## **Where can you find data about unequal educational opportunity?**

- The [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) collects data from every public school and district about multiple areas of educational opportunity disaggregated by student race, family income, English learner status, and disability.
- Reports from think tanks, associations, and advocacy groups also include important data points that highlight the persistence of educational inequity across lines of race, sex, and disability.

## **Why not just try to break the portal?**

Given how disingenuous and dangerous this effort is, it is appealing to try and shut it down to prevent “reports” that would target educators and their important work to support and protect students. However, overwhelming the portal with evidence of real discrimination can help to both uplift what the Department of Education SHOULD be doing (and put important information in front of decision-makers), while rejecting this vehicle and its witch hunt.

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<sup>2</sup> The form asks for an email address, school or school district name, ZIP code, and a description of the discrimination. Individuals should exercise their own discretion in how to complete those fields. Unequal educational opportunity occurs at the classroom, school, district, state, and national levels, and each of us has a responsibility to make sure that students’ rights are respected and education is available no matter where they live.