

Alaska Equitable Services Ombudsman

Role and Responsibilities

To help ensure equitable services and other benefits for eligible private school children, teachers and other educational personnel, and families, the Department of Education & Early Development must designate an ombudsman to monitor and enforce ESEA equitable services requirements under both Title I and Title VIII. (ESEA sections 1117(a)(3)(B) and 8501(a)(3)(B).)

What are the roles and responsibilities of an ombudsman?

The ombudsman serves as the department's primary point of contact for addressing questions and concerns from private school officials and districts regarding the provision of equitable services under Titles I and VIII of ESSA¹. In addition, the ombudsman is required to monitor and enforce the equitable services requirements under Titles I and VIII and, thus, should have a significant role in the State's monitoring process. Furthermore, the ombudsman should ensure that private school officials know how to contact the ombudsman. The following are examples of activities the ombudsman could undertake in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the position:

- Serve as a general resource regarding equitable services requirements for both districts and private school officials, which may include conducting initial outreach to define the contours of the ombudsman's responsibilities.
- Develop, in partnership with other relevant state department staff, monitoring protocols applicable to the provision of equitable services and participate in a sample of any monitoring activity.
- Provide technical assistance regarding equitable services requirements for state department staff administering applicable programs, district staff, and private school officials.
- Establish a process for receiving documentation of agreement from districts consistent with the consultation requirement that the results of such agreement shall be transmitted to the ombudsman. (ESEA section 1117(b)(1).)
- Participate in the State's Title I Committee of Practitioners (ESEA section 1603(b)) and, as applicable, nonpublic schools working group.

What specific responsibilities does an ombudsman have with respect to monitoring and enforcement?

The primary responsibilities of an ombudsman are to monitor and enforce the equitable services requirements in Titles I and VIII. Accordingly, an ombudsman should work with SEA staff administering Title I and programs covered under Title VIII to develop monitoring protocols applicable to the provision of equitable services under each program. To ensure that monitoring protocols are being followed, the ombudsman should take an active role in the monitoring process, particularly with respect to the resolution of any findings regarding equitable services requirements under Titles I and VIII. The ombudsman also should serve as the primary point of contact for

¹ The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was amended December 10, 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

responding to and resolving any complaints regarding equitable services that the state department receives under its ESEA complaint procedures.

Notice of Allocation

A state department must provide notice in a timely manner to appropriate private school officials in the state of the allocation of funds for educational services and other benefits under each ESEA program that a district has determined are available for eligible private school children, teachers and other educational personnel, and families. (ESEA sections 1117(a)(4)(C) and 8501(a)(4)(C).) This information can be found on [DEED's Equitable Services webpage](#) under the Allocations and Proportionate Share tab.

Contact the Equitable Services Ombudsman

The equitable services ombudsman may be contacted by email at private.school.ombudsman@alaska.gov.