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NAFSCE Strongly Opposes U.S. Department of Education Decision to Transfer Key Family Engagement Programs to Health and Human Services

The national family engagement membership association warns the move fails to prioritize student achievement and unnecessarily risks harming critical programs that support parents and families in advancing their children's education.

Alexandria, VA. - The National Association of Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) strongly opposes the recent announcement by the U.S. Department of Education to transfer administration of several family engagement programs to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through an interagency agreement. This action represents a significant step toward the current Administration's stated goal of dismantling the Department of Education.

Among the programs affected are the Statewide Family Engagement Centers, Full-Service Community Schools, Promise Neighborhoods, and Ready To Learn Program. These initiatives play a critical role in strengthening family-school partnerships and supporting student achievement. The transfers to HHS create additional concerns for these programs, some of which received funding cuts and grant discontinuations.

NAFSCE has consistently spoken out against efforts to weaken or dismantle the Department of Education, including through administrative mechanisms such as interagency agreements that reassign core responsibilities without clear benefits to programs or students, transparency, or stakeholder input.

"This move does nothing to prioritize student success or academic achievement," said Vito Borrello, Executive Director of NAFSCE. "What we are hearing are political talking points about bureaucracy, but we have yet to see any substantive details about how this shift will improve outcomes for students or strengthen programs that are already delivering results."

The transfer creates needless uncertainty regarding program administration and oversight. Moving these family engagement related grants to a department without established expertise in K-12 education risks diminishing their purpose and impact. Furthermore, operating family engagement programs from within HHS will undermine its integration into the educational programs now moved to other agencies. Rather than streamlining government, this transition adds another layer of bureaucracy by shifting management from one federal agency to another without a clear implementation framework.

NAFSCE played a key role in the development and implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers program, designed to help the Department of Education strengthen family-school partnerships nationwide. The organization remains deeply committed to protecting the integrity of these and similar initiatives.

“We have heard repeated commitments from this Administration about empowering parents and increasing parent engagement,” Borrello added. “Yet, this Administration continues to propose cuts, foster instability, and create threats to the very programs that operationalize those goals. Parents and families are not political talking points. Family engagement is a nonpartisan, evidence-based strategy that strengthens student outcomes and deserves sustained and increased investment, not increased confusion.”

NAFSCE will continue to oppose this decision and urges rigorous oversight to ensure the Department of Education effectively manages these programs, as Congressionally directed.

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About NAFSCE

The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) is the first membership association focused solely on advancing family, school, and community engagement. Its mission is to advance high-impact policies and practices for family, school, and community engagement to promote child development and improve student achievement. For more information, visit www.nafsce.org.