



Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Ombudsman

ESSA Requirement: The Ombudsman

To help ensure equitable services and other benefits for eligible private school children, teachers and other educational personnel, and families, an SEA 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?

An ombudsman should serve as an SEA's primary point of contact for addressing questions and concerns from private school officials and LEAs regarding the provision of equitable services under Titles I and VIII. 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 LEAs 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 SEA 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 SEA staff administering applicable programs, LEA staff, and private school officials.
- Establish a process for receiving documentation of agreement from LEAs 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 responding to and resolving any complaints regarding equitable services that the SEA receives under its ESEA complaint procedures.

Questions? Reach out! ombudsman@doe.k12.ga.us