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Settlement Forces State to Overhaul Oversight of Schools Serving Students with Disabilities

Agreement strengthens accountability and protections statewide

Denver, CO — Disability Law Colorado (DLC) has reached a [settlement](#) with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) requiring major changes to facility school oversight. The agreement resolves State Complaint 2026-525 and establishes new safeguards to ensure students receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

The agreement requires stronger coordination across agencies and increased accountability for facility schools, which often serve students with complex needs.

“This settlement is about making sure students in facility schools are no longer overlooked,” said **Emily Harvey, Co-Legal Director at Disability Law Colorado**. “For too long, there has been a lack of clear oversight and coordination across systems serving these students. This agreement establishes stronger accountability and clearer expectations to ensure students receive the educational services they are entitled to.”

Key provisions include:

- New student rights training and resources
- Regular state audits and enforcement for noncompliant schools
- Improved coordination across agencies and schools

“In my work, I’ve seen how difficult it can be for families to navigate placement decisions and get the services their children need,” said **Nikki Bishop, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Parent Advocate**. “When systems aren’t well coordinated, students can fall through the cracks. This agreement is an important step toward changing that.”

Advocates say the changes will help ensure students in facility schools, often among the most vulnerable, receive consistent educational services and protections.

The agreement is available on our [website](#). Contact DLC Communications Manager **Felix Ortiz** to schedule interviews with **Emily Harvey** or **Nikki Bishop**.

Disability Law Colorado is a nonprofit civil rights organization, authorized by federal law to combat discrimination, abuse, and neglect. We aim to make Colorado the best place in America for people with disabilities to thrive. For more information, visit disabilitylawco.org.