



Youth for Neurodiversity Inc.

October 31, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health & Human Services (HHS)
U.S. Department of Education
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

RE: Urgent Action Needed to Reverse Layoffs at OSEP and RSA to Protect 7.5 Million Neurodivergent Students

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of Youth for Neurodiversity Inc., a youth-led nonprofit dedicated to empowering neurodivergent youth, I am writing to urge you to reconsider layoffs at the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Nearly 7.5 million students with learning differences of autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and others rely on timely critical education, therapy, and training services overseen by OSEP and RSA. The layoffs affecting 121 employees at OSEP and RSA have left only a handful of staffers amid the government shutdown that began on October 1, 2025. Protections to youth under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Autism CARES Act of 2024 are now at severe risk.

Specifically, neurodivergent youth rely on enforcement by OSEP and RSA for timely delivery of services at schools and providers for individualized education programs (IEPs), 504 plans for accommodations, speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral supports, vocational training for transition from school to employment, job coaching, and assistive technology. Delayed services from schools and providers shift the burden to Medicaid-funded care programs, which are already under strain due to broader HHS layoffs and uncertain funding, compounding our concerns about neurodivergent youth receiving timely care.

At Youth for Neurodiversity, we believe that all youth deserve to feel valued, celebrated for who they are, and receive care to thrive and achieve their full potential. Nearly 1 in 36 children are autistic and often have co-occurring learning differences. We recognize that the administration has affirmed that the education and healthcare needs of neurodivergent students are a priority, including goals of the Autism CARES Act of 2024. However, the drastic layoffs at OSEP and RSA are very worrisome. Furthermore, given the highly polarized nature of media communications, we youth do not have a direct channel to hear updates from the government. We do not have clarity on how limited-size OSEP and RSA will deliver timely critical services to our neurodivergent peers.

We at Youth for Neurodiversity are committed to advocating for our neurodivergent peers, representing the needs of youth to legislators. We strongly urge you to: (1) Restore staff to OSEP and RSA; (2) Secure emergency funding to maintain oversight; (3) Collaborate with Congress to resolve the government shutdown; and (4) Establish a communication pathway directly to youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns. We can be contacted at info@youthfornd.org. We look forward to your leadership in prioritizing the needs of neurodivergent and differently abled youth.

Sincerely,

Aashna Parsa

Aashna Parsa
Founder and President