

ACF  Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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**INFORMATION MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees, Including Delegate Agencies and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grantees

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Designation Renewal System (DRS) Changes – Public Comment Period

**INFORMATION:**

The Office of Head Start (OHS) has published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the Federal Register, [Head Start Designation Renewal System Changes](#). This publication opens a 45-day public comment period. OHS is soliciting feedback on these proposed changes and will use comments submitted by the public in making decisions for the final rule.

This NPRM proposes improvements for two of the seven conditions of the DRS: the condition related to the Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Pre-K (CLASS®) and the fiscal condition related to audit findings. The proposed revisions will ensure OHS identifies those communities where competition is the most warranted and more effectively holds grantees accountable, while making the DRS more transparent.

For the CLASS® condition, the NPRM proposes to remove the lowest 10 percent criterion and set more rigorous minimum thresholds across all three domains grantees must meet in order to avoid designation for competition. Specifically, the proposed rule would increase the minimum threshold for Emotional Support from 4 to 5, Classroom Organization from 3 to 5, and Instructional Support from 2 to 2.5.

For the fiscal condition, the NPRM proposes to add a second criterion that would consider Head Start findings from annual audits to determine whether fiscal management challenges exist. This specific use of Head Start audit findings provides OHS an earlier predictor that is more comprehensive to detect fiscal management and oversight risks.

The current DRS standards will remain in effect until a final rule is issued.

To submit comments, follow the "Submit a comment" instructions in the [Federal Register](#). To ensure OHS can effectively respond to your comments, clearly identify the issues on which you

are commenting. Please be as specific as possible in your comments. Provide the page number, identify the column, and cite the paragraph from the Federal Register document (e.g., page 10999, second column, §1305.6(a)(1)(i)). If you wish to comment anonymously, please enter "N/A" in the required fields.

If electronic submission is not possible, you may send comments via the U.S. Postal Service to the address indicated in the Federal Register. In accordance with the instructions in the Federal Register, OHS encourages all interested stakeholders to submit comments in response to the DRS changes by the 45 days deadline published in the NPRM.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families. We look forward to receiving your comments.

/ Dr. Deborah Bergeron /

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