Mission:
Ensuring equal access to education and promoting educational excellence throughout the nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.
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Foreword

Overview of OCR Compliance and Enforcement Program (edlite-2002arc-2.html#_Toc42306684)
Foreword

The Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is a law enforcement agency charged with protecting fundamental rights conferred in statutes that charge the federal government with the obligation to ensure that public monies do not support discrimination.

President George W. Bush announced to the nation, on his third day in office, that education was his highest domestic priority. With strong bipartisan cooperation, the 107th Congress enacted the president’s education agenda, which centers on accountability for results, local control and flexibility, expanded parental options and doing what works to improve student performance. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act) is the most comprehensive reform of federal education programs in more than three decades. Signed into law by the president on January 8, 2002, the NCLB Act contains specific provisions to ensure that all children will have access to a high-quality education regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability or socio-economic status. The NCLB Act embodies four key principles—stronger accountability for results; greater flexibility for states, school districts, and schools in the use of federal funds; more choices for parents; and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been demonstrated to work. The Act also places an increased emphasis on reading, especially for young children, enhancing the quality of our nation’s teachers, and ensuring that all children in American schools learn English.

This landmark legislation starts a new and exciting era in education, with firm commitment to the bold proposition that all children can learn. No longer will expectations vary on the basis of a child’s race, ethnicity, sex, disability or socio-economic status. The NCLB Act insists on high standards for all children and the ending of what the president calls the “soft bigotry of low expectations” for children who face special challenges or who are not performing satisfactorily in the educational process.

The challenge now is to align fair, effective and efficient enforcement of the civil rights laws with the implementation of the new education reform legislation so they are working hand-in-hand to prevent, identify and remedy discrimination.

This report covers the period from October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2002. The accomplishments that are described are another reminder of the importance of the OCR compliance and enforcement program—a program that can help provide opportunity for all of America’s children to receive a world-class education.

I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that no child is left behind.
Respectfully submitted,

Gerald A. Reynolds