



NYC Department of Education: Its Share of Federal Education Civil Rights Lawsuits

Original analysis of 8,707 records from the Federal Judicial Center, FY2014–FY2025 (federal fiscal years, Oct. 1–Sept. 30). Published October 23, 2026. <https://settlementinsight.com/research/nyc-department-of-education-federal-lawsuits-share>

In fiscal years 2020 through 2025, 1,341 of the 5,075 education civil rights cases commenced in U.S. district courts, or 26.4%, named the New York City Department of Education, its schools chancellor or the City of New York as first defendant. The category covers suits under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Title IX. In fiscal 2025 the share was 26.4%.

26%

U.S. education cases naming NYC schools, FY2020–25

1.34K

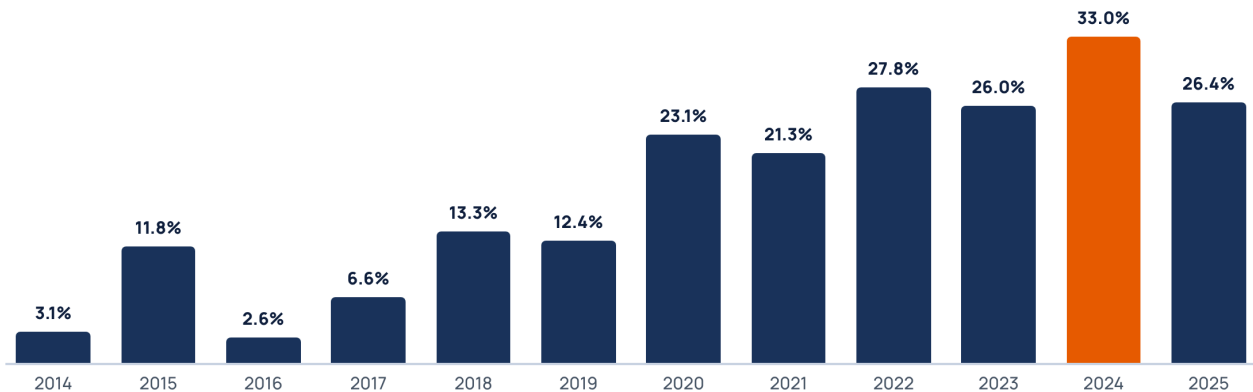
NYC school cases, FY2020–2025

3.7×

NYC school cases vs. all of Pennsylvania, FY2020–25



Share of U.S. education civil rights cases naming NYC schools first, by fiscal year



Source: Settlement Insight analysis of data from the Federal Judicial Center

settlementinsight.com/research/nyc-department-of-education-federal-lawsuits-share · free to use with a link (CC BY 4.0)

What the federal court records show

- 1. About one in four.** Of 5,075 education civil rights cases commenced nationwide in fiscal 2020–2025, 1,341 named New York City's school system first. All other school systems, colleges and defendants in the country account for the remaining 3,734.

2. **More than any other state.** The NYC school cases outnumber all education civil rights cases filed in the federal courts of Pennsylvania, the state with the most such cases outside New York, by a factor of 3.7× (1,341 against 361). The comparison does not adjust for the number of students.
3. **A rising share.** In fiscal 2014 the city's school system accounted for 3.1% of these cases. The share passed one fifth in fiscal 2020 and reached 33.0% in fiscal 2024, before falling to 26.4% in fiscal 2025.
4. **Concentrated in Manhattan's federal court.** The Southern District of New York received 1,408 education civil rights cases in fiscal 2020–2025, 27.7% of the national total, and 91% of them named the city's school system first.
5. **Not driven by reopened cases.** Counting only new suits and cases removed from state court, and leaving out reopened, remanded and transferred cases, the share is 27.2% (1,295 of 4,761).

How we measured

Data come from the Federal Judicial Center's Integrated Database (IDB) of federal civil cases, in the release loaded on October 10, 2026, which covers filings through June 30, 2026. We used every case with nature-of-suit code 448 (Civil Rights: Education) commenced between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2025 (2014–2025 in federal fiscal years), 8,707 records in all.

We assigned cases to fiscal years by filing date and counted every record, including reopened, remanded and transferred cases, because that is how the judiciary counts cases commenced. Our counts match the judiciary's Table C-2 exactly for fiscal 2025 (985) and fiscal 2024 (932).

A case counts as a New York City school case when the first-named defendant field (compared case-insensitively, after collapsing runs of spaces to one and dropping a leading "The ") begins with "New York City Dep", "NYC Dep", "N.Y.C. Dep", "New York City Board of", "NYC Board of", "New York City Public Sc", "City School District of the Ci" (a name cut off at 30 characters, counted as the City School District of the City of New York) or "City School District of New Yo", or begins with "City of New York"; these prefix rules apply in every federal district. It also counts when the field, after removing a trailing ", et al" and surrounding spaces, is exactly a chancellor's surname or "Chancellor David Banks" (one such case), the case was filed in the Southern or Eastern District of New York, and the filing date falls within that chancellor's term, with no grace period: Walcott to December 31, 2013; Fariña (spelled "Farina") January 1, 2014 to April 1, 2018; Carranza April 2, 2018 to March 14, 2021; Porter March 15 to December 31, 2021; Banks January 1, 2022 to October 15, 2024; Aviles-Ramos from October 16, 2024. A chancellor's name outside these dates is not counted. Ambiguous names are not counted: a bare "Department of Education" or "Board of Education" (with or without "of the"), "Department of Education-New Yo", "New York Department of Education", "New York Board of Education", "New York, et al", a name cut off before the city is identifiable (such as "City School District of Th"), the mayor, blank, sealed or unknown defendants. Duplicate-looking records (same court, docket and filing date) are kept, as in the judiciary's counts. Fiscal years run October through September by filing date. Shares divide those cases by all 5,075 education civil rights cases nationwide filed October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2025 (fiscal 2020–2025), or by all cases in the fiscal year for yearly shares; the highest yearly share is taken over fiscal 2014–2025.

Checked against published figures

- Civil rights - Education cases (NOS 448) commenced in U.S. district courts, FY2025 (12 months ending Sept. 30, 2025): published 985, our count 985 (exact match). [Table C-2. U.S. District Courts - Civil Cases Commenced, by Basis of Jurisdiction and Nature of Suit, During the 12-Month Periods Ending September 30, 2024 and 2025](#)
- Civil rights - Education cases (NOS 448) commenced in U.S. district courts, FY2024 (12 months ending Sept. 30, 2024): published 932, our count 932 (exact match). [Table C-2. U.S. District Courts - Civil Cases Commenced, by Basis of Jurisdiction and Nature of Suit, During the 12-Month Periods Ending September 30, 2024 and 2025](#)

Limitations

- The nature-of-suit code is picked by the filer on the civil cover sheet. Some suits under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Title IX are coded as other civil rights cases, and some suits against the Department of Education under code 448 may concern other claims. The figures measure code 448 cases, not every education dispute in federal court.
- The IDB holds only the first-named defendant, cut at 30 characters. Cases that list the city's school system second, or under an ambiguous name, are not counted, so the count likely misses some of the city's cases. Cases counted through the City of New York or a chancellor's surname may in a few instances concern other matters.
- The data do not show which statute a case was brought under, whether it seeks tuition reimbursement, services or attorney's fees, or how much was paid. Counts are not adjusted for the number of students in each state or school system.
- One record is one case commenced in a district court. A reopened case counts again in the year it is reopened, as in the judiciary's own tables; counting new suits and removals only gives a share of 27.2%.

Data files

- [Federal education civil rights cases by U.S. district court, FY2020-FY2025](#) (CSV, 93 rows)
- [Federal education civil rights cases by state, FY2020-FY2025](#) (CSV, 55 rows)
- [How NYC school cases were identified, FY2020-FY2025](#) (CSV, 4 rows)
- [NYC Department of Education share of federal education civil rights cases, by fiscal year](#) (CSV, 12 rows)

How to cite

Goldberg, L. (2026). NYC Department of Education in federal court — share of U.S. education civil rights cases (NOS 448), FY2014–FY2025 [Data set]. Settlement Insight. <https://settlementinsight.com/research/nyc-department-of-education-federal-lawsuits-share>

Free to reuse with attribution under CC BY 4.0. Please link to <https://settlementinsight.com/research/nyc-department-of-education-federal-lawsuits-share> as the source.