



# Monthly Highlights Report

March 2026

**18**Audit-Related  
Assignments Underway**107**Open Criminal &  
Civil Investigations**\$3.5M**FY 2026 Financial  
Impact/Reports**\$5.1M**FY 2026 Financial  
Actions/Investigations

## Recently Issued Reports

### Fraud Advisory: Potential Fraud Involving FAFSA from Dependent Students with Unusual Parent Data

In June 2025, we initiated analysis of FAFSA data that found a pattern of activity involving dependent students with unusual parent data on the FAFSA. We determined that 12,026 dependent student identities submitted FAFSAs associated with 1,991 parent identities where it is unlikely that the student and parent are related or associated. As a result, these FAFSA submissions have a high likelihood of being fraudulent—a potential loss of almost \$3.5 million in Federal student aid associated with these FAFSA submissions during award year 2024–2025. We made two recommendations to FSA to address the issue. [Report](#)

### FY 2025 Financial Statements Audit

The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 requires the Inspectors General to audit the agency's financial statements each year, which is intended to help improve an agency's financial management and controls over financial reporting. For FY 2025, the auditors issued an unmodified opinion on the FY 2025 consolidated financial statement of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The auditors identified one material weakness and three significant deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting. Seven recommendations were made to ED to address the internal control findings. See pages 84-96 for the OIG report. [Report](#)

### Quality of Data Reported through ED's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Surveys by Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU)

We found that SNHU did not always report verifiable data in the Student Financial Aid, Graduation Rates, and Institutional Characteristic Surveys to IPEDS for the 2021–2022 reporting period because it did not update and implement procedures for collecting, consolidating, assessing the reliability of, and reporting data to IPEDS. Because the data were not always verifiable, its published net price, graduation rate, and cost of attendance were unreliable. Prospective students and their parents might have made enrollment decisions based on this unreliable information. [Report](#)

### FY 2026 Management Challenges

Per the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000, the OIG reports annually on the most serious management and performance challenges ED faces. For FY 2026, we identified five management challenges: (1) change management; (2) oversight and monitoring of grantees, (3) oversight and monitoring of student financial assistance programs, (4) data quality and reporting, and (5) Information technology security. The report includes a summary of each challenge, a brief assessment of ED's progress in addressing each challenge, and information on further actions that, if properly implemented, could enhance the effectiveness of ED programs and operations. [Report](#)

### OIG 91st Semiannual Report to Congress

This statutory report presents the activities and accomplishments of the OIG from April 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025. The audits, investigations, and related work highlighted in the report are products of our mission to identify and stop fraud, waste, and abuse; and promote accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness through our oversight of ED programs and operations. [Report](#)

## FY 2025 Performance Results Report

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, this report presents the results of the OIG's work over fiscal year 2025 in meeting its performance goals. [Report](#)

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Find the list of the audit-related assignments currently underway and read our issued reports on K-12 programs, student aid and higher education programs, Department management and operations, Pandemic Relief Aid and more [here on our website](#).

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## Investigative Results

### Student Aid Fraud

- Study Across the Pond, a student recruiting firm, and its principal agreed to pay \$1.3 million to settle allegations that they violated the incentive compensation ban. [Press Release](#)
- The leader of a student aid fraud ring that targeted more than \$5 million in Federal student aid from numerous North Carolina community colleges was sentenced to prison. [Press Release](#)

### K-12 Fraud

- A former Hulbert Schools (Oklahoma) Encumbrance Clerk was sentenced to prison for theft of Federal funds. The former clerk issued herself payroll and miscellaneous payments in excess of her contracted and authorized salary with no legitimate purpose. She conspired with the Schools Treasurer in the scheme, resulting in a financial loss of more than \$500k. [Press Release](#)
  - Two former superintendents of school districts in Mississippi pled guilty to conspiracy to commit embezzlement. The two used their positions to enter into reciprocal consulting contracts for consulting services at an inflated rate of payment or never provided. [Press Release](#)
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Read more about our investigations [here on our website](#) and in our [Semiannual Reports to Congress](#).

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## Other Fraud Awareness Efforts

### Ghost Students on TV

OIG's Assistant Inspector General for Investigation Services was featured in an ABC News story on ghost students/student aid fraud, sharing information on how criminals operate these schemes and what is being done to stop them. [ABC News Story](#)

### FraudGram Newsletter

The OIG issued its 5th FraudGram Newsletter, providing the public with quick facts about education-related scams and tips to avoid them. The OIG also [launched a webpage](#) dedicated to informing the public about student loan-related scams. [FraudGram](#)

### Fraud Awareness Trainings & Briefings

So far in FY 2026, the OIG has conducted 86 fraud awareness and prevention meetings, trainings, and discussions with stakeholders and law enforcement partners at the Federal, state, and local levels.

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Visit [this page](#) of our website for more free materials, podcasts, scheduling training and more on identifying and reporting fraud to the OIG.

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