

## **February 26, 2025 – LinkedIn Post by Ron Wasserstein, Executive Director**

The placement of Dr. Peggy Carr as Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics on administrative leave is profoundly disappointing and indeed alarming, particularly given the absence of a professional cause or clear rationale. Unless quickly reversed, this action is likely to undermine trust in the agency and in government statistics.

Dr. Carr is eminently qualified to be Commissioner. Her service to NCES, the Department of Education, and the country goes back more than 30 years and includes several leadership positions and oversight of major programs. Prior to serving as commissioner, Carr was the associate commissioner for assessment at NCES, where she oversaw the National Assessment of Educational Progress and a portfolio of large-scale international assessments, including the Program for International Student Assessment and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Dr. Carr also served as acting commissioner of NCES between 2016 and 2018. Since becoming Commissioner in 2021, Dr. Carr has been an effective leader in facing the agency's many challenges and accomplishments, most recently providing America's schools with timely information via the School Pulse Survey. The many recognitions of her exemplary service and leadership include the Meritorious Executive Rank Award in 2008 by President George W. Bush for sustained superior accomplishments in management of programs.

The Evidence Act, signed into law by President Trump in January 2019, mandates that statistical agencies "conduct objective statistical activities". This requirement is grounded in the trust placed in the agency and the integrity of its products. Without trust, an agency's statistical outputs are likely to be viewed as lacking objectivity. Trust is also crucial for encouraging individuals or entities—whether businesses, schools, or others—to share their data. Such trust requires professional, experienced, and respected leadership committed to upholding the integrity and objectivity of the agency's work. Removing the head of a statistical agency without justifiable professional cause is likely to erode this trust, as it will be perceived by many as an attempt to improperly influence official statistics or as a signal of distrust in the agency itself.

I urge the Administration to allow Dr. Carr to resume her leadership responsibilities of the National Center for Education Statistics. As I wrote in the post below, NCES information is an invaluable resource to families, governments, businesses, decision makers, and the education community at large, all of whom need objective and timely information to inform their decisions in the best interests of America's students and the country's future.