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NEA NEWS

How Dismantling the Department of Education Would Harm Students

Educators and parents will not stand for the

destruction of our country's commitment to equal educational opportunities for all students.



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8 min

By: Tim Walker, Senior Writer
Published: February 4, 2025

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The White House is expected soon to issue an executive U.S. Department of Education.**

- 2** Stripping the department of its resources and mission will harm the millions of students in low-income communities who rely on educational services and support. Civil rights protection will be threatened, and discrimination based on race, gender, and disability will be exacerbated.
- 3** The American people do not support these actions, said Pringle, and educators, parents and other allies will continue to advocate, and mobilize so that all students have well-resourced, high-quality public education.

In a widely expected move, President Donald Trump will at a moment's notice issue an executive order—or a series of orders—[aimed at dismantling the Department of Education \(ED\)](#), while also urging Congress to abolish it outright. The department, which was established by President Jimmy Carter in 1980, due to the advocacy of NEA and others, has been a key part of the administration's public education rhetoric, as a candidate and now as president.

Since Inauguration Day, the White House has issued reckless and often illegal directives to destabilize public schools and target some of the most vulnerable students. They include stripping schools of critical resources, [national school voucher programs](#), providing more funding to private charter operators, and [greenlighting Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) raids on public schools](#).

The divisive culture war language (“ending radical indoctrination” and “ending indoctrination”) used by the administration and its allies to justify these actions is not only divisive, but also harmful to the public good.

obscure the true aims of Trump's agenda—and the very real harm that will be inflicted, especially on the millions of low-income students.

Ninety percent of U.S. students and 95% of students with disabilities attend public schools. Students across the country benefit from programs of the Department of Education. Eliminating the department, National Education Association President Becky Pringle said this week, was equivalent to "stealing our future."

"If it became a reality," Pringle said, "Trump's power grab would harm our most vulnerable students, explode class sizes, cut job training, make higher education more expensive and out of reach for middle-class families, and away special education services for students with disabilities and civil rights protections."

"Americans did not vote for, and do not support," she added, "a government's commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunities for every child."

NEW CALLS TO ABOLISH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Ever since its creation, the Department of Education has faced criticism from right-wing politicians for its abolishment, but the current administration presents the gravest threat yet.

The plan to close the department was a part of the GOP campaign [laid out explicitly in Project 2025](#), a policy blueprint published by the Heritage Foundation to guide a second Trump presidency. Indeed, the education section of the Project 2025 manual is: “Federal education should be limited and, ultimately, the federal Department of Education eliminated.”



Students across the country benefit from programs run by the U.S. Department of Education. Closing the department would be equivalent to “giving up on our future,” said NEA President

Doing so, however, requires an act of Congress. And bipartisan federal role in ensuring a quality education for all students h these efforts. Just last year, the U.S. House of Representatives rejected an amendment to a bill that sought to eliminate the [than 60 Republican members joined Democrats in turning b](#) However, [a new bill was introduced in the House last week c](#) [elimination of the department by the end of 2026.](#)

While officially closing the doors of the Education Department dismantling its key functions and stripping its funds is a very danger. [According to reporting in *The Wall Street Journal*,](#) the weighing a series of executive orders that would abolish prog “explicitly in the department’s statute” and transfer other fun departments—or, in effect, gutting the Education Department closing it.

HOW STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WILL PAY THE I

When the White House talks about dismantling Department programs, it uses phrases such as “back to the states” to obsc students— especially lower-income students in rural, suburb communities and students with disabilities—will lose big.

The Department of Education is a critical champion in enfor prohibiting discrimination and ensuring every student has a that will help them reach their full potential. Dismantling it :



Becky Pringle

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Trump is prepping an executive order to dismantle the Dept. of Education, directly harming students. It will drain resources from t most vulnerable, skyrocket class sizes, make higher ed more expensive, strip special ed services, and gut student civil rights protections. We won't let this happen.

Feb 3, 2025 at 7:26 PM



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Here are the key programs that would be impacted:

- Title 1, which directs money to schools with high concent living in poverty and provides supports such as reading sj class sizes, could be decimated if, as proposed in Project 2 block grants and handed over to individual states—without accountability or oversight. According to an [analysis by t American Progress](#), 180,000 teaching positions could be 1 million students in low-income communities.
- Roughly 7.5 million students, or 15 percent of the student

special education under the [Individuals with Disabilities](#) which provides \$15 billion to support students with disabilities could be transferred to another agency, making it significant that students with disabilities receive the services and support they deserve.

- Many expect the White House to move the Education Department's Civil Rights to the Department of Justice, a move that would reduce the ability to protect students against discrimination based on disability. The absence of strong federal oversight would leave students vulnerable to discrimination, leading to lower levels of academic achievement and a higher risk of dropping out.
- The Education Department also administers Pell Grants, and loan repayment and forgiveness programs. Thirty percent of students rely on these [federal loans to pay their tuition](#). Students could lose this support, leading to more students dropping out and fewer options for families.

'EDUCATORS WON'T BE SILENT'

By stripping the Department of Education of resources and the White House and its allies would be able to turbocharge key tenets of the public education agenda already being implemented at the state and local parts of the country. Private school vouchers are at the top of the list.

“The intent is clear,” said Pringle. “Starve our public schools of the resources students need and funnel these resources to discriminatory programs.”

private schools or tax cuts for billionaires who funded his ca

Just last week, Trump signed an executive order designed to c
our public schools through vouchers—[a catastrophic idea](#) tha
[front of voters, is resoundingly rejected.](#)

And according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* poll, more than
opposed dismantling the Department of Education, with sin
supporting prioritizing education funding over tax cuts. Fan
country support strong public schools because they understa
more opportunities, more resources, and greater protections

“Educators won’t be silent as anti-public education politician
opportunities from our students, our families, and our comm

America,” Pringle said. “Together with parents and allies, we organize, advocate, and mobilize so that all students have we that allow every student to grow into their full brilliance.”

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