

A Teachers' Guide to Understanding Efforts to Dismantle the U.S. Department of Education



EDUCATORS
FOR EXCELLENCE

What to Know and Resources to Share

Why is the U.S. Department of Education (USED) in the news?



On March 20, **President Trump issued a long-expected [Executive Order \(EO\)](#) calling for the dissolution of the USED** and directing the Secretary to reduce operations to the maximum extent allowed by law. **[63% of Americans oppose this](#)**. The Trump Administration has also previously [proposed turning federal funding managed by USED into 'block grants,'](#) which would eliminate any guidance, requirements, or oversight associated with this money and how it is used.

Shutting down the USED would require Congressional action. The same day the EO was issued, [Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana expressed his intention to introduce a bill eliminating USED](#). However, it is unlikely to pass due to Republicans' slim majority. **This doesn't mean that the Administration can't gut USED, which it has already begun to do.** On March 12, [USED fired nearly half its staff](#)—1,300 people—crippling USED's operations.

What would dismantling USED mean for schools?



USED has four core functions:

1. **Alleviate funding gaps between states and districts, ensuring that public dollars support public schools and are strategically allocated to the students who need them most.**
2. **Ensure equity of opportunity for all students, regardless of race, income, or disability.**
3. **Hold states accountable for delivering an excellent education by measuring student learning.**
4. **Foster research and innovation nationwide, identifying and scaling what works in education.**

Without USED, funding gaps wouldn't be filled; budgets of struggling schools would shrink; crucial research wouldn't get done; and states wouldn't be held accountable for providing quality education. No one would have the bird's-eye oversight necessary to identify and address equity concerns nationwide.

On average, [between 11 and 14% of each state's education budget is funded by the federal government](#); for some states, this percentage is as high as 23%. That means if federal funding were severely cut or eliminated, some **states could lose nearly a quarter of their entire education budget**.

The Administration's reasoning for eliminating USED is that it [creates unnecessary bureaucracy](#) and that education decision-making [should belong to states](#). It has also said it [would transfer any of USED's essential responsibilities](#)—including managing critical funding streams like Title I—to other departments. However, the Administration has already [enacted extensive funding cuts and stated plainly it plans to pursue more](#), while also [overextending its authority by meddling in issues firmly in the realm of local policy](#), like curriculum. This makes clear that this Administration's ultimate goal is not to eliminate bureaucracy or return decision-making to states, but to strip schools of resources to fund tax cuts for the rich.

While improvements could undoubtedly be made to USED's operations, that does not mean we should eliminate it completely. **We must reimagine K-12 education—not dismantle it.**

What should I do in response to this?



- [Email your members of Congress](#) and demand they tell the Secretary of Education to do her job by executing the core functions of USED.
- Stay up-to-date on the Administration's latest moves at e4e.org/federal-updates so you can continue to be an informed advocate for yourself and your students.