

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 20, 2025

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20515

Linda McMahon
U.S. Secretary of Education Nominee
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear President Trump:

As you plan for the first one hundred days of your second term, we implore you to consider the devastating impact that dismantling the U.S. Department of Education (Department) would have on students, families, and the economy.

Education impacts virtually every aspect of American life and is vital to our nation's economic competitiveness and growth. The need for sufficient reading and math comprehension skills is ingrained in everyday life, whether it's shopping at the grocery store, paying bills, applying for a loan, using public transportation, etc. These skills are developed through participation in a robust public education system that is equipped with the tools necessary to support students from pre-K to high school graduation.

While education is primarily the responsibility of the state and local education agencies, the Department of Education plays an important role in ensuring equity in education, especially at the K-12 level. Congress created the Department through the Department of Education Organization Act (Public Law 96-88). In doing so, Congress noted that "education is fundamental to the development of individual citizens and the progress of the Nation" and that there is "a continuing need to ensure equal access for all Americans to educational opportunities of a high quality, and such educational opportunities should not be denied because of race, creed, color, national origin, or sex."

Though it is true that the federal government contributes only eight percent of funding to K-12 education, this funding plays an important role in ensuring equal access to a high-quality education for all students. To put this in perspective, in the 2017-2018 school year, approximately 7 million children nationwide, between the ages of 3 and 21, received educational services supported by the federal government.¹

¹ <https://crs.gov/Reports/R44624?source=search>

To provide all children, regardless of their socioeconomic status, with the opportunity to receive a free and high-quality education, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This law established Title I grants, which provide supplemental assistance to school districts with high poverty rates. These funds can be used to further programs aimed at closing achievement gaps, helping students meet state achievement standards, etc. These funds are distributed by the Department to school districts all over the country in red and blue states with urban, suburban, and rural districts, as poverty does not discriminate based on political ideology.

Federal support is also critical to the education of students with disabilities, as highlighted by passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975. In that law, Congress noted the prominent role the federal government has in ensuring educational equality for children with disabilities through a permanent, broad-scale federal program. It called for the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities, an effort that would be seriously harmed by dismantling the Department. The Department is tasked with administering IDEA, including funding to assist states in providing students with disabilities with free public education. These grants are crucial for providing early intervention for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children, which has been proven to improve educational outcomes, and funding special education services at the K-12 level, which provides a specialized learning environment for children with disabilities.

While dismantling the Department of Education would have a disastrous effect on K-12 education, it would have an equally devastating effect on higher education. The Department is tasked with higher education responsibilities, including:

- Enforcing various civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination at all post-secondary institutions that receive federal funds, which includes Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin) and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs or other federally funded activities). These laws are critical to ensuring students can learn in an environment free from racial discrimination, sex discrimination, antisemitism, islamophobia, etc.;
- Administering and coordinating programs that are related to adult education and literacy with the goal of enabling adults to acquire the basic skills necessary to function in today's society. Sadly, approximately 130 million Americans still struggle with illiteracy and other challenges that hinder their ability to navigate our society and employment;²
- Authorizing grants to support career and technical education (CTE) activities at the secondary and post-secondary education levels, as outlined in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. CTE programs serve roughly 12.3 million students

² https://www.barbarabush.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BBFoundation_GainsFromEradicatingIlliteracy_9_8.pdf

across the country and benefit our communities by providing training in a range of fields, such as health sciences, information technology, manufacturing, etc.;³

- Developing initiatives that expand access to community and technical colleges and their associated degrees and certificates. Tens of millions of Americans attend community and technical college, and many receive federal support for career and technical training, which help individuals earn a stable and sustainable income;
- Administering the Pell Grant program, which help low-income, degree-seeking individuals afford college. Pell Grants served over 6 million students in the 2021-2022 school year, many of whom would struggle to attend higher education institutions without Pell support;⁴
- Administering other federal grants, such as TRIO, which provides services and programming to over 870,000 students nationwide to help low-income and first-generation individuals get to, stay in, and graduate from higher education institutions;⁵
- Developing and administering the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, which helps connect prospective students with federal financial aid aimed at making a post-secondary degree more affordable and accessible. Proper and timely FAFSA administration allows students and families to make educated and informed decisions on enrolling into the college of their choice;
- Administering student financial aid, which includes grant-based aid, administering repayment options, and loan disbursement, consolidation, deferment, and forgiveness like Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), which benefits police officers, firefighters, educators, nurses, military service members, and other workers in the public sector; and
- Other duties as necessary as determined by the Secretary of Education.

As outlined above, education – both at the K-12 and post-secondary levels – has a profound impact on virtually every aspect of our country. A robust public education system strengthens our workforce, economy, families, and ourselves as individuals. Choosing to undermine a system whose goal is to “promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” is a direct contradiction of what our country stands for.

Rather than trying to destroy federal support for public education, we urge you to instead invest in our public education system and the millions of students, families, teachers, and education professionals who benefit from federal support. We respectfully implore you to reconsider your plans to dismantle the Department of Education.

Sincerely,

³ [CTE in Your State - State Profiles and Comparisons - Advance CTE](#)

⁴ [Recipients of Federal Pell Grants in the U.S. 2023 | Statista](#)

⁵ [2023_COETRIO_BY_STATE_022124.pdf](#)



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



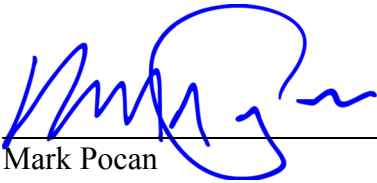
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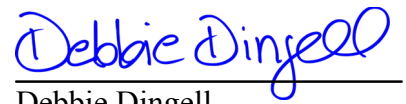
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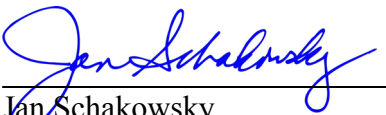
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