



Congress has the power to protect funding for our public schools and students. Our members of Congress can prevent any cuts to K-12 education funding and to programs that support students in higher education through the budget reconciliation and appropriations processes. They can also oppose federal school voucher programs that would create tax havens for the rich while hypercharging school privatization.

WHAT IS AN EXECUTIVE ORDER?¹

- EOs are directives from the President that explain how that administration plans to interpret and enforce the law.
- Executive orders cannot override laws or case law interpreting those laws.
- Any action the president directs the federal government to take must be based on an existing statute or a constitutional power of the president.
- An executive order is not law. An executive order that directs the executive/agency to act beyond what is allowed by those statutes and powers is unconstitutional.

WHAT DOES THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ED) DO?

Research

- USED facilitates educational research through the Institute of Education Sciences, which among other research functions administers the National Assessment of Educational Progress – providing critical data on student academic performance in reading, math, science, and social studies across the country.

Enforcing civil rights law through the Office of Civil Rights²

- USED is the largest investigator of school discrimination complaints nationwide, receiving over 22,000 complaints last year, with disability discrimination being a leading issue. USED investigates cases, enforces resolutions, and holds schools accountable for discriminatory actions.
- Without USED, millions of students and families would lose vital federal oversight, weakening state and local enforcement and leaving parents with few options to protect their children's rights.

Funding³

- USED provides critical funding for public schools, helping bridge gaps in state and local resources. It funds low-income students through Title I, special education via IDEA, and college access through Pell grants and loans, ensuring education remains accessible to all.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)⁴

- USED is the sole agency ensuring school districts and charter schools comply with IDEA, providing guidance and oversight to help states implement the law, especially during unexpected changes. It also ensures funding supports programs that benefit students with disabilities and disadvantaged students. Without USED's expertise, funding allocation and continuity would be uncertain.

The US Department of Education does NOT tell schools what to teach. Decisions about curriculum, staffing, and academic standards are left to the state and local level!

PA RELIES ON THE US DEPT. OF EDUCATION FOR \$2.8 BILLION WORTH OF GRANTS



THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN PA⁵

- \$1.57 billion in grants to K–12 schools
- \$1.06 billion in grants to postsecondary education students
- \$169 million in grants for vocational rehabilitation & adult basic and literacy education

▶ TITLE I

- The \$18.4 billion Title I program that provides funding to schools serving large low-income populations. Funding pays for many things that help our most at-risk students, including allowing for smaller class sizes, providing reading specialists, and expanding mental health counseling.
 - 2024 PA State allocation – \$736 million

▶ INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

- The \$15.5 billion Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) program which helps schools cover the costs of educating students with disabilities.
 - 2024 PA State allocation: \$554 million

▶ PERKINS V GRANT PROGRAM

- The \$1.4 billion Perkins V grant program, which assists schools with providing career and technical education.
 - 2024 PA State allocation: \$51 million

▶ TITLE II, PART A

- Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which provides roughly \$2.2 billion for teacher training and professional development and for new teacher supports.
 - 2024 PA State allocation: \$70.6 million

▶ TITLE III

- Title III of ESSA which provides around \$900 million to aid schools with instruction of non-English proficient or ESL students.
 - 2024 PA State allocation: \$19.6 million

▶ ADDITIONAL FEDERAL FUNDING THAT YOU MAY SEE IN YOUR DISTRICT'S BUDGET.

- Child Care and Development Block Grant
- School Based ACCESS Program
- Medical Assistance Reimbursement for Administrative Claiming (Quarterly) Program

A NOTE ABOUT FEDERAL SCHOOL VOUCHERS

- The Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) would be the first national private school voucher program and provide \$10 billion in funding for private school vouchers.
- The Act has been proposed not as an educational bill but as a change to the tax code so it can be part of a budget reconciliation bill that only needs 50 votes in the Senate.
- The Act creates a tax haven for wealthy people, providing generous tax credits — dollar-for-dollar reductions in taxes owed — to incentivize donors.

FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS WOULD BE “CATASTROPHIC”

Any funding cut will open up a hole in your school district budget that will need to be filled with

- A property tax increase
- Cuts in teachers, programs and services
- Both A and B

Students would lose classroom teachers and reading and math coaches and specialists who work with students who are struggling, special education teachers and aides, mental health professionals and nurses. It would mean larger class sizes for all students and cuts in programs and services unrelated to special education and Title I.

▶ THE BLOCK GRANT SCAM

- We’ve seen this playbook before—block grants that let politicians slash education funding with no accountability. That means fewer resources, larger class sizes, and more kids left behind.
- Dismantling the Department of Education will severely harm kids and families, and block grants are a scam that offer no viable solution.
- Block grants hand states a blank check with no federal oversight, allowing politicians to redirect education funds however they want—even away from schools.
- That means less money for public education, fewer resources for students, and no accountability when states shortchange kids..
- This scam will leave struggling schools even worse off, depriving students—especially those in underfunded urban, rural, and suburban communities—of the support they need to succeed.

▶ WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY

Find your Member of Congress and cut through the noise to support your local public schools.

- Google Find My Legislator PA
- Enter your address

Call their office with a script:

“I am <name of congressional rep.’s> constituent and I am calling to ask him to protect 100% of federal funding that supports public schools and higher education in Pennsylvania.

We did not elect <name of congressional rep> to go to Washington to cut funding from our schools and communities.”

▶ SOURCES

1 Education Law Center

2 How Dismantling the US Department of Education Would Directly Impact Students with Disabilities, February 2025, Education Law Center PA.

3 Economic Policy Institute How Dismantling the US Department of Education Would Directly Impact Students with Disabilities, February 2025, Education Law Center PA.

4 How Dismantling the US Department of Education Would Directly Impact Students with Disabilities, February 2025, Education Law Center PA.

5 Fiscal Year 2023-FY 2025 President’s Budget State Tables for the U.S. Department of Education | U.S. Department of Education