

The Impacts Of Federal Funding Decisions On PA's Education Landscape



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Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure elected officials adopt and implement a pro-public education agenda. To that end, we advocate for sound education policy and build and mobilize the public will to ensure that support for quality public education and an opportunity to learn for all children is a top priority for key decision makers.

Our Work

- Ed Voters is Pennsylvania's only statewide public education policy and advocacy organization.
- We educate individuals, organizations, and our statewide network about issues impacting public education.
- We train advocates through Zoom and in-person meetings and create opportunities for advocates to engage decision makers.
- We create fact sheets and write research briefs to support advocacy efforts.



Overview

1. Provide a high-level overview of what the US Department of Education does and public school funding that funding that is at risk
2. What is an Executive Order?
3. What is the US Department of Education and what does it do?
4. Major K-12 federal funding streams
5. Finding your district's federal funding
6. A note about national vouchers
7. A note about higher education
8. What you can do today



A note to consider before we begin...

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 appropriations 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?

- EO's 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.

Source: Education Law Center PA

***For detailed federal updates, we recommend [signing up for the Ed Counsel emails.](#)



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Eliminating the US Department of Education?

The US Department of Education is a creation of Congress so it cannot be eliminated without an act of Congress. However, absent congressional action eliminating USED, the Administration can, and likely will, take significant actions that could severely incapacitate it.

On 3/11/25, USED announced a major reduction in force (RIF) that, together with other recent employment actions, reduces the agency's workforce by nearly 50%.



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Dismantling the US Department of Education

The recent massive reduction in force (RIF) of half of the staff in U.S. Department of Education implemented by the Trump Administration, effectively shutters the agency and guts its ability to support public schools. The order will immediately trigger mass layoffs, with thousands of Department of Education employees losing their jobs overnight.

Federal education programs will be thrown into chaos, key funding streams will be left in limbo, and schools across the country will face uncertainty about the resources they rely on. With no staff to administer critical programs, states and districts will be forced to navigate a funding crisis on their own, leaving millions of students at risk—especially those in underfunded communities.



What does the US Department of Education (USED) 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. The agency also collects and provides the data that helps identify both problems and progress and that provides educators and families with information about what works, for whom, and under what circumstances.



What does the US Department of Education (ED) do?

Enforcing civil rights law through the Office of Civil Rights.

USED is the largest investigator of complaints nationwide regarding discrimination in schools. During the last year, USED received more than 22,000 complaints of discrimination, with discrimination based on disability a leading cause of the complaints. USED investigates incidents of discrimination, seeks resolutions to ensure equal access for students, and issues decisions when schools perpetuate discriminatory actions.

Without USED, millions of students and the families who advocate for them would not only lose the oversight and leadership of a dedicated federal agency to turn to when discrimination occurs, but state and local enforcement would be significantly weakened, leaving parents with little recourse to protect the rights of their children.

Source: [How Dismantling the US Department of Education Would Directly Impact Students with Disabilities, February 2025, Education Law Center PA.](https://www.edlawcenter.org/resource/dismantling-us-department-education-would-directly-impact-students-disabilities)



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What does the US Department of Education (ED) do?

Funding

USED provides crucial funding for public K–12 schools, narrowing some of the huge gaps between needed resources and state and local revenue. Specifically, the USED provides funding for low-income children through [Title I funds](#) and funding for special education through [IDEA programs](#). These resources help balance the scales of school funding, as high-poverty districts often get less funding from local sources, which rely heavily on property taxes.

The USED also administers crucial programs—like Pell grants and loans—that make college attendance possible for those who are not rich.

Source: [Economic Policy Institute](#)



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What does the US Department of Education (USED) do?

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)

USED is the agency ultimately responsible for ensuring that individual school districts and charter schools comply with the IDEA. USED is the only agency directly responsible for ensuring state and local compliance with the IDEA. USED provides essential guidance to states and schools about how to implement and comply with the law, particularly when there are unexpected changes impacting schools.

USED also works to ensure that these funds go to programs that will have the greatest benefit for students with disabilities and students who are disadvantaged. Without an agency with education expertise determining funding, it is unclear how funding would be allocated or whether it would be maintained.

Source: [How Dismantling the US Department of Education Would Directly Impact Students with Disabilities, February 2025, Education Law Center PA.](https://www.edlawcenter.org/resource/dismantling-us-department-education-would-directly-impact-students-disabilities)



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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!



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Recent Congressional Testimony

“The executive order reveals utter disregard for the Department’s core functions, which are to support states’ and school districts’ efforts to provide educational access and opportunity, equity, and excellence for students and families across the nation and to ensure that states and districts comply with key federal laws including those that protect civil rights...

“The only thing the Trump administration would be “returning” us to is a time throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries when the federal government didn’t provide coordinated aid or support, when many students were left out of public education altogether, when higher education was out of reach for all but a few, and when states and districts – no matter how cash-strapped, no matter how uneven their commitment to embracing integration and equal access for all students – were left to their own devices.”

Source: [Statement from Education Law Center Executive Director Robert Kim on Trump Executive Order to Dismantle the U.S. Department of Education](#)



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PA relies on the US Dept. of Education for \$2.8 BILLION worth of grants

The Department of Education in PA:

- \$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

*Source: [Fiscal Year 2023-FY 2025 President's Budget State Tables for the U.S.](#)
[Department of Education | U.S. Department of Education](#)



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PA relies on the US Dept. of Education for \$2.8 BILLION worth of grants

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



PA relies on the US Dept. of Education for \$2.8 BILLION worth of grants

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



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PA relies on the US Dept. of Education for \$2.8 BILLION worth of grants

The **\$1.4 billion Perkins V grant program**, which assists schools with providing career and technical education.

- 2024 PA State allocation: \$51 million



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PA relies on the US Dept. of Education for \$2.8 BILLION worth of grants

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



PA relies on the US Dept. of Education for \$2.8 BILLION worth of grants

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

Source: [Fiscal Year 2023-FY 2025 President's Budget State Tables for the U.S. Department of Education | U.S. Department of Education](#)



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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](#)



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.



How To Find Your Own District's Federal Funding Information

- Step Two - Find the 2024-2025 General Fund Budget

BASD General Budget Documents

2024-2025

 2024-2025 General Fund Budget



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How To Find Your Own District's Federal Funding Information

- Step One - Google “(your district here) district budget”
- We’re going to use Bethlehem Area SD as an example.



Bethlehem Area School District

<https://www.basdschools.org> › business-office › budget

⋮

BASD General Budget Documents

[BASD General Budget Documents](#) - Bethlehem Area School District. ... Past Budget Documents ·

Bethlehem Area School District Education Center. CONTACT. Bethlehem ...



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How To Find Your Own District's Federal Funding Information

- Step Three - Open the budget doc and scroll until you find the Revenue From Federal Sources section (8000's)

***This section will contain key federal revenue line items.

REVENUE FROM FEDERAL SOURCES	
8110 Payments for Federally Impacted Areas	60,000
8514 Title I - Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged	4,741,686
8515 Title II - Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals	530,382
8516 Title III - Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students	208,244
8517 Title IV - 21st Century Schools	592,284
8580 Child Care and Development Block Grants	201,765
8749 Other CARES Act Funding	250,000
8810 School-Based Access Medicaid Reimbursement Program (SBAP) Reimbursements (Access)	800,000
8820 Medical Assistance Reimbursement for Administrative Claiming (Quarterly) Program	108,000
REVENUE FROM FEDERAL SOURCES	
	\$7,492,361



A note about Medicaid cuts

- Proposals to cap Medicaid spending or reduce the federal match would shift the bulk of the mandated costs of providing health care coverage to States even though health needs and costs of care for children will remain the same or increase.
- The proposals to cut federal Medicaid funding that are being considered to find major cost savings for permanent federal tax cuts will actually force States and local communities to increase taxes and reduce or eliminate various programs and services, including other non-Medicaid services. These proposals will result in states cutting eligibility, services, and benefits for children and a rationing of health care for children.
- School-based health services are mandated on states and districts and those mandates do not cease simply because Medicaid funds are capped by Congress. As with many other unfunded mandates, capping Medicaid merely shifts the financial burden of providing services to the States.



Federal funding cuts would be “catastrophic”

Any federal 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.



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.

The proposed legislation explicitly [prohibits nearly all accountability measures](#) related to how voucher funds are spent.



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A note about higher education

USED Provides students with funding and support to pursue higher education, namely through

- Overseeing the Federal Application for Free Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Administration of the Pell Grant.
- Management of the federal student loan portfolio.
- **Total 2024 PA federal student loan volume: \$4.74 billion.**

For additional information on federal higher education issues, the [American Council on Education](#) is an excellent resource.



Congress is considering funding cuts so that they can pay for enormous tax breaks for the ultra wealthy.

House Passes G.O.P. Budget Teeing Up Enormous Tax and Spending Cuts

The vote cleared the way to enact major elements of President Trump's domestic agenda and escalated a bitter fight among Republicans over what federal programs to shrink to finance major tax cuts.

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Passage came after Speaker Mike Johnson, with assistance from President Trump, tried to put down revolts among centrist Republicans who feared that the plan would require deep cuts to Medicaid and conservatives who wanted more reductions. Kenny Holston/The New York Times



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Elected officials vote for cuts when they think their constituents won't notice them.

The cautionary tale of Tom Corbett.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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POLITICS > ELECTION



'A thousand cuts' and one big one: How Corbett's fate was sealed

In January 2011, with the effects of the recession lingering, the new Pennsylvania governor needed to find billions of dollars in his first budget.



Tom Corbett pauses as he concedes the election to Tom Wolf on Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014 in Pittsburgh.
(AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar)

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by Thomas Fitzgerald and Angela Couloumbis, Inquirer Staff Writers
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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: [Find Your Members in the U.S. Congress | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](https://www.congress.gov/members)
- Enter your address

1. Senator Fetterman, John



State: Pennsylvania

Party: Democratic

Served: Senate: 2023-Present

Contact: 142 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4254

[Contact](#)

2. Representative Mackenzie, Ryan



State: Pennsylvania

Party: Republican

Served: House: 2025-Present

Contact: 121 Cannon House Office Building
(202) 225-6411

[Contact](#)

3. Senator McCormick, David



State: Pennsylvania

Party: Republican

Served: Senate: 2025-Present

Contact: B40C Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-6324

[Contact](#)



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What you can do today

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 and to use the power of Congress to reinstate employees at the US Department of Education to ensure programs and funding we depend on will not be impacted.

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



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What you can do today

Take Action: Tell Congress to Protect Public Education



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Tell Congress to Protect Public Education!

Federal support for public education is facing a
serious threat.



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Thank you!
EdVotersPA.org



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