

DKG U.S. Forum

Resolution: Regarding the Proposed Elimination of the U.S. Department of Education

The DKG mission is to promote educational excellence and advance the professional interest of women in education. Its primary purposes include actions to inform members of current economic, social, political and educational issues so that they may participate effectively to support a sustainable world society, and to initiate, endorse and support desirable legislation in the interest of education and women educators.

The U.S. Forum finds that it is within the mission and purposes of the Society and the U.S. Forum to engage in discussions about and comment on the various bills currently before Congress to eliminate and/or defund the U.S. Department of Education.

Whereas, Public Education is the foundation of our democracy, serving 90% of all students in the United States.⁽¹⁾ Among these students, approximately 15% have learning differences that require additional support (7.5 million students ages 3-21); 34 % come from economically disadvantaged homes (16.5 million students and 56% of all US schools) and 10.6% (5.3 million students) come from homes where English is not the first language⁽²⁾; and

Whereas, Congress established the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on May 4, 1980, in the Department of Education Organization Act (Public Law 96-88 of October 1979) with core functions being ⁽³⁾:

1. Administer and coordinate educational programs specified by law that supplement and support students in K-12 and higher education, including Title Programs, IDEA, and Federal Student Loan programs;
2. Ensure compliance with federal laws governing these programs, including the Office of Civil Rights, to assure access to equal educational opportunity;
3. Promote improvements in the quality of education through Federally supported research, evaluation and training; and
4. Increase accountability of Federal education programs; and

Whereas, the current proposed legislation and executive orders calling for the closure of the Department of Education (ED) by the end of 2026 raise concerns about the sustainability of and fidelity with requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA), reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2025) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as funding for those programs⁽⁴⁾; and

Whereas, the current legislation and executive orders that call for placing the Office of Civil Rights under the Justice Department, cuts in staffing at OCR and the Department of Justice⁽⁵⁾ raise serious concerns about the ability of the Department of Justice to provide OCR services and funding at adequate and necessary levels; and

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Whereas, the provision of block grant awards to states removes requirements for using federal monies for targeted ESEA and IDEA populations and opens the door for funds to be diverted to other purposes ⁽⁶⁾; and

Whereas, the elimination of research and accountability functions of the U.S. Department of Education place efforts to have uniform high standards of compliance and educational outcomes across all states at-risk⁽⁷⁾; and

Whereas, dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education could negatively impact millions of students, particularly those in greatest need who rely on federally funded services and supports ⁽⁸⁾; and

Whereas, such legislation calling for the closure of the Department of Education and other actions are proposed without public disclosure of transition planning, research into consequences of the actions, or study of alternative plans for providing the important services and supports of the current U.S. Department of Education;

Be it resolved that the DKG U.S. Forum encourages U.S. Forum members, member states, and chapters to:

1. Engage members in a discussion regarding the implications of proposed elimination of the Department of Education (ED), study the proposed laws and executive orders (including funding bills), as well as any research and expert opinion on the consequences and/or benefits of closure of the U.S. Department of Education, and take allowable actions deemed appropriate to communicate their views to members of Congress, the Secretary of the Department of Education, other agencies impacted by the proposals, and the President of the United States; and

2. Request that Congress authorize and implement a detailed bi-partisan research effort into the consequences, potential harm and/or benefits of closure of the ED - including impact of funding cuts, block grant awards, changes to the student loan program, and compliance with federal legislation for students with disabilities and other at-risk populations - **prior** to the implementation of any legislation or executive orders that defund the U.S. Department of Education or reassign its duties to other departments or agencies; and

(3) Express to members of Congress, the Secretary of the Department of Education, and the President of the United States its support for the full funding of services in defense of equitable, inclusive, and well-resourced public education for all. Federal efforts in compliance with PL 96-88 on behalf of quality education must remain coordinated, focused and awarded the status appropriate to the importance of educating our children and citizenry, ensuring continuity of minimum standards across all states and territories.

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Footnotes:

- (1) Economic Policy Institute, March 21, 2025, Report on Public Education Data. p. 1
- (2) National Center for Education Statistics [nd], U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov>. Retrieved 2025, June 26.
- (3) Learning for Justice. "Understanding the Role and Responsibilities of the Department of Education," <https://www.learningforjustice.org/understanding-the-role-and-responsibilities-of-the-department-of-education>. Retrieved 7-5-25.
The language specified in the law states the following functions:
 1. Strengthen the Federal commitment to assuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual;
 2. Supplement and complement the efforts of states, the local school systems and other instrumentalities of the states, the private sector, public and private nonprofit educational research institutions, community-based organizations, parents, and students to improve the quality of education;
 3. Encourage the increased involvement of the public, parents, and students in Federal education programs;
 4. Promote improvements in the quality and usefulness of education through Federally supported research, evaluation, and sharing of information;
 5. Improve the coordination of Federal education programs;
 6. Improve the management of Federal education activities; and
 7. Increase the accountability of Federal education programs to the President, the Congress, and the public.
- (4) U.S. Congress (2025): HR 3345, HR 899, HR 369; The White House. "Executive Order 14242", 3-20-2025. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03improving-education-outcomes-by-empowering-parents-states-and-communities>; and OMB memo to Senator Susan Collins, 5-2-2025
- (5) U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (May 2, 2025) Memo on OCR staffing and funding cuts., OMB.
The Office of Civil Rights serves to protect students from discrimination (race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability), including enforcement of Title IX and Title VI. Approximately 20,000 complaints are filed annually with OCR. OCR also oversees Civil Rights Data Collection. Current budget proposals cut the Office of Civil Rights (already has sustained cuts in personnel) by 35% of its budget (a \$49 million cut).
- (6) Office of Management and Budget (2025, May 2). [Budget letter: IDEA and Title I consolidations, Migrant Education, and Streamline K-12 Programs,"
In the current HR1 budget and "skinny" budget: IDEA (individual disability \$) funding remains the same in terms of dollars but the programs are all folded into one. The result of consolidation is unknown at present but favors giving states flexibility in how they spend grants. Title I funding remains the same, but it is not actually full funding for every student eligible as that would be \$54 billion and proposed level is \$18.4. Migrant Education programs cut by \$428 million; K-12 grant funding is "simplified" into a block grant (18 non-specified programs and grants folding in) for a loss of \$4.5 billion through consolidation.
- (7) Institute for Higher Education Policy (2025, June 24). "Report on Institute of Education Sciences (IEWS) funding cuts."
The Institute of Educational Sciences shares research and evaluation information, statistics, and best practices to improve school performance. In February 2025, the Trump administration cut funding to the IES by 67%.
- (8) GovFacts (2025, February). "What the Department of Education does." GovFacts. 7/5/25.
Funding for K-12 schools through programs that serve 26 million students annually in almost 100,000 public schools and 32,000 private schools includes \$18.4 billion for schools serving low-income families through Title I and more than \$14 Billion for IDEA state funding (students with disabilities). Virtual elimination of TRIO and GEAR UP, both progression to college initiatives; TRIO serves 880,000 students now.