

March 12, 2025

Letter to Congress and New Administration: Elimination of U.S. Department of Education

On behalf of more than 28,000 members, the National Association for College Admission Counseling ([NACAC](#)) wishes to **express our unequivocal opposition to current efforts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education**. NACAC is a non-profit, non-partisan association comprised of high school counselors, college advisors, and college and university admission officers. Together, these college admission counseling professionals are committed to centering the well-being of students as they make the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

NACAC's first core value is to education, and our vision is that postsecondary education be accessible to all who seek it. In pursuit of our core values and our vision, NACAC is committed to ensuring that college admission counseling professionals are well supported in their efforts to serve students. Throughout its history, the U.S. Department of Education has played a significant role in ensuring that (1) disparities between states and districts are minimized so that all students are given a fair chance at success and (2) students of varying economic backgrounds have the opportunity to engage in postsecondary education, ranging from professional certification to bachelor's degrees and beyond.

Eliminating the Department of Education (ED) will—

- Eliminate funding for K-12 and postsecondary educational institutions in all 50 states and all 435 Congressional districts nationwide. For instance, Michigan's fifth Congressional district, represented by House Education and Workforce Committee Chair Rep. Tim Walberg, received nearly \$80 million in ED funding between FY2023 and FY2024. During a similar time period, Louisiana, home to Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee Chair Sen. Bill Cassidy, received \$3.7 billion in ED funding.
- Put [nearly 50 million](#) public K-12 students at risk of losing funding or services to augment state and local education funding. About 26 [million](#) of these students attend the [two-thirds](#) of all public schools that are eligible for ESSA Title I assistance.
- Threaten the ability of [more than 7 million](#) students with disabilities to receive support services required by the law, including services that can help them succeed in life after high school.
- Harm more than [7 million](#) students who benefit from the Pell grant to attend postsecondary education, including [700,000 students](#) who participate in Federal Work Study programs.
- Eliminate the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, which provide hundreds of thousands of secondary school students with academic preparation, student supports, and college advising services annually.
- Threaten worsened [student-to-counselor ratios](#), some already as high as 1,000:1, that prevent students from receiving [effective college advising](#), among other services.
- Eliminate funding through [ESSA Title IV-A](#) that states can use to provide college advising services for students.

Deconstructing and privatizing education in America is not the solution. More than 75 percent of Americans oppose cuts to federal education programs, and more than 70 percent of Americans support more federal funding for education (Committee for Education/Navigator Research [poll](#), November 2023). The administration and Congress should increase funding for public K-12 education, as 49.6 million students across the U.S. rely on public schools (U.S. Department of Education, [Condition of Education](#), May 2024). Public schools are also the only schools available for many low-income students and families living in rural areas ([Wall Street Journal](#), Nov. 9, 2023). Moreover, there are nearly 10 times as many students in public

schools as there are in private schools. To pretend that there will be capacity to serve the population of public school students and their families through private schools is a fantasy at best.

The value of K-12 and postsecondary education has never been clearer. According to the Federal Reserve Bank's [Anchor Economy Initiative](#), higher education institutions and hospitals provide more than \$1.7 trillion in economic benefits to the U.S economy. Moreover, individuals with a bachelor's degree currently earn wages that are [65 percent higher](#) than those with a high school diploma (College Board, 2023). Completion of a postsecondary degree correlates with more community engagement, increased political efficacy, and greater life satisfaction. The benefits to society include lower rates of incarceration, a larger tax base, and lower unemployment rates (College Board, 2023). In short, education is an individual and public good.

The U.S. Department of Education occupies a critical role in supporting states, students, and families. Given the vast expanse of America's educational landscape, including the interstate nature of postsecondary education and the essential enforcement of federal civil rights laws and laws protecting students with disabilities, the need for a centralized administration is what led to the establishment of ED as a cabinet-level agency. Education is critical for America's future and warrants recognition at the highest levels of government, even given the responsibility that states maintain for policymaking and funding. Eliminating the infrastructure of ED will make it orders of magnitude more difficult to administer programs and services that extend to all corners of American society, from pre-school to K-12 to higher education. This ultimately will threaten millions of students, educators, and families with unacceptable disruptions to their lives and well-being.

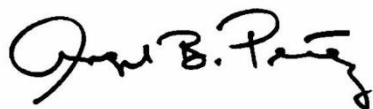
Upon signing the "Department of Education Organization Act" in 1979, the late president Jimmy Carter [observed](#) that "education is our most important national investment." He also noted:

The time has passed when the Federal Government can afford to give second-level, part-time attention to its responsibilities in American education. If our Nation is to meet the great challenges of the 1980's, we need a full-time commitment to education at every level of government—Federal, State, and local.

The challenges President Carter spoke of remain and will not be solved by diminishing the national commitment to education. Regardless of one's ideological views about the performance and function of the Department of Education, there is no doubt that moving away from our national commitment to education will begin a long and painful descent toward the erosion of America's educational, civic, political, and economic institutions.

We urge you in the strongest possible terms to oppose eliminating or deconstructing the U.S. Department of Education.

Sincerely,



Angel B. Pérez
CEO, National Association for College Admission Counseling