



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on March 5, 2025

New Education Secretary Signals End Is Near for the Department

The Senate confirmed Linda McMahon as the new secretary of the Department of Education on Monday. That same day, she [announced](#) plans for the department's "final mission."

One of President Donald Trump's many campaign promises included eliminating the federal Education Department. Conservatives have had the agency in their crosshairs since Democratic President Jimmy Carter created it by signing the Department of Education Organization Act into law in 1979. Ronald Reagan's campaign promise to eliminate it came to naught for multiple reasons, including his party's failure to win control of both chambers of Congress.



AP Images
Linda McMahon

But advocates of eliminating the department are more hopeful that this time will be different. Republicans control the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the Trump administration has moved at breakneck speed and with unprecedented aggression to achieve its goals. Perhaps it's telling that Trump nominated not someone with significant education experience for this role, but a co-founder of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE).

End the Ed?

McMahon sent a letter to her new employees signaling the department will be shuttered if she and her boss can get their way:

My vision is aligned with the President's: to send education back to the states and empower all parents to choose an excellent education for their children. ... In coming months, we will partner with Congress and other federal agencies to determine the best path forward to fulfill the expectations of the President and the American people. ... Our job is to respect the will of the American people and the President they elected, who has tasked us with accomplishing the elimination of bureaucratic bloat here at the Department of Education — a momentous final mission — quickly and responsibly.

"Staff members last week were offered a \$25,000 buyout to resign 'in advance of a very significant Reduction in Force,'" [according](#) to *The Wall Street Journal*. This explains McMahon's statement in the letter saying, "The Department of Education's role in this new era of accountability is to restore the rightful role of state oversight in education and to end the overreach from Washington. This restoration will profoundly impact staff, budgets, and agency operations here at the Department."



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Workers at the department called the email a “power grab” focused on privatization at the expense of children with disabilities and from low-income families, *The Guardian* [reported](#).

Only an act of Congress can fully eliminate the department, but earlier media reports say the Trump administration plans to hollow it out in the meantime.

McMahon was confirmed by a 51-45 vote. During her confirmation, she swung between two major ideas — restructuring the department, or closing it. She also vowed to fight antisemitism in higher education and get rid of males from female sports and locker rooms.

Vehicle for “Transgender” Ideology

During Joe Biden’s presidency, transgender advocates made significant inroads into the institutions underpinning American society, including education. One of President Trump’s most appealing campaign promises was that he would rid America of such lunacy. He has kept this promise, evidenced by several actions. He signed an executive order banning men who suffer delusions of being the other sex from women’s sports. And his Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has banned “transgender” people in the military.

The Education Department has been utilized as a vehicle for radical cultural transformation, including attempts to normalize gender dysphoria. As Christopher Rufo has [noted](#), one of the department’s main functions is administering “ideological production, which includes an array of programs, grants, civil rights initiatives, and third-party NGOs that create left-wing content to push on local schools.” Rufo is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a board member of New College of Florida, and the author of *America’s Cultural Revolution: How the Radical Left Conquered Everything*.

In addition to ideological production, the Education Department also administers college student loans and grants, as well as K-12 funding. Government schools rely on federal funding for anywhere from 8 to 15 percent of their revenue.

Rufo’s Plan

Rufo, who believes the left-wing ideological regime poses an existential threat to the United States, suggests breaking the department into pieces and ultimately shutting it down. The department should first spin off student loans and grants to an independent financial entity:

The federal government currently backstops \$1.6 trillion in student loans and issues another [\\$110 billion](#) in student aid each year. This is an enormous portfolio that will require a devoted set of administrators, risk analysts, and cost-cutters. These professionals should reform the student-loan portfolio, shifting as much of it as possible back to the private market and restricting the total number of loans, which is partially responsible for administrative bloat and the student-debt crisis.

Next, the Trump administration, in cooperation with Congress, should block the Education Department’s K-12 funding programs to the states. The department doles out about \$100 billion to state governments and local districts annually. This pile of cash comes with strings attached. While Rufo suggests dividing up the funds by state population and dispensing it without strings attached, it seems to undermine the idea of removing *all* ties between the federal government and local school districts.

Thirdly, and this part is crucial, Trump needs to shut down the Education Department’s centers of



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ideological production and fire the bureaucrats who run them:

The department maintains a sprawling network of ideological centers through its research programs, as well as a vast array of NGOs, which survive on department funding and promote left-wing identity activism. These groups have become hotbeds of progressive identity politics, promoting theories of “systemic racism” and the idea that men can turn into women. Such activities do not serve the public good and do not deserve public subsidy, especially under a conservative president who promised to put an end to critical race theory and gender ideology in the federal government.

Government Schools’ Failing Grade

The U.S. public school system is a failure by all rational standards. There are zero academic subjects in which more than half of America’s public “education” students are proficient. That’s [according](#) to the government’s own assessment, the Nation’s Report Card.

In January, the Department of Education released a statement in response to the latest dismal report card. [It said](#), in part:

Despite the billions of dollars that the federal government invests in K-12 education annually, and the approximately \$190 billion in federal pandemic funds, our education system continues to fail students across the nation. We must do better for our students. The Trump Administration is committed to reorienting our education system to fully empower states, to prioritize meaningful learning, and [to] provide universal access to high-quality instruction. Change must happen, and it must happen now.

Despite what Trump says, the U.S. is not dead last in K-12 education. But it is far lower than it should be. The Program for International Student Assessment, administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), tests 15-year-olds around the world. It placed the U.S. 16th out of 81 in science. American students did much worse in math, ranking 34th. All academic categories display the same, dismal results.

Meanwhile, funding for “public education” has consistently increased, going from 4.7 percent of GDP in the 1980s to 6.1 percent in 2024.

Public Education’s Real Agenda

For those who know the true agenda behind “public education,” the perpetual academic deterioration and the infusion of left-wing ideology we’re seeing make sense. *The New American* has [pointed out](#) that the template for today’s failing school system was really an indoctrination program designed by atheistic socialists such as John Dewey and Horace Mann. We have published [reports](#) highlighting the much higher learning levels of 19th century youth compared to those of today.

Charlotte Iserbyt, who served as the senior policy advisor in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in Reagan’s Education Department, wrote a book titled *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America*. In it, she makes the case that the American public education system is really a conditioning program designed to create socialist-minded Americans who will not resist the eventual submergence of America into a one-world socialistic government. Her book tracks how education has



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been infused from decade to decade with degenerate and socialist-oriented curricula.

The New American magazine has for years taken the constitutionally aligned stance that the federal government has no place in education.

If you're looking for alternative options to public schools, we encourage you to look into our affiliate online classical school, [FreedomProject Academy](#).



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