

Protect the U.S. Department of Education

What's Happening

Since taking office in 2025, the Trump administration has **reduced the US Department of Education staff by 50 percent**, risking the federal government's ability to ensure equitable educational access for students with disabilities (Center for American Progress [CAP], 2025).

On July 14, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the administration may continue its restructuring and downsizing plans while related litigation proceeds (NPR, Cory Turner, 2025)

Cuts have occurred in the offices of **Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), and Civil Rights (OCR)** (CAP, 2025).

Quick Facts

- Grants supporting teacher preparation programs in 14 states have seen **\$30 million** in federally funded grants cancelled. (Ed Week, 2025)
- Proposed **\$4.5 billion in funding cuts** for Title I & K-12 in FY 2026 (K-12 Dive, 2025)
- Proposed **research budget cuts in education up to 67%** (Center for American Progress, 2025).
- November 18, 2025, the administration taken significant **steps to fully dismantle the US Department of Education** by moving responsibilities to other departments (e.g., USA, Today, 2025)



The US Department of Education **does NOT** control state instruction or what is taught in schools.

The US Department of education **DOES** ensure equitable access to education for students with disabilities.

What's at Risk

Impacts of restructuring the U.S. Department of Education

1. **Weakens IDEA enforcement of education as a civil right and reframes disability as a medical issue**, undoing decades of progress in inclusion and access.
2. **Undermines the principle of inclusion** embedded in IDEA, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and Section 504.
3. **Reduces accountability** for schools supporting students with disabilities as civil-rights enforcement offices are downsized.

Sources (The Arc, 2025; PBS, 2025; NPR, 2025)



How Pennsylvanians Can Act

- **Contact state and federal lawmakers** to oppose the transfer of IDEA to HHS and protect funding for special education, research, and teacher development.
- **Share your story** with SJAC about how IDEA supports affect you as an educator, parent, or student.
- **Stay informed** about updates from SJAC, The Arc of the U.S., and advocacy groups supporting disability rights in education.