

THE PRESIDENT'S FY27 BUDGET REQUEST: Cuts, Consolidations, and Consequences for Education

The President's FY27 budget request proposes \$75.7 billion for the U.S. Department of Education — a \$3.2 billion (4.1%) cut below the FY26 enacted level. The request includes some of the largest domestic spending reductions in recent history, targeting programs that working families rely on. While the Administration claims to be restoring fiscal discipline, the request comes alongside a proposed 40% increase in military spending, underscoring that these education cuts reflect policy priorities, not budget necessity.

The FY27 request level-funds Title I and increases funding for IDEA and Pell, but simultaneously advances sweeping changes that weaken targeted federal investments in K–12 education. It eliminates programs serving vulnerable student groups, consolidates core formula and competitive grants into a severely underfunded block grant, and proposes dramatic reductions to programs that make higher education more affordable. Taken together, the FY27 budget continues the Administration's broader effort to reduce the federal role in education and dismantle the Department's capacity to carry out its statutory responsibilities.

ELIMINATING CORE FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Although Title I is level-funded, the budget request eliminates several critical K–12 programs that provide targeted support for students facing the greatest barriers to academic success, including:

- English Language Acquisition
- Migrant Education
- Native Hawaiian Education
- Full-Service Community Schools
- Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) Grants
- Comprehensive Centers

Eliminating these programs directly undermines the federal government's responsibility to ensure equity and opportunity for underserved students. Notably, the budget request seeks to consolidate Alaska Native education into the "MEGA" block grant while eliminating funding for Native Hawaiian Education entirely - a decision that appears less grounded in student need than in political retribution and strategy.

The budget proposal increases IDEA funding overall, but consolidates nearly all targeted IDEA programs into Part B state grants. This streamlining approach risks undermining early childhood services, parent supports, and personnel development - areas that are already under-resourced nationwide.

MEGA BLOCK GRANT: A \$6.5 BILLION CUT DISGUISED AS "FLEXIBILITY"

The FY27 budget proposes a new Make Education Great Again (MEGA) program, **consolidating 17 formula and competitive grant programs into a single block grant funded at \$2 billion.** This represents a 70% cut compared to the combined FY26 appropriations for the programs being consolidated.

The Administration claims MEGA will reduce red tape and prioritize literacy and numeracy, but the proposal does not reflect a serious federal commitment to academic improvement. Instead, it consolidates and defunds long-standing federal programs that were designed to deliver targeted resources to specific student populations, including funding for **literacy, rural education, homeless children, after-school programs, magnet schools, school safety, and family engagement centers.**

While the request requires states to reserve 25% of MEGA funding for literacy and 25% for math, these set-asides occur within a significantly reduced funding pool - meaning that even protected priorities receive fewer resources than under current law. Ultimately, the MEGA proposal would allow states to spread limited funds across many competing priorities, risking that the most vulnerable and least politically powerful students will be shortchanged.

EROSION OF DATA AND ASSESSMENTS

The budget eliminates all funding for state assessments, instead folding it into the MEGA block grant. This is a significant threat to assessment implementation and federal accountability. If Congress provides insufficient funding for assessments, or if states choose not to prioritize assessment spending within MEGA, federal assessment support could effectively be zeroed out. Under ESSA's noncompliance provisions, inadequate federal funding could trigger a situation where states are no longer expected to fully meet federal assessment requirements. This would eliminate one of the most critical tools parents and policymakers rely on to understand student achievement, identify achievement gaps, and hold schools accountable for serving all students.

The budget also slashes NAEP funding by nearly 30% and cuts the overall budget for the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) by 67%, eliminating key functions such as Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS). These cuts would severely weaken the nation's capacity to conduct independent research, evaluate federal programs, and support evidence-based policymaking.

HIGHER EDUCATION: DEEP CUTS TO ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

The FY27 budget proposal increases discretionary funding to address the Pell Grant shortfall and maintains the maximum Pell award at \$7,395. However, it also eliminates nearly all other programs that help students enroll in and graduate from college – **cutting overall higher education funding by 78%**. The proposal eliminates vital programs that support low-income students, first-generation students, and students who need additional academic and financial assistance to complete college, including: SEOG, TRIO, GEAR UP, TQP, CCAMPIS, and Hawkins Centers of Excellence. The budget also proposes **major reductions to Federal work study** and attempts to shift costs to employers, a change that would likely dramatically reduce the availability of work-study jobs that allow students to pay for college.

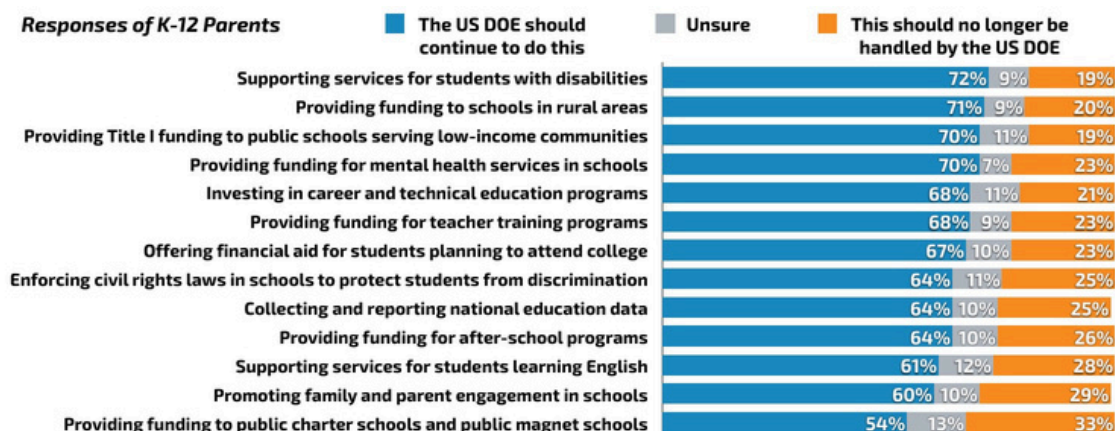
DISMANTLING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The FY27 request continues the Administration's effort to dismantle the Department of Education by shifting programs to other agencies, gutting research infrastructure, and dramatically reducing staffing. **The request formally shifts Career and Technical Education funding to the Department of Labor**, attempting to codify the Administration's first interagency agreement (IAA) and move major education functions outside the Department of Education, despite statutory authorization placing CTE within USED.

The budget request also codifies the extreme layoffs over the past year, reducing spending on personnel compensation by 75% and leaving only 231 employees to support USED program administration, compared to 1,327 in FY25. The budget also proposes a 35% cut to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), reducing staffing from 530 FTE in FY25 to just 271.

PARENTS ARE CLEAR:

There is bipartisan support for continued investments in the Department of Education, including targeted funding for students with disabilities, rural communities, Title I, and mental health services.



Q. Here are some things that the US Department of Education (DOE) has been doing. For each of the following, please indicate if you think it is something the US DOE should continue to do, or if you think it should no longer be handled by the US DOE.
N=1,517 registered voters nationwide, with a base sample of 1,000 voters and an oversample achieving a total of 709 voters who are K-12 parents, conducted March 13-18, 2025

