

President Trump is Illegally Dismantling the Department of Education

Why do we need a Department of Education (ED)?

It is explicitly stated in the *Department of Education Organization Act* that the purpose of creating ED was because a “dispersion of education programs across a large number of federal agencies ha[d] led to fragmented, duplicative, and often inconsistent federal policies relating to education.” The Trump Administration’s actions to dismantle ED have been extremely inefficient and wasteful but have also resulted in inconsistent enforcement of federal education policy.

Moreover, a core function of ED is to protect and defend students’ civil rights. The federal government must retain its central role in enforcing students’ civil rights because, historically, when states had no federal oversight, we saw unchecked segregation in public schools, a refusal to educate students with disabilities, and a lack of resources for low-income communities.

What steps has the Trump Administration already taken to dismantle ED?

Mass Layoffs: Since March 2025, ED has [reportedly](#) sent layoff notices to 1,400 employees. Another 600 employees, faced with the threat of layoffs, retired or accepted voluntary separation incentives. The department also fired about 100 employees who were still serving in their probationary period. All told, ED lost about half of its total workforce.

Closed Headquarters: On March 16, 2026, the Administration [announced](#) it would transfer ED's Lyndon B. Johnson headquarters building to the Department of Energy.

Interagency Agreements (IAAs): As of June 16, 2026, ED has entered into [14 interagency agreements](#), transferring 148 programs to six other federal agencies outside ED. Significantly, as part of these agreements, ED is offloading the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and core functions of the Federal Student Aid Office (FSA).

Waivers: As of June 16, 2026, ED has granted [waivers](#) to Iowa, Louisiana, and Indiana, allowing them to undermine federal oversight of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), which specifically directs funding to high-poverty schools, English as a Second Language programs, afterschool and summer learning, and more, and requires states to meet certain accountability standards.

How has dismantling ED harmed students?

In February 2026, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that ED paid OCR investigators up to [\\$38 million](#) not to work.

In March 2026, GAO reported that the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) had stopped key oversight of student loan servicers, leaving [43 million](#) borrowers without sufficient support. Without proper oversight, borrowers may receive inaccurate information or be placed in the wrong repayment plans.

In April 2026, the Senate HELP Committee released a report that in 2025, OCR [reached zero resolution agreements](#) involving sexual harassment, sexual violence, seclusion or restraint, racial harassment, or discriminatory school discipline — despite more than 2,700 pending cases.