

# STAND UP FOR STUDENTS AND OPPOSE THE DISMANTLING OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Nearly 50 years ago, the Department of Education was created to ensure that all children in the United States had access to a quality public education, regardless of disability, race or family income. The Department of Education is the only federal agency committed exclusively to children, and it is an essential force for ensuring that all our country's students receive a well-supported and equitable public education. **The Department of Education** supports robust educational opportunities for nearly 26 million low-income students and 7.5 million students with disabilities across our country.

On March 20th the president signed an Executive Order directing Education Secretary Linda McMahon to "take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education and return authority over education to the States and local communities." And earlier in the month, the administration announced the layoffs of nearly 50% of Department of Education staff.

The Department of Education is responsible for flagging and offering funding and guidance for challenges in the system, such as the youth mental health crisis and is also the most reliable reporter of homelessness among American students. It keeps Congress apprised of new trends and research on this and many other issues that curb student success. The gutting and dismantling of the Department of Education will have profound and potentially life-long impacts for tens of millions of our children. For example, when children with disabilities are not receiving the support they need from their school district or state, their parents can turn to the Department of Education for help. But that may no longer be the case going forward.

While the administration maintains that the slashing of resources and dismantling of the Department of Education will return power to the States, this is already the case because it is States that determine how and what they teach. Federal dollars make up just a fraction of public schools' funding — between 6% and 13%, according to a **2018 report** from the U.S. Government Accountability Office. But while federal resources are modest in size, they play a critical role. They help schools that are unable to on their own provide a quality public education to kids living in rural parts of our country, other low-income communities, and as mentioned above, for children with disabilities. And there are no plans to provide those resources to States once they are eliminated at the federal level.

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## Take Action:

1. Write an email to your **Representative** and **Senators** and urge them to stand up for children and publicly oppose attempts to dismantle the Department of Education and cut its funding.
2. Please consider personalizing your message using examples from above or from your own life. (You might mention the importance of supporting students with disabilities/protecting students civil rights/analyzing data around students/supporting English Learners.)
3. Ask for a response.
4. Don't forget to share what you are doing on your social media channels and to ask your friends and family to take action as well.