



Press Release



Michigan Department of Education Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Order to Abolish U.S. Education Department, Cuts in Staff and Funding Are Harmful to Children
Focus Should Be on What's Best for Students

LANSING, MI – The federal government should focus on supporting teaching and learning for children at the local level rather than the president's ill-advised plan to abolish the U.S. Department of Education, Michigan education leaders said.

The education leaders are responding to an executive order that President Donald Trump issued today that is the first part of his effort to eliminate the federal department. Congress would need to approve eliminating the U.S. Department of Education for the abolition to become reality.

Today's executive order follows earlier action by the president to drastically reduce the size of the workforce at the U.S. Department of Education.

"As educators, we must continue to keep our eyes on our most important goal—educating and supporting our children," said State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice. "At the end of the day, I do not believe the U.S. Department of Education will be shuttered. Congress and the American people will not allow it. What's more concerning is the president's effort to cut federal funds and the effect on students with disabilities, poor children, children experiencing homelessness, English learners, and other children who require more funding to local school districts to educate and support. The federal government already underfunds education, particularly for our students with disabilities."

State Board of Education President Dr. Pamela Pugh criticized President Trump's efforts to abolish the federal education department.

“Sadly, President Trump cares more about scoring political points than he cares about our children,” Dr. Pugh said. “I will continue to fight his efforts to take actions that will be harmful to Michigan’s students. The federal government needs to do more—not less—to help all children learn and be physically and mentally healthy so they can achieve their dreams. I will continue to work with anyone in Michigan or Washington, D.C. who wants the best for our children and to vehemently oppose anyone who does not have our students’ best interests at heart.”

State Rep. Regina Weiss of Oak Park, a former educator, is also standing up for children.

“The Trump administration’s move to unilaterally dismantle the federal Department of Education is a direct assault on our schools and services for children across the country,” Rep. Weiss said. “The administration is putting critical education funding that our most vulnerable students depend on at risk, including students from low-income families and students with disabilities. All of these services and many more could be impacted and potentially eliminated by this rash action. I will fight against these extreme measures and work to ensure that our tax dollars continue to come back home to Michigan to serve our kids.”

Terrence Martin, president of the American Federation of Teachers Michigan, said: “President Trump’s decision to attempt to eliminate the Department of Education poses a significant threat to the educational landscape in Michigan and the entire country. This move undermines the vital support systems that ensure equitable access to quality education for all children. Union members, who play a critical role in educating and advocating students, will face increased challenges in fighting for adequate resources for classrooms. Without federal oversight, we risk widening the gap in educational opportunities, particularly for our most vulnerable populations. It is imperative that we stand together to protect the future of education and uphold the rights of both students and educators.”

Chandra Madaffer, Michigan Education Association President & CEO and a teacher from Oakland County, said: “Having begun my career as a special education teacher, I know firsthand the diverse needs of learners — and the importance of the funding that flows from the U.S. Department of Education. Eliminating federal funding, which makes up 15% of our special education budget, would be devastating for the over 200,000 Michigan students receiving special education services. From funding for low-income rural and urban schools to support for students seeking a higher education, the U.S. Department of Education is essential to student success in our state.”