

THE STATE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION IN 2026

During his 2024 Presidential Campaign, President Donald Trump made several campaign promises to address several issues in our education system.

The Trump administration has:

- ➔ [Pledged](#) to promote pro-American curriculum and eliminate what he called "Marxist" and "left-wing indoctrination" from K-12 classrooms. **Status: Enacted**
- ➔ [Pledged](#) to "fire" accreditors he deemed ideologically biased ("radical Left" accreditors) and replace them with ones enforcing higher academic standards and less political conformity. **Status: Enacted**
- ➔ [Pledged](#) to crack down on campus protests and restore what he characterized as a safe, pro-American environment on campuses. **Status: In Progress**
- ➔ [Proposed](#) using federal funding preferences to incentivize states to adopt "complete curriculum transparency," making all teaching materials publicly available to parents. **Status: In Progress**



Journalism at Work

Following the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack against Israel, college students began to file complaints with the Department of Education alleging that these colleges weren't taking action to protect Jewish students. These complaints were [shared](#) with Campus Reform, raising their profiles and resulting in the launch of at least 16 federal investigations.

The State of the Federal Government's Role in Education in 2026

Executive Summary

During his 2024 Presidential Campaign, President Donald Trump made several campaign promises to address several issues in our education system. After his election, efforts have been made by the Trump Administration to ensure that these campaign promises are turned into government policy.

President Trump and his team at the Department of Education have pursued efforts such as expanding school choice, stripping federal funding from schools utilizing CRT, banning men from participating in women's sports, revoking funding for universities accused of advocating for DEI policies or allowing antisemitic activity on campus, and reversing Biden-era rules expanding Title XI beyond its original definitions. Congress has also passed the One Big Beautiful Bill, which included education updates including reforming the student loan system, and establishing a national tax credit for all education opportunities, including homeschooling and private schooling.

Thanks to court challenges or incomplete implementation, the Trump Administration has not made progress on several campaign promises, such as the elimination of tenure protections and parental mandates on gender identity transitions. Additionally, Congress introduced but has not passed legislation on education, including legislation prohibiting bias in school accreditors and expanding civil rights language to protect Jewish students from harassment on campuses.

Various organizations have worked to bring to light examples of antisemitism and efforts by bad actors in education, along with those who to continue using DEI policies. Others have managed to highlight these issues on multiple occasions, including the launch of at least 16 federal investigations into antisemitism on college campuses and posting footage of a university administrator admitting to utilizing DEI practices, after which she was dismissed.

K-12 Education Promises

- [Pledged](#) to shut down the federal Department of Education and return control to the states.
 - In Progress: President Trump [signed](#) an executive order on March 20, 2025, directing Education Secretary Linda McMahon to begin dismantling the department and return authority to states. Congressional action will be [needed](#) to completely shut down the department.
- [Promised](#) every parent the right to choose their child's school, including public, private, charter, or homeschool, using federal funding as leverage for states that adopt school choice policies.
 - In Progress: Trump [signed](#) an executive order on January 29, 2025, expanding school choice. Congress included a \$20 billion federal school voucher/tax credit program ("Education Freedom Tax Credit") in the "One Big Beautiful Bill" reconciliation package. As of early 2026, 29+ states have opted in or indicated interest; the program is set to launch January 1, 2027.

- [Pledged](#) to strip federal funding from any school or program "pushing Critical Race Theory, radical gender ideology, or other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content."
 - Enacted: President Trump [signed](#) Executive Order 14190 ("Ending Radical Indoctrination in K–12 Schooling") on January 29, 2025, threatening to pull federal funding from schools teaching CRT or gender ideology. The DOE has launched 100+ civil rights investigations into school districts.
- [Promised](#) to eliminate tenure protections for teachers, which President Trump characterized as shielding underperforming educators from accountability.
 - No Update: No notable federal action has been [taken](#) on this issue, since this promise appears to have been aimed at creating "funding preferences" for states that abolish teacher tenure. However, no such federal funding mechanism has been implemented
- [Pledged](#) to promote pro-American curriculum and eliminate what he called "Marxist" and "left-wing indoctrination" from K–12 classrooms.
 - Enacted: President Trump [signed](#) EO 14190 (Jan. 29, 2025), which explicitly directs schools to instill "patriotic admiration" for the nation. The DOE has [scrubbed](#) hundreds of guidance documents referencing DEI and "anti-American" ideologies.
- [Promised](#) to bar transgender female athletes from competing in girls' and women's sports at schools receiving federal funding.
 - Enacted: President Trump [signed](#) EO 14201 ("Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports") on February 5, 2025. The order directs that Title IX be interpreted to bar transgender female athletes from women's sports in schools receiving federal funding. The DOE has [used](#) this to investigate and threaten funding for non-compliant institutions, with several lawsuits ongoing.
- [Pledged](#) to mandate parental notification and consent before schools could recognize a child's gender transition or new identity.
 - In Progress: The Department of Education [instructed](#) schools that they cannot withhold gender identity information from parents, citing FERPA (federal student privacy law). No federal legislation has been implemented at this time.
- [Promised](#) legislation and executive action to give parents greater control over curriculum, school board decisions, and what their children are taught.
 - Enacted: Multiple executive actions have been [signed](#), with both EO 14190 (Jan. 2025) and the March 20, 2025, executive order ("Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities") directly address expanding parental rights and returning educational control to families and local communities.
- [Pledged](#) to direct the Departments of Justice and Education to open civil rights investigations into school districts engaged in race-based discrimination, including against Asian Americans.

- In Progress: The DOE's Office for Civil Rights has [opened](#) 100+ investigations, and reporting from ProPublica and NPR reveals the administration is [investigating](#) DEI programs, transgender policies, and alleged discrimination against students.
- [Proposed](#) using federal funding preferences to incentivize states to adopt "complete curriculum transparency," making all teaching materials publicly available to parents.
 - In Progress: Curriculum transparency was [included](#) as a goal in the March 2025 executive order but has not been implemented as a standalone federal funding requirement. States that have opted into the school choice tax credit program are expected to face transparency conditions, but formal rules have not yet been issued.

Higher Education Promises

- [Pledged](#) he would "reclaim" American universities from what he called "Marxist maniacs and lunatics," using the phrase repeatedly on the campaign trail.
 - In Progress: The Trump administration has [launched](#) an aggressive campaign against universities, including threatening to revoke federal funding for Harvard and other elite institutions over DEI programs, antisemitism, and campus protests. Harvard has been a primary target, with billions in federal grants frozen.
- [Promised](#) to dramatically raise taxes and fines on the large endowments of private universities, particularly those he accused of tolerating antisemitism or promoting "woke" ideology.
 - In Progress: Legislation [moving](#) through Congress, including The "One Big Beautiful Bill" reconciliation legislation includes tiered endowment excise tax increases (from 1.4% up to 21% for the largest endowments). The revenue is being discussed as part of school choice and American Academy funding.
- [Proposed](#) creating a federally-funded, tuition-free online university (the "American Academy") open to all American citizens, funded by revenue from taxing elite university endowments.
 - No Progress: No proposals have been [moved](#) forward towards the funding or creation of the American Academy.
- [Pledged](#) to "fire" accreditors he deemed ideologically biased ("radical Left" accreditors) and replace them with ones enforcing higher academic standards and less political conformity.
 - Enacted: Executive order signed and implementation underway with President Trump [signing](#) EO 14279 ("Reforming Accreditation to Strengthen Higher Education") on April 23, 2025, targeting two major accrediting agencies for investigation.
- [Promised](#) to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion offices at colleges receiving federal funding.
 - In Progress but Legally Contested: Trump [signed](#) EO 14173 ("Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity") on January 21, 2025, where the DOE declared all race-conscious programming illegal and threatened to pull funding within 14 days. As of February

2026, the original guidance was [effectively](#) killed by courts, though the administration continues to pursue DEI elimination through other legal tools (DOJ guidance, civil rights investigations).

- [Pledged](#) to crack down on campus protests and restore what he characterized as a safe, pro-American environment on campuses.
 - In Progress: Through a combination of executive orders [targeting](#) antisemitism, campus protest crackdowns, and the defunding/investigation of universities deemed non-compliant, the administration has aggressively pursued this agenda.
- [Promised](#) to oppose broad federal student loan forgiveness, calling it "very, very unfair" to those who already paid their debts.
 - Enacted: The Trump DOE [moved](#) to terminate Biden's SAVE plan (7.5 million borrowers) via a joint settlement with Missouri (Dec. 2025), with official guidance [issued](#) March 27, 2026, directing those borrowers to exit.
- [Pledged](#) to reverse Biden administration Title IX rules that extended protections to LGBTQ+ students, and reinstate the original sex-based definition.
 - Enacted: The Biden administration's 2024 Title IX rules were [vacated](#) by a federal court in January 2025 before Trump even acted. On January 31, 2025, Trump's DOE officially [reinstated](#) the 2020 Trump-era Title IX regulations, which define sex as biological and narrow LGBTQ+ protections.

Congressional Action

- In July 2025, Congress passed and President Trump signed into law the "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act, a reconciliation bill which included several updates to the education system in this country, including:
 - The National Tax Credit for donations to scholarship-granting organizations [allowing](#) families to use the scholarships for private K–12 school tuition, homeschooling, and other qualifying education expenses
 - An overhaul to the student loan system, which [included](#) eliminating the Biden-era SAVE income-driven repayment plan, saving an estimated \$307 billion.
 - Reforms for the Pell Grant, [including](#) tightening eligibility rules and restrictions on non-U.S. nationals receiving federal student aid.
- Congress has introduced or considered several pieces of legislation relating to education, including:
 - Accreditation for College Excellence Act (H.R. 2516), a bill [prohibiting](#) accrediting agencies from requiring colleges to adopt specific political, social, or ideological views as a condition of accreditation. It was reported favorably out of the House Education and Workforce Committee and awaits a House floor vote.
 - Preventing Antisemitic Harassment on Campus Act (S. 826), a bill [amending](#) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to explicitly prohibit religious discrimination (covering Jewish students) and

strengthening Higher Education Act enforcement against antisemitism on campuses. The bill has been introduced and referred to the Senate HELP Committee.

- Israel Anti-Boycott/Campus Access Bill (H.R. 4795), a bill [barring](#) universities receiving federal funds from participating in academic boycotts of Israel and require them to certify that students are not blocked from participating in academic programs in Israel. No further action has been taken after it was introduced.

Journalism At Work

As attacks have risen against individuals of the Jewish faith, various news outlets have worked behind the scenes to highlight the rise of antisemitism in our school systems.

- Following the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack against Israel, college students began to file complaints with the Department of Education alleging that these colleges weren't taking action to protect Jewish students. These complaints were [shared](#) with Campus Reform, raising their organizations profile and resulting in at least 16 federal investigations being launched.
- The Functional Government Initiative (FGI) [reported](#) the federal Head Start program reveals just how far it has deviated from its original purpose. Head Start no longer focuses on early childhood education and instead on early childhood indoctrination, pushing myriad politically charged issues, including divisive DEI rhetoric, onto young children.
- In 2025, The Trump administration cut \$210 million in federal funding to Princeton University after Campus Reform's Zachary Marschall [filed](#) a Title VI civil rights complaint alleging the school failed to address antisemitism following the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks. ICFS partners assisted with strategy, identifying institutions, and drafting the Title VI complaints Marschall filed, including the Princeton complaint.
- Undercover videos [filmed](#) by Accuracy in Media showed school officials telling AIM investigators that their institutions simply changed how they market and organize their DEI structures rather than completely dismantling them, despite state law and federal directives. These videos, filmed at University of Utah and Utah Tech University, were noticed by Protect the Public's Trust, who filed federal civil rights complaints against both schools.
- A university administrator in North Carolina at Charlotte [confessed](#) that she uses "finesse" to get around the Board of Governors' ban on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and discussed "covert" opportunities to keep doing DEI work. When confronted by AIM's investigators, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Assistant Director of Leadership & Community Engagement Jacqueline Sanders said she can't say that, but they've "renamed, we've reorganized, we've recalibrated, so to speak." The university issued a statement denying the accusations, but public [reporting](#) across North Carolina revealed the administrator had been fired.