

## Defunding Fed Ed: Which States Have the Most to Lose?



Trump administration efforts to defund federal education programs would [hurt red states](#) much more than blue ones.

The [share](#) of K12 funding provided by the federal government ranges from 23 percent in Mississippi to 7 percent in New York.

Overall, in 2021-22, [average federal education](#) spending was 17 percent in states that voted for Trump in 2024 versus 11 percent in states that voted for Harris.

That's partially because Title I, the largest federal K-12 education funding program (at over \$18 billion annually), prioritizes schools that serve larger shares of students from [low-income families](#). But the bigger factor driving this distribution is states' own levels of funding. Blue states can and do contribute more to fund their K-12 systems.

The Trump-voting states "are just lower wealth states and they don't have the same capacity to step in and make up that difference," NEPC director Kevin Welner told Axios. Common uses of Title I funding include teacher, paraprofessional, and instructional coach salaries, curricula, and professional development.

A [new tool](#) released by the Education Law Center, an NEPC partner, lets users tally up the potential losses by state.

While plans to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education have received a great deal of [attention](#), much of the potential impact would come not from the closure of the department

itself, but from reductions or changes to the funding it administers. [By law](#), any decision to close the department must be made by Congress and not by an executive order issued by the President.

“Moving program administration to other departments is going to be highly disruptive, if that happens,” Welner said. “But the bigger question is what Congress decides to do in response to any requests from the administration to cut these programs.”

[Project 2025](#), a conservative blueprint for the current administration’s first 180 days, proposed converting the current Title I funding into a no-strings-attached block grant to states, and then phasing it out entirely over the next decade. Along with that phase-out would be a phase-in of a major federal voucher program, starting at \$10 billion annually.

In the meantime, as the Trump administration continues to degrade the Education Department’s capacity through mechanisms such as shrinking staff and ending contracts, the pain will be felt disproportionately in states that helped put the administration in place. As NEPC Fellow Derek Black explained to [Education Week](#), “Massachusetts can walk away from Title I tomorrow and they will be OK. Alabama cannot. Mississippi cannot.”

## NEPC Resources on School Finance and Funding

This newsletter is made possible in part by support provided by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice: <http://www.greatlakescenter.org>

The National Education Policy Center (NEPC), a university research center housed at the University of Colorado Boulder School of Education, sponsors research, produces policy briefs, and publishes expert third-party reviews of think tank reports. NEPC publications are written in accessible language and are intended for a broad audience that includes academic experts, policymakers, the media, and the general public. Our mission is to provide high-quality information in support of democratic deliberation about education policy. We are guided by the belief that the democratic governance of public education is strengthened when policies are based on sound evidence and support a multiracial society that is inclusive, kind, and just. Visit us at: <http://nepc.colorado.edu>