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**April 21, 2025**

(119-03)

## U.S. Department of Education

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### **U.S. Department of Education Directive to States to Certify Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

As shared in a communication from IASB's Executive Director Kimberly Small, J.D., earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Education issued letters to state education agencies, requiring that they certify with antidiscrimination obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the recent U.S. Supreme Court case *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. In a [follow up communication from IASB](#), it was shared that the Illinois State Board of Education issued a statement and sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Education stating that it had previously provided the required certifications and that it would continue to comply with Title VI and Supreme Court cases that interpret Title VI. ISBE also indicated that it would not be collecting assurances from local school districts.

### **Revocation of Federal ESSER Funds**

On March 28, the U.S. Department of Education revoked its prior approval of Illinois' request for an extension in federal pandemic relief ESSER funds. Twenty-seven Illinois school districts, two Regional Offices of Education and three other entities had previously been granted an extension to spend

\$77.25 million in outstanding ESSER funds. Those funds had already been obligated for various purposes, including construction projects, transportation for homeless students, and social emotional supports.

## President Trump Executive Orders

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### [Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities](#)

On March 20, President Trump signed an Executive Order to close the Department of Education (DOE). In the Executive Order, President Trump noted that despite taxpayers spending \$60 billion annually on federal school funding, reading and math scores are at historic lows. Therefore, he believes the Department of Education's main functions should be returned to the States and authorized Secretary McMahon to the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education.

Eliminating the Department of Education would require an Act of Congress. The Executive Order does provide that the DOE will continue to execute all statutory requirements that fall under their agency's purview. For more information on President Trump's Executive Order to close the DOE, read IASB news listing from March 21: [Executive Order to Begin Dismantling U.S. Department of Education | IASB](#)

### [Restoring Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#)

On March 7, President Trump signed an Executive Order that calls for the Secretary of Education to revise the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) to exclude organizations that engage in activities that have a "substantial illegal purpose." According to the Trump Administration, the reason for this Executive Order is to stop taxpayer funds being distributed to organizations that advance illegal immigration, terrorism, child abuse, discrimination, and public disruptions. The program was designed to encourage college graduates to work for the government or authorized not-for-profit organizations for at least 10 years, while making at least the minimum payments on their student loans, to be eligible to have the remaining balance of their student loans forgiven. During the Biden administration, waivers and improvements were made to the program to allow for more students to be able to get their loan balances forgiven.

### [Layoffs at Department of Education](#)

On March 11, the U.S. Department of Education announced the reduction of 1,933 employees. The reduction represents 50% of the employees in the

Department. Employees were placed on administrative leave on March 21. According to Secretary McMahon, the reduction in employees is the department's commitment to efficiency, accountability, and ensuring that resources are directed where they matter most.


## Links

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- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions](#)
- [U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor](#)
- [U.S. Senate Budget Committee](#)
- [U.S. House Budget Committee](#)
- [Congressional Budget Office](#)
- [Federal legislative information](#)

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*This Federal Legislative Report was written with assistance from the Consortium of State School Boards Associations.*

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