

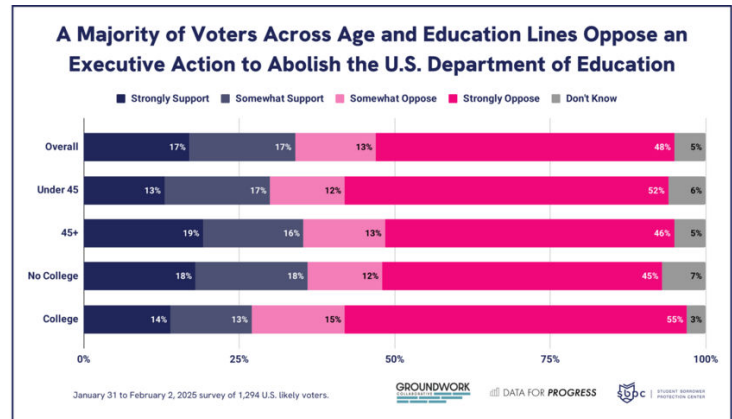


FACT SHEET: Value and Importance of Federal Investments in Education

June 2026

PROTECT federal investments in education

Americans support federal education funding: 77% of Americans oppose cutting vital education funding ([source](#)) and a majority oppose eliminating the Department of Education ([source](#)). The Department of Education funds vital services for public school students and makes it possible for adults to get the job training or post-secondary education they need to support their families and contribute to our economy.



Education pays – for individuals and society: Despite accounting for just 2% of the federal budget, investments in education and job training generate significant returns beyond just increasing student achievement and knowledge.

- **Public schools are key to local economies;** in [many communities, schools are the largest employer](#).
- **The more than [7.6 million unfilled jobs](#) in America could continue to grow** if we do not produce students with 21st century skills and knowledge needed for success in today's rapidly transforming global economy.
- **[Wages and employment rates increase](#) with more years of education**, and higher wages lead to more tax revenue that boosts the economy.
- **[A strong military](#) depends on investments in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)** and other disciplines.
- **[Higher investments in public schools lead to less adult crime](#)**, also saving future public costs.

REBUT myths about education funding

- **Money matters in education.** Spending to train and hire educators, provide safe learning environments, and other strategies boosts student outcomes. Disappointing national achievement tests should be addressed, but they are not an excuse to de-fund education. Federal investments focused on [low-income schools](#) boost student achievement, graduation rates, and later earnings outcomes.
- **The Department of Education is efficient and necessary.** It is the [smallest cabinet agency](#) yet it administers the [sixth largest budget](#) and provided over \$87 billion in [new student loans](#) last year. It has cut its staff by 20 percent since 2015 and spends less on program administration now than it did 10 years ago. It provides valuable support, guidance, and information on what works.

DEMONSTRATE the importance of education funding and impact of cuts

- **[Rural and poorer communities](#) will be hit hardest by education funding cuts.** Because more "red" states get a higher percentage of their education funding from the federal government, they will be hit hardest by federal cuts.

- **Administration actions to restrict and cut funding are impacting students, educators, universities, and research.**

The Administration has:

- ended competitive grant funding for teacher development programs, cutting the pipeline to provide well-prepared teachers to help fill shortages in the educator workforce;
- issued executive orders conditioning funding on whether schools and universities comply with certain Administration cultural and policy priorities, contradicting the [law](#) creating the Department of Education that states that **“No provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system, over any accrediting agency or association, or over the selection or content of library resources, textbooks, or other instructional materials by any educational institution or school system, except to the extent authorized by law.”**
- broken contracts for required education research that could help improve American education, preventing the US from participating in some international assessments, reporting data on school and university finances, and collecting data on the extent of teacher shortages and chronic absenteeism; and
- **Congress must protect investments in education, which are already underfunded.** Congress needs to ensure that funding enacted for education is provided as required under law. Congress will soon be deciding on funding for education for FY 2027, and may be debating further cuts to student loan programs, institutional support, Pell Grants, and school nutrition programs in another budget reconciliation bill.

CEF information resources:

- [CEF’s education “budget book”](#) describes federal education programs, their funding history and existing needs, has downloadable education charts, and provides contact information for a CEF-member expert to answer questions (visit cef.org/advocacy/cef-budget-book/)
- [CEF’s Funding Education Table](#) shows funding for federal education programs (visit cef.org/charts-and-resources/charts/)
- [CEF fact sheets](#) have information on the education programs proposed to be eliminated in President Trump’s previous budgets, some myths and facts about education investments, data about COVID-relief funding, and more (visit cef.org/priorities-in-the-119th-congress/)