

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2025

Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Trump,

We write today to express our deep concern regarding ongoing efforts to dismantle the Department of Education and to remind you of the Department's congressional mandate to ensure equal access to education for all. Any reduction in federal support for education in Rhode Island and across the nation directly harms students, teachers, parents, schools, and employers. We forcefully urge you to reconsider any efforts to dismantle the Department of Education.

As recently as Wednesday, February 12, you stated that, "I'd like [the Department of Education] to be closed immediately,"<sup>1</sup> and there has been ample public reporting that you are preparing an executive order to abolish the Department. This comes on the back of years of threats. Project 2025 stated: "The federal Department of Education should be eliminated."

The Department of Education Organization Act, through which Congress established the Department of Education over 25 years ago, states: "The Congress declares that the establishment of a Department of Education is in the public interest, will promote the general welfare of the United States." A strong education system is essential to the American workforce, economy, and global competitiveness. Although state and local educational agencies take the lead in administering education policy, the Department of Education serves a vital role in setting national student achievement standards and "strengthen[ing] the Federal commitment to ensuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual."

In Rhode Island, we have seen the powerful impact of the Department of Education's support for local students. Rhode Island receives approximately \$275 million in federal funds, 95 percent of these funds are provided directly to school districts. This includes \$65 million for Title I, which provides financial assistance to school districts to ensure that all children, regardless of background, can access high quality education and meet academic standards. Without this funding, approximately 850 teachers in Rhode Island would lose their jobs. In addition to these Title I funds, Rhode Island school districts rely on other federal funds from Title III, Title IV, and IDEA Part B to provide services such as: special education and early intervention for children with disabilities, English language acquisition, and new technology for academic achievement and digital literacy.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, at a time when Rhode Island and other states face workforce shortages in the teaching profession, Department of Education programs that provide professional development for education professionals and support recruitment and retention of teachers are vital. At the end of the 2023-2024 academic school year,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/12/politics/video/donald-trump-department-of-education-closed-immediately-collins-vpx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2023-11/FY22%20Fiscal%20Accountability%20Report.pdf>

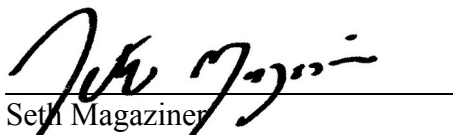
Rhode Island school districts had more than 100 open teaching positions.<sup>3</sup> Federal funds through Title II-A Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants increase student achievement by improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers and other school leaders and supporting recruitment and retention efforts for teachers to reduce class sizes.

In Rhode Island, as in every state, the Department of Education also supports career and technical education (CTE). In fiscal year 2024, Rhode Island received over \$11 million for CTE from its base state allocation through Perkins. These funds help prepare Rhode Islanders for high-wage, in-demand jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workforce they need to grow. In part thanks to federal support, the number of CTE programs in Rhode Island has increased exponentially, more than doubling in the past 8 years to keep up with demand. There are now more than 280 CTE programs operating in the state and over 20,000 students participating, nearly half of public high school students statewide.<sup>4</sup>


Federal programs administered by the Department of Education also ensure that all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, have access to higher education. For 53 years, Federal Pell Grants – named after former Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell who championed the program – have helped create a pathway for millions of low- and middle-income students to attain higher education. In the 2023-2024 school year, 22,281 Pell Grants were awarded in Rhode Island. The Federal Student Aid Office at the Department of Education also administers numerous other federal student aid programs such as Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant awards and Federal Work Study awards that each support thousands of students in Rhode Island. The Department of Education also administers the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which allows students to determine their eligibility for student financial aid.

In summary, the Department of Education serves vital functions in ensuring access to education at the K-12 and higher education levels. The Department of Education was founded under the principle that: “Education is fundamental to the development of individual citizens and the progress of the Nation.” This rings true in Rhode Island and across the nation. Rather than trying to destroy federal support for education, we urge your administration to invest in the educational systems and programs that support American students, families, and teachers and serve as the backbone of the American economy.

Sincerely,



Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress

<sup>3</sup> <https://turnto10.com/news/crisis-in-the-classroom/rhode-island-schools-face-teacher-shortages-as-new-academic-year-approaches-department-education-commissioner-angelica-infante-green>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/10/07/metro/career-technical-education-schools-rhode-island/>