

EDUCATION

Trump administration finalizing plans to shutter Education Department

An executive order — which President Donald Trump is expected to sign sometime this month — was expected to lay out a two-part strategy for shuttering the agency.



President-elect Donald Trump listens with Linda McMahon at right, during an America First Policy Institute gala at his Mar-a-Lago estate, Nov. 14, 2024, in Palm Beach, Fla. | AP Photo/Alex Brandon

By **JUAN PEREZ JR.**

02/03/2025 06:16 PM EST



The Trump administration is finalizing plans to dismantle the Education Department through an executive order that would build on the president's

campaign promise to hammer the longtime conservative target.

The order — which President Donald Trump is expected to sign sometime this month, according to a White House official — was expected to lay out a two-part strategy for shuttering the agency, according to two people familiar with the plans and granted anonymity to discuss them.

It would direct the department to craft a plan to wind down its functions using its existing administrative authority. But the order was also expected to call for the agency to inventory a complex set of laws needed to delegate the department's powers to other agencies and then close the department, an acknowledgment that some of conservatives' biggest desires for change hinge on congressional approval. Such an order would launch a complex initiative. Some conservatives concede they currently lack enough support for legislation to close the department and farm its core functions out to other federal agencies.

While Trump has been vocal about closing the Education Department, the agency appears to have also drawn the attention of Elon Musk's government efficiency operation, which picked apart the US Agency for International Development [over the weekend](#).

According to a third person granted anonymity to discuss sensitive information, representatives from the so-called Department of Government Efficiency were working at Education Department headquarters Monday and seeking access to agency records.

A representative for DOGE did not respond to a request for comment. The Wall Street Journal first reported word of administration discussions about the executive order.

Although the general thrust of Trump's executive order is taking shape, the timing is a little awkward.

The nomination hearing for Trump’s nominee to lead the department, billionaire pro wrestling magnate Linda McMahon, hasn’t yet been scheduled as her team waits for her financial disclosures and other paperwork to be cleared by the Office of Government Ethics.

Once McMahon does face a Senate confirmation hearing, she will likely face even sharper questions on whether she thinks her agency-in-waiting should exist.

There was debate among staff at the department that the executive order could put McMahon in a difficult position to answer questions about the president’s agenda, and to what extent she would execute a plan to eliminate the department, according to an individual in contact with Education Department officials.

“Common sense tells me they won’t do that until the secretary is confirmed,” said another person familiar with the discussions who was granted anonymity to address sensitive information.

“That’s partly politics, but there will be deadlines in that executive order,” the person said. “The secretary is going to need every day to meet those deadlines. To start the clock on her before she can start working on it, common sense tells me they wouldn’t do that to her.”

Rebecca Carballo contributed to this report.

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