



Trump order to dismantle the education department in the works, sources say

The order is expected to ask for a plan to shutter the department.

By [Arthur Jones II](#) and [Katherine Faulders](#)
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President Donald Trump talks to reporters after signing an executive order in the Oval Office, Jan. 31, 2025, in Washington.
Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

President Donald Trump could soon sign an executive order directing the secretary of education to dismantle the federal Department of Education, according to sources briefed on drafts of the order that have circulated among top administration officials.

The proposed order gutting the agency is expected to call for the education secretary to submit a proposal for dismantling the department and for Congress to pass legislation to get rid of it.

The timing on when Trump plans to sign the order remains unclear, but sources familiar with the process told ABC News that conversations about the future of the department have been actively occurring.

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Closing down the department would be an extraordinary move that would help Trump inch closer to fulfilling the promise that he made for months on the campaign trail: dismantling it and sending education policy back to the states.



President Donald Trump talks to reporters after signing an executive order in the Oval Office, Jan. 31, 2025, in Washington.
Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

But any executive action is likely to ask for a plan to shut down the department, but not an immediate directive to shut down the department, sources told ABC News.

It's also unclear how the next education secretary would handle plans to close the department and reallocate its functions. Trump's education secretary choice Linda McMahon has not yet had a Senate confirmation hearing. A bill in the Senate to shutter the department would likely fail without the necessary 60 votes.

Trump and department skeptics have said they believe the agency has too much spending power -- more than \$20 billion in the 2025 fiscal year -- without adequate academic results. The Nation's Report Card highlighted the widening achievement gap and sliding reading scores for fourth- and eighth-grade students.

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Trump last week signed executive orders defending parental rights and prioritizing universal school choice, combating antisemitism and cutting federal funding for K-12 "indoctrination."

Conservatives dating back to President Ronald Reagan have campaigned on the promise of closing the Education Department. It's also recently become a bicameral push from Republicans on Capitol Hill.

The news comes as dozens of Department of Education employees received letters [placing them on administrative paid leave](#) over the weekend as the department takes steps to issue unprecedented reform.

Trump's rhetoric -- including threatening for months to shutter the department -- has now made some department employees worried about the agency's future, according to an employee who said they've been placed on administrative leave from their "dream job."

"It feels like it could happen, so it's very disturbing," the employee said.

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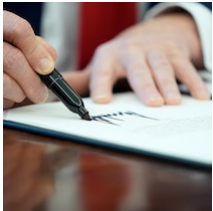
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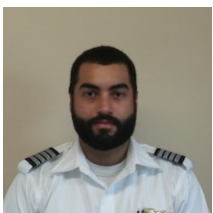
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