

## KNOW THE FACTS

# Education Cuts in Trump's 2018 Budget Proposal



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*In June, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos confirmed what we have long suspected: she and President Trump are prioritizing private education at the expense of an equitable K-12 public education for all. The administration's favoritism towards America's wealthiest is riddled throughout the budget (e.g., defunding Medicaid and cuts to food stamp programs), but cuts to the Department of Education are especially alarming considering that federal funds are often the only lifeline for programs that support our nation's most vulnerable student groups.*

*The \$68 billion for discretionary programs previously allocated to the Department of Education is slashed by \$9 billion under the Trump/DeVos proposal, eliminating 15 K-12 programs and initiatives that support low-income and vulnerable students through before- and after-school programs, anti-bullying and student health initiatives, and resources to improve teacher quality and retention. This proposal is a significant blow to an already underfunded agency—in 2017, the Department of Education received less than 3% of the entire federal budget—at a time when more should be invested in our children.*

*Secretary DeVos not only supports these draconian cuts to education, but champions funneling the limited remaining funds into private and religious schools whose operations elide educational and anti-discrimination standards. In its first outright attack on public education, the administration proposes a complete overhaul to three categories of federal dollars that are intended for vulnerable students who not only need, but deserve, a quality public education.*

### WHERE ARE THE CUTS?

Two K-12 Offices in the Department of Education will see drastic cuts if the Trump/DeVos proposal is adopted: **(1) the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education** and **(2) the Office of Innovation of Improvement**. These offices are dedicated to providing a high-quality education to low-income students, improving educational resources to the lowest-performing schools, and programs that support student achievement by improving educational programs and teacher and principal effectiveness. Trump and DeVos also want to withdraw more than \$200 million from programs that empower universities and community-based organizations to help low-income, disadvantaged, and first-generation-college students attain and excel in higher education. These cuts deviate from the annual trend of increased federal investment

in these programs. The proposal also provides no additional funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (“HBCUs”), despite their need for increased federal assistance.

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

### Title I Funds

For 50 years, the Education for the Disadvantaged account of the Department of Education’s budget has helped low-income students receive a high-quality education through two categories of funds: (1) funds dedicated for low-income schools, commonly referred to as Title I funds; and (2) funds supporting literacy programs for low-income students.

Alarmingly, Trump and DeVos propose reducing Title I grants by nearly \$600 million and eliminating the literacy programs completely. Like many things, the administration has tried to overshadow the practical impact of its budget by emphasizing its allocation of \$1 billion to Furthering Options for Children to Unlock Success (“FOCUS”)—a new federal program that perpetuates the school-choice myth. Unfortunately for Trump and DeVos, math is unaffected by rhetoric.

This budget siphons federal dollars away from low-income schools and students of color into already-wealthy districts. Slashing Title I funds by nearly \$600 million and investing \$1 billion in FOCUS will lay the groundwork for expanding school vouchers, a dangerous trend that puts money in the pockets of religious organizations, investors, and wealthy families.

### Title II and Title IV Funds

A quality education involves more than new textbooks—students need a positive school climate, access to student health services, and effective and committed teachers and administrators. The Department of Education has historically invested in programs supporting a holistic approach to K-12 education through its Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Breaking this norm, the Trump/DeVos budget eliminates \$4 billion that Congress previously dedicated to addressing low-income-student achievement by improving teacher and administrator quality, effectiveness, and retention. The administration also proposes defunding programs that support, among other things, mental-health services, anti-bullying initiatives, and the creation of community learning

centers for students in high-poverty and low-performing schools. Absent federal support for these programs, school climate will suffer in the schools that serve our most vulnerable students.

### Innovation and Improvement Funds

The Office of Innovation and Improvement is responsible for researching, identifying, and implementing evidenced-based programs to help close the achievement gap that burdens high-needs students. The Trump/DeVos budget proposal eliminates five of the office’s ten programs, including those that fund arts programs and initiatives to recruit and support qualified principals in high-needs schools. Three of the programs that survive the cuts are a school-voucher program, a charter-school program, and magnet school program. In fact, Trump and DeVos are asking Congress to increase by nearly 80% the total amount of taxpayer dollars allocated to charter, magnet, and voucher systems. We know that these programs overwhelmingly benefit America’s wealthy families—those that can afford private and religious schools without federal subsidies. Under this budget, our low-income families, vulnerable families, and everyday families are intentionally abandoned in underfunded and ill-resourced public schools.

## THE IMPACT ON CALIFORNIA'S CHILDREN

Trump and DeVos want to dismantle programs that help bridge educational gaps that exist both nationally and locally, and California’s students do not fare well under this proposal. California received \$4.09 billion in federal funds for elementary and secondary education programs this year. The proposed budget will cut existing Title I funds by at least \$31 million in California. We also stand to lose approximately \$410 million—i.e., 3,600 teachers—from these cuts. Cumulatively, California will lose over \$450 million dollars—about 10% of the existing budget—from the cuts discussed above. Far from fake news, this budget confirms an objective truth: Trump and DeVos are abandoning America’s needy and vulnerable children.