

Dismantling the Department of Education Toolkit

Public school enrolls 90 percent of America's students – 95 percent of students with disabilities in communities of all backgrounds across the country. Public education imparts academic lessons, civil rights protections, and life skills. It prepares students for the future. Dismantling the Department of Education will undermine their future. This does not only affect students and families, but it also affects whole communities. It will sow discord, increase economic disparities, and it endangers our fragile democracy. Public schools have significant value to local communities, especially in rural areas where they serve as a hub for the community.

The Department of Education was founded to help provide all students, no matter where they live, the color or their skin, or their socio-economic background, with quality education. Under the current administration, life-changing educational opportunities will be eliminated.

Crafting your story

Form letters are not as effective in making a difference. The truth, personal stories are twenty-two times more likely to be remembered than facts alone. Advocacy is important and when

we share, we must share how these budget cuts will have an impact on us and how it will decrease the quality of living for millions of Americans.

Organizations provide policy details with key messaging. Using this information with your unique perspective increases your impact. Your personal touch is important, and it paints a picture of what you experience and that everyone's experience and circumstances are vastly different.

1. What values drive me to act? What is my why?
2. Why is this important to me?
3. What personal experiences shape my why?
4. What challenges do I face? How would this increase my challenge?

Education Figures and Talking Points

This dangerous plan would:

- Increase class sizes and there would be less one on one attention for students.
- There would be fewer resources and basic rights for students with disabilities.
- There would be limited access to programs that encourage lower-income students and students with disabilities to attend college.
- This would cut afterschool and summer programs that augment in-school learning and skill-building.

- The state of South Carolina would lose between \$2–3 billion in funding. Here is the breakdown by program:
 - Title I: \$290,698,239 and 6,523 entry level teacher positions would be lost.
 - IDEA: \$238,567,507 and 5,353 entry level special education teacher positions would be lost.
 - Impact Aid (Basic support payments and payments for children with disabilities) \$1,800,669 and 40 entry level teacher positions would be lost
 - Other programs (effective instruction, student support and academic enrichment, and small, rural school achievement): \$87,788,872 and 1,970 entry level teacher positions would be lost.

Advocacy Actions: Levels of Engagement

Your engagement is important and so is your community's engagement.

If you have one minute:



Make a phone call

Offices track constituent calls, and hearing directly from voters – especially in large numbers – can influence decision-making. A flood of calls signals that the issue is urgent.

Call Script:

My name is [your name]. As a constituent, I urge you (your boss) to fight for the Department of Education and the opportunities it provides for all children. Dismantling the department will deprive students across the state of critical programs and protections. It will affect our economy, our ability to compete in the global economy, and it will decrease the number of services that will help individuals with developmental, physical, and intellectual disabilities become independent. [Add part of your story. For a longer script, check out “More messaging for phone calls.”]

Post on social media

Public pressure plays a critical role in advocacy. Posting about issues on social media not only helps educate the community but shows lawmakers that their constituents see what they are doing. Tag your lawmakers to increase the chances of your message reaching their office.

This document includes sample posts and graphics to make this easy for you. No matter how much time you have, the actions that you and your community make can make an impact.

If you have ten minutes:

 **Send a personalized email to your offices.**

Personalized are far more effective than a form letter or petition. When sending your email, include your own story and connect it to the issue. It makes it more likely that a staff member will take notes and pass your message on to their boss. If you can, reach out to the staff member who handles education instead of sending a generic email. Call the office and ask who the staffer is who handles public education in DC or in their district office.

If you have one hour/day:



Request a meeting with your lawmaker or his/her staff

One of the most impactful actions you and your community can take is to ask for a meeting with your lawmaker or staff. These meetings allow for in-depth discussion and relationship building. Building a relationship makes it more likely that your concerns will be taken seriously. You can find talking points above that you can use in the meeting. You can adapt them to personalize them with your story.

If you have a few hours:



Generate Media

Write a letter to the editor or an opinion editorial to bring attention to the issue and help shape the narrative. Voters read newspapers

and opinion pieces. You can also respond to a letter to the editor or article in your newspaper about dismantling the Department of Education. A well-placed piece of media can reach policymakers, other media outlets, community leaders, other advocates, and families affected by these decisions. This can help drive action. Refine your message. Find out how many words you are allowed to have for a letter to the editor before you start writing.

Take Action

Education is essential to a productive society and with the Executive Order to dismantle education, it increases discrimination against children with disabilities. It decreases education opportunities for students in Title I schools and limits our ability to provide quality education to compete in the global economy.

Despite the importance of public education, Senate and House leaders have been silent about the executive order to dismantle this vital department. to Medicaid. It is not acceptable to deny children quality education. The House and the Senate must speak out and show their support for public education.

Tell your members of Congress to reject the Senate and House plans to dismantle the Department of Education.

Longer Call Script:

Hi, my name is [Name] and I live in [City]. I urge [Policymaker] to protect public education – our nation's most effective way to provide quality education to all students in America, including low-income children and children with disabilities.

Millions of children need services provided in our education system. The cruel Executive Order would take away quality education opportunities for all children. This is indefensible and economically wrong.

Public education is necessary for millions of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. The funds needed to support children must be managed by the Department of Education to ensure protection for children.

As a constituent, I implore [Policymaker] to speak out about cutting public education which would increase the burden on already cash strapped states. Cash strapped states would either raise taxes or cut programs.

[Democrat]

I realize that the Member is a supporter of public education, but we need them to stand up to their colleagues on the other side of the aisle and do everything in their power to prevent the shuttering of the Department of Education. What actions are they taking to avert this crisis?


[Republican]

It is essential that we get the Member's commitment to protect public education. Where does the member stand on this issue? I will be following closely to ensure they do what is in the best interest of their constituents and not in the best interest of special interest groups.

Social Media Sample Posts

- Make it personal – Share why protecting public education matters to you.
- Call on others to act – Encourage your friends and followers to get involved.
- Tag your lawmaker – They need to hear from their constituents.
- Act quickly – Congress is making decisions now and they need to hear from those who will be impacted.

Facebook

 When our communities are under attack, we must stand up and fight back. Call your member of Congress and demand that they speak up about the Executive Order to dismantle the Department of Education.

Instead of prioritizing children and their education, the administration is prioritizing cruel measures to dismantle the Department of Education which could cost taxpayers millions of

dollars in the future. Demand that your tax dollars continue to support public education.

Cutting public education means that more children will lose access to quality, supported education. People will lose jobs and individuals with disabilities will lose needed educational services.

Speak out now. Tell Congress to reject the administration's Executive order to dismantle the Department of Education. Your voice matters. Our community's voice matters.

#ProtectPublicEducation

Bluesky



The Executive Order to dismantle the Department of Education would limit educational opportunities and needed services for children with disabilities. Tell your member of Congress to publicly show support for public education and denounce the administration's efforts to undermine it.

Public education increases education outcomes for children with disabilities. Students should not be collateral damage in the class war that has been created. Tell your member of Congress to speak up about the shuttering of the Department of Education.

#ProtectPublicEducation

LinkedIn

Children and educators need our support. Call your members of Congress and encourage your members of Congress to speak out against the dismantling of the Department of Education. Ask them to go on the record denouncing the move to affect educational outcomes for millions of children.

Congress must speak out against the dismantling of Public Education. Dismantling the Department of Education is a bad policy and will affect children in the future. It is time for members of Congress to stand up and show their support for children, education, and communities.

Constituents must speak up and demand that Congress prevent the dismantling of Public Education. Contact your lawmakers and tell them: Protect Public Education.

#ProtectPublicEducation

Instagram

Millions of students rely on Public Education for their educational needs. Millions rely on public education for special education needs. Congress must speak up and say enough is enough and

tell the administration that public education is essential to competing in the global economy.

Tag a friend who should know about dismantling Public Education.
Share this post. Encourage others to take action.

#ProtectPublicEducation

Square (Instagram):

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGlOToBUkM/fTZ35TNDp0KksK3LaQOIhA/view?utm_content=DAGlOToBUkM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniqueLinks&utlId=h03c08d9dee

Landscape (Facebook, Bluesky, LinkedIn)

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGlOToBUkM/fTZ35TNDp0KksK3LaQOIhA/view?utm_content=DAGlOToBUkM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniqueLinks&utlId=h03c08d9dee