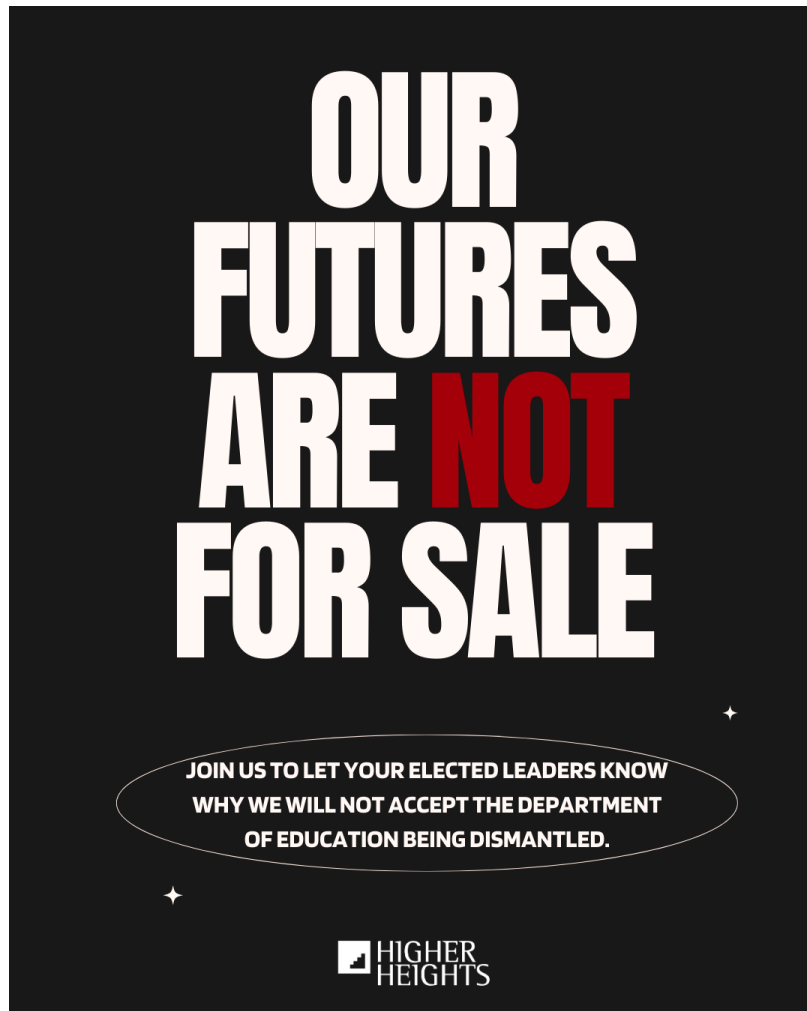




Breaking Down Donald Trump's Executive Order Dismantling the Department of Education



Toplines:

1. **Worsening Educational Inequities for Black Students**
 - a. Black students in underfunded schools rely heavily on federal funding, which could be jeopardized by this executive order.
2. **Barriers to Higher Education for Black Women**
 - a. Black women depend on Pell Grants and federal student loans for college access; the loss of these resources would reduce their opportunities for higher education.
3. **Loss of Workforce Development Programs**



- a. Job training programs funded by the Department of Education provide critical skills for Black women. Eliminating these programs limits career opportunities.
- 4. Decline in Mental Health Support for Students**
 - a. Black students, facing trauma and discrimination, rely on school mental health services. Dismantling the Department of Education would cut these vital supports.
- 5. Impact on Black Women Educators**
 - a. Black women make up 7% of K-12 teachers. Budget cuts could lead to staff reductions, decreasing representation and mentorship in schools.
 - b. The dismantling of the Department of Education could lead to large-scale layoffs in schools, disproportionately affecting Black women educators who serve as essential role models and advocates for Black students.
- 6. Weakening Civil Rights Protections in Schools**
 - a. The Department of Education enforces civil rights laws. Without it, Black students could face increased discrimination and inequitable treatment.

Fact Sheet: Impact on Black Women and Their Families

- 1. Pell Grants & Federal Student Loans**
 - a. In 2021, 47% of Black women college students used Pell Grants, with the average Pell Grant amount covering only about **1/3 of the cost of tuition** at public colleges.
 - b. **Action Needed:** If the Department of Education is dismantled, these crucial financial supports may be eliminated, making college even less affordable for Black women.
- 2. Loss of Educational Resources**
 - a. Black students represent about 15% of public school enrollment, but **60% of Black students** attend schools where more than **75% of students are from low-income families**.
 - b. Federal education funding is vital to maintaining educational quality and access to services like school counselors, special education, and after-school programs, all of which disproportionately benefit Black students.
- 3. Mental Health Services**
 - a. **1 in 3 Black children** are exposed to trauma, with school being one of the few places where mental health support is available.
 - b. The dismantling of the Department of Education threatens to cut funding for mental health services in schools, leaving many Black children without the support they need to thrive academically and emotionally.

Prominent Black Women Leaders Who Were Former Educators

- 1. **Shirley Chisholm:** Before her tenure in Congress, Chisholm worked as an early-childhood educator.



2. **Jahana Hayes** (U.S. Representative, Connecticut)
 - a. **Background:** Before entering Congress, Jahana Hayes was a high school history teacher. She was named the **2016 National Teacher of the Year** and has used her experience as an educator to advocate for educational equity and reform in Congress.
 - b. **Statement/Social Posts:** <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHb5Xc4xe0q/?igsh=d3RxbnZodWpkNXF0>
3. **Yvette Clarke** (U.S. Representative, New York)
 - a. **Background:** Clarke, who represents Brooklyn, was an educator before serving in Congress. She worked in both primary and secondary schools and is known for advocating for public education and policies aimed at improving access to quality education.
 - b. **Statement/Social Posts:** <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHb2t5JvVrv/>
4. **Fredricka Wilson** (U.S. Representative, Florida)
 - a. **Background:** Wilson spent much of her career in education before entering politics, including roles as a teacher and school principal. She has been a strong voice for education reform and has advocated for increased funding for schools in underserved communities.
 - b. **Statement/Social Posts:** https://www.instagram.com/p/DHb0W4kSzcs/?img_index=1
5. **Nikema Williams** (U.S. Representative, Georgia)
 - a. **Background:** Williams has a background in education advocacy and was involved in efforts to improve schools in Georgia before her political career. Although she wasn't a classroom teacher, she has worked closely with educators to push for policies supporting education.
 - b. **Statement/Social Posts:** <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHb7KGfuvLQ/>
6. **Alma Adams** (U.S. Representative, North Carolina)
 - a. **Background:** Adams is a former educator who taught for many years before entering politics. She has been a vocal advocate for educational opportunities, especially for low-income students, and has worked to improve access to higher education.
 - b. **Statement/Social Posts:** https://www.instagram.com/p/DHb-Xr_R1rR/
7. **Terri Sewell** (U.S. Representative, Alabama)
 - a. **Background:** Sewell taught at Princeton University as part of a faculty position before transitioning to law and eventually running for Congress. Though not a traditional K-12 teacher, she has been a strong advocate for education during her tenure in the House.
 - b. **Statement/Social Posts:** <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHb4WgDuhFC/>
8. **Shontel Brown** (U.S. Representative, Ohio)



- a. **Background:** Brown has worked in a variety of education-related capacities, including involvement in after-school programs, and has advocated for youth education initiatives throughout her career.
- b. **Statement/Social Posts:**
<https://x.com/RepShontelBrown/status/1902779910587924850>

Fact vs. Fiction

FICTION: “This executive order just reduces government waste and gives more control to states.”

FACT: Eliminating the Department of Education would cut critical federal funding for public schools, Pell Grants, and student loan programs—leaving millions of Black students and families without the resources they need. Many states, particularly those with underfunded school systems, rely heavily on federal support to ensure students receive a quality education.

FICTION: “Local and state governments can handle education funding without federal oversight.”

FACT: States have historically failed to ensure equal funding and access to quality education for Black students. The Department of Education enforces civil rights protections in schools, including protections for students with disabilities and students facing racial discrimination. Without federal oversight, systemic inequities will deepen.

FICTION: “This won’t affect Black women or Black students disproportionately.”

FACT: Black students are more likely to attend underfunded schools that depend on Title I funding, which would be jeopardized by this executive order. Additionally, Black women carry the highest student loan debt burden of any demographic—dismantling the Department of Education puts critical financial aid programs at risk.

FICTION: “This is just a symbolic move that won’t have real consequences.”

FACT: This executive order is part of Project 2025, a dangerous blueprint for dismantling key federal protections and programs. If enacted, it would devastate public education, threaten jobs for Black educators, and roll back decades of progress in educational equity.

Deeper Dive

1. Educational Inequities and the Risk of Increased Disparities

- a. **Data Point:** According to the **U.S. Department of Education**, Black students make up 15% of the total public school enrollment, with a disproportionate number attending schools in low-income, underfunded districts.
- b. Dismantling the Department of Education risks removing federal funding that is critical for these schools, where Black students represent a significant percentage of



the population. Without these funds, these districts will be unable to provide essential resources, from technology to after-school programs, worsening existing educational disparities.

2. Impact on Higher Education Accessibility

- a. **Data Point:** The **National Center for Education Statistics** reports that 23% of Black women aged 18-24 were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in 2020.
- b. Black women are increasingly enrolling in and graduating from college, yet they rely heavily on federal financial support such as **Pell Grants** and **federal student loans** to make higher education affordable. Elimination of the Department of Education's oversight on financial aid would increase barriers to obtaining a college education for Black women, impacting their long-term economic mobility.

3. Federal Workforce Development and Training

- a. **Data Point:** According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, Black women have a 7.9% unemployment rate, higher than the national average of 5.8%.
- b. Federal job training programs through the Department of Education, including **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** programs, help provide Black women with the skills and credentials needed to enter the workforce. The loss of these programs would reduce access to job-readiness initiatives, limiting career opportunities and contributing to persistent wage gaps.

4. Mental Health Services for Black Students

- a. **Data Point:** A report by **Child Trends** found that Black children are more likely to face challenges related to trauma, mental health, and school discipline, with Black students being 3 times more likely than their White peers to be suspended.
- b. Schools provide vital mental health support services for students, including Black students who are disproportionately affected by systemic racism. The removal of the Department of Education's support for these programs would reduce the resources available to address these challenges, harming the well-being of Black children and families.

5. Impact on Black Women Educators

- a. **Data Point:** Black women make up **7% of K-12 teachers** in the U.S., and their role is crucial in creating an environment of cultural understanding and mentorship.
- b. Without federal support, schools could face severe staff reductions, including among Black women educators. This would impact both Black students' academic achievement and the diversity of educators, depriving Black students of role models and mentors.

6. Loss of Civil Rights Oversight

- a. **Data Point:** In 2018, the **Department of Education** processed over 50,000 civil rights complaints, including those related to discrimination based on race and gender.



- b. The Department of Education plays a critical role in enforcing civil rights protections in schools. Without this oversight, Black students may face a resurgence of discriminatory practices, such as exclusionary discipline and inequitable access to educational resources.

Press Statement: Higher Heights Calls on Congress to Reject the Executive Order

Higher Heights for America Statement on Trump's Executive Order to Dismantle the Department of Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2025

(New York, NY) — Today, Donald Trump signed an executive order to dismantle the Department of Education, a direct attack on the foundation of opportunity in this country. This reckless decision would strip millions of students—particularly Black students—of the resources they need to succeed, gut funding for public schools, and threaten Pell Grants and federal student loan programs that help Black women access higher education.

Let's be clear: this is part of a broader effort outlined in **Project 2025**, an extreme right-wing agenda designed to roll back the progress we've fought for. It's not just about education—it's about silencing, destabilizing, and disempowering Black communities. This administration is waging war on everything that makes America strong: our public schools, our teachers, our children's future.

"Black women—92% of whom used our voices and our votes in November to emphatically reject this dangerous agenda—are standing our ground. We are unbought and unapologetic in our fight to protect our families, our children, and our future. This is not just about policy; it's about power, and we refuse to let this administration strip our communities of the resources we need to thrive," said Glynda C. Carr, President and CEO of Higher Heights for America.

Higher Heights will mobilize, organize, and fight back. We call on Congress to **reject this executive order and block any attempts to dismantle the Department of Education**. We will not sit idly by while this administration attempts to dismantle our access to quality education and economic mobility. Our votes and voices will not be ignored, and our collective power continues to strengthen amongst these relentless attacks.