

Feb. 26, 2025

Dear Sheri,

The U.S. Department of Education has issued a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) telling K-12 and post-secondary schools that receive federal funds they “must cease using race preferences and stereotypes as a factor in their admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, sanctions, discipline, and beyond.” The department will begin monitoring adherence to the policy starting on March 1, with schools that fail to comply facing the possibility of losing their federal funding.

NAESP will continue to monitor the latest from the U.S. Department of Education and provide resources and information (see news items below) as they happen.



David Griffith

Associate Executive Director,
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McMahon Smoothly Navigates Confirmation Hearing

There were no fireworks during Secretary of Education-nominee Linda McMahon’s confirmation hearing, but a slew of recent president executive orders and the Trump administration’s desire to abolish the U.S. Department of Education undergirded many of the questions and answers.

McMahon was pressed several times about the fate of the department. She agreed that **abolishing the cabinet agency does require an act of Congress**. But McMahon noted there are actions to downsize or reorganize the department that

are the purview of the administration's management authority and do not require congressional approval. For instance, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education is mandated by congressional statute, but the Office of Education Technology was created by previous administrative directive.

McMahon said it was not President Trump's intention to end education funding but to make the department more efficient. **"Defunding is not the goal,"** McMahon said.

With regard to reorganization possibilities, McMahon said several times she would **look at moving the IDEA program to the Department of Health and Human Services** and noted the program resided in the old Health, Education, and Welfare Department when it was first created.

McMahon said that the federal government should not dictate curriculum (a prohibition in the Every Student Succeeds Act) but demurred in answering as to whether specific examples of school classes, clubs, and activities might run afoul of the administration's proscriptions against diversity, equity and inclusion. McMahon told senators she would have to look at these instances on a case-by-case basis once she starts at the department.

Following the hearing, the Senate HELP Committee approved her nomination by a 12-11 party line vote. The full Senate is expected to hold the final vote to confirm her before the end of the week.



The Roundup

- **Kirsten Baesler**, North Dakota state superintendent of public instruction, [has been nominated](#) to be the assistant secretary of K-12 education.
- **Peggy Carr**, [commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics](#), has been placed on administrative leave by the Trump administration.
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- NAEP's long-term trend **assessment of 17-year-olds** that was scheduled to be administered next month [has been canceled](#).
- The contracts of the 10 Regional Education Labs that provide **research and technical assistance to states and local districts** in their geographic areas have been canceled because of ["woke spending."](#)
- The U.S. Department has canceled more than \$600 million in grants under the SEED (Supporting Effective Educator Development), TQP (Teacher Quality Partnership) and Teacher and School Leader incentive programs.
- In the wake of the interaction between President Trump and Maine Gov. Janet Mills at the National Governors Association meeting, the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) have notified Maine leaders they are opening separate civil rights investigations into whether the state is complying with the president's executive order on "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports."



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