

November 23, 2025

Heidi Semann
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Inspector General
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Acting Inspector General Semann:

I write to inform the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General (ED OIG) of the findings of my ongoing oversight investigation into President Trump and Secretary McMahon's dismantling of the Department of Education (ED). In addition, I write to urge the ED OIG to expand its ongoing investigation of these matters in light of my findings and to request that the ED OIG's investigation encompass the Trump Administration's recent decision to transfer many of ED's responsibilities to four other agencies,¹ potentially in violation of federal law. The public deserves to know how the public education programs that children and families rely on are being impacted by the Administration's actions.

At my request, in April 2025, the ED OIG opened an investigation² into whether the Trump Administration's dangerous and illegal efforts to dismantle ED had undermined the Department's ability to fulfill its mandate to "promote student achievement...by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access"³ for students of all ages. Simultaneously, I have carried out my own investigation of the dismantling of the Department, sending eight oversight letters to ED since March 2025, in addition to having a face-to-face meeting with ED Secretary McMahon in June 2025.⁴ During that meeting, Secretary McMahon acknowledged that she cannot legally move statutory functions of ED outside the Department without the consent of Congress and made several concrete commitments: to restore the income-driven repayment (IDR) counter that ED had removed from Federal Student Aid's (FSA's) website, to continue pausing the seizure of Social Security benefits for student loan borrowers in default, and to provide a written response to my

¹ U.S. Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education Announces Six New Agency Partnerships to Break Up Federal Bureaucracy," press release, November 18, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>.

² U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "In Response to Warren Request, Education Department Watchdog Will Investigate Trump and DOGE's Attempts to Gut Agency," press release, April 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/in-response-to-warren-request-education-department-watchdog-will-investigate-trump-and-doges-attempts-to-gut-agency>.

³ U.S. Department of Education, "About us," <https://www.ed.gov/about>.

⁴ U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "Save Our Schools Campaign," <https://www.warren.senate.gov/save-our-schools-campaign>.

June 2025 oversight letter on ED's policies and the Department's dismantling.⁵ However, ED's written responses to my oversight letters, including the June 2025 letter, largely failed to provide complete and transparent answers, necessitating further investigation from the ED OIG. In addition, ED's responses contained certain details that only raised further questions about the extent to which Secretary McMahon has damaged the Department's ability to carry out its basic functions, concerns that are further bolstered by the Secretary's November 18 announcement.⁶ The ED OIG should also investigate those questions and the implications of the November 18 announcement.

The Dismantling of ED May Have Worsened Customer Service for Student Loan Borrowers

The ED OIG's investigation should encompass several avenues through which the dismantling of ED may have severely compromised customer service for student loan borrowers: by delaying the restoration of the IDR payment counter, limiting ED's ability to sufficiently oversee federal student loan servicers, and increasing the likelihood of problems with ED's generative artificial intelligence (AI) customer service chatbot.

First, the ED OIG should investigate the impact of the dismantling of ED, including mass firings at FSA, on ED's failure to restore the IDR payment counter for over six months. This counter had shown borrowers their progress towards debt relief when enrolled in an IDR plan, allowing them to make informed decisions regarding student loan repayment.⁷ However, ED took down the payment counter from FSA's website in April 2025.⁸ ED claimed that the removal of the counter would be temporary,⁹ but it still has not been restored as of November 2025. After being asked multiple times about any plans to restore the counter, including during my in-person meeting with Secretary McMahon, ED has refused to provide any timeline for doing so.¹⁰ In addition to

⁵ U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "McMahon Admits to Warren That Education Secretary Lacks Legal Authority to Dismantle the Education Department," press release, June 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mcmahon-admits-to-warren-that-education-secretary-lacks-legal-authority-to-dismantle-the-education-department>.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education Announces Six New Agency Partnerships to Break Up Federal Bureaucracy," press release, November 18, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>.

⁷ The College Investor, "Student Loan IDR Forgiveness Tracker Disappeared," Robert Farrington, April 28, 2025, <https://thecollegeinvestor.com/57146/student-loan-idr-forgiveness-tracker-disappeared>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ CNN, "Student loan servicer pauses payment counts tracking in a move experts say could cause confusion," Shania Shelton, July 10, 2025, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/07/10/politics/student-loan-servicer-mohela-payment-tracking>.

¹⁰ U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "McMahon Admits to Warren That Education Secretary Lacks Legal Authority to Dismantle the Education Department," press release, June 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mcmahon-admits-to-warren-that-education-secretary-lacks-legal-authority-to-dismantle-the-education-department>; Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, June 4, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_secretary_mcmahon_re_ew-mcmahon_meeting1.pdf; Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ed_response.pdf; Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

evaluating how firings at ED may have affected ED's work on the counter, the ED OIG's investigation should evaluate ED's progress toward restoring the counter with accurate information, including correct payment counts and information on eligible payments broken down by month.

In addition, the ED OIG should examine how ED's dismantling may have led to insufficient federal oversight of the student loan servicers responsible for providing critical customer service to borrowers. Given servicers' records of insufficiently communicating with borrowers, misinforming borrowers about critical paperwork deadlines, causing borrowers to fall behind on payments by failing to send bills on time, and otherwise offering inadequate customer service,¹¹ it is essential that ED regularly evaluate servicers' performance and be prepared to penalize them if they fail to meet their contractual obligations. For example, under the Biden Administration, MOHELA was penalized for failing to process hundreds of thousands of IDR applications in a timely manner and for "failing to send timely billing statements to 2.5 million borrowers."¹²

In response to my investigation, ED claimed that it is continuing to "review the performance of all our current contractors" but refused to provide more information when I requested details on how it was doing so.¹³ Similarly, ED claimed to be "collaborating with MOHELA,"¹⁴ the worst-performing federal loan servicer,¹⁵ to "help drive overall improvement," but refused to provide any information on what this collaboration entailed or how it was evaluating MOHELA's customer service performance.¹⁶ ED has also failed to report servicers' customer service performance metrics to the public, which it had done regularly before the Trump Administration took office and began dismantling the Department.¹⁷

¹¹ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, March 10, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_senator_warren_rep_clyburn_to_ed_re_mohela_customer_service_data.pdf.

¹² The Washington Post, "Student loan servicer MOHELA faces new punishment from Biden administration," Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, October 17, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2024/10/16/mohela-student-loans-punishment>.

¹³ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

¹⁴ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ed_response.pdf.

¹⁵ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, March 10, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_senator_warren_rep_clyburn_to_ed_re_mohela_customer_service_data.pdf.

¹⁶ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

¹⁷ Federal Student Aid, "Servicer Performance Metrics and Allocations," <https://studentaid.gov/data-center/business-info/contracts/loan-servicing/servicer-performance>.

The ED OIG should review how the dismantling of ED, including mass layoffs at the teams responsible for vendor oversight and handling borrower complaints about servicers,¹⁸ may be interfering with the Department's capacity to review servicer performance and hold servicers such as MOHELA accountable for offering poor customer service.

The ED OIG's investigation should also examine the extent to which FSA's customer service AI chatbot, known as "Aidan," has the potential to mislead families and borrowers or compromise their privacy and how the dismantling of the Department may have affected the development of the chatbot. In response to multiple inquiries regarding these potential problems with the chatbot, the Department simply cited an FSA blog post that failed to address my questions.¹⁹ ED's failure to describe any guardrails is particularly worrying because of the tendency of generative AI chatbots to "hallucinate" by providing convincing but factually incorrect information and the privacy concerns that could arise if the chatbot is trained on past customer interactions.²⁰

The Dismantling of ED May Have Worsened the IDR Application Backlog

The dismantling of ED has contributed to massive delays in FSA operations and processing times, potentially including the unacceptably large backlog of 1.1 million IDR applications.²¹ The ED OIG should examine ED's progress toward clearing that backlog, how ED decided to mass-reject nearly 500,000 IDR applications based on a contrived technicality, and the role of Reductions in Force (RIFs) in ED's response to the backlog.²² Critically, this backlog is preventing borrowers from accessing affordable payments that can count towards Public Service Loan Forgiveness or

¹⁸ Yahoo Finance, "How Trump has wiped out the teams that protect student borrowers," Jordan Weissmann, April 19, 2025, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/how-trump-has-wiped-out-the-teams-that-protect-student-borrowers-173450503.html>.

¹⁹ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, June 4, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_secretary_mcmahon_re_ew-mcmahon_meeting1.pdf; Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ed_response.pdf; Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf; U.S. Department of Education, "What's New for the 2026–27 FAFSA® Form? Beta Launch, Smarter Virtual Assistant, and More," James Bergeron, June 25, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/homeroom-blog/whats-new-2026-27-fafsar-form-beta-launch-smarter-virtual-assistant-and-more>.

²⁰ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, April 1, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_ed_re_doge_ai_chatbot.pdf; CNET, "Hallucinations: Why AI Makes Stuff Up, and What's Being Done About It," Lisa Lacy, April 1, 2024, <https://www.cnet.com/tech/hallucinations-why-ai-makes-stuff-up-and-whats-being-done-about-it/>; IBM, "Exploring privacy issues in the age of AI," Alice Gomstyn and Alexandra Jonker, September 30, 2024, <https://www.ibm.com/think/insights/ai-privacy>.

²¹ U.S. Department of Education, "Status Report," American Federation of Teachers v. U.S. Department of Education, September 15, 2025, <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.dcd.278527/gov.uscourts.dcd.278527.42.0.pdf>.

²² American Federation of Teachers v. U.S. Department of Education, et al., "Status Report," September 15, 2025, <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.dcd.278527/gov.uscourts.dcd.278527.42.0.pdf>; Letter from Senator Wyden, Senator Warren, et al. to ED Secretary McMahon, September 7, 2025, https://www.wyden.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/wyden_mcmahon_idr_letter.pdf.

IDR debt relief.²³ When asked, ED refused to provide a concrete timeline for when it expects this backlog to be cleared and instead offered the vague assurance that it is “working closely with...loan servicers to ensure IDR applications are being processed in a timely manner.”²⁴ The ED OIG’s investigation should examine whether this is true and whether ED has taken all actions within its power to address the backlog.

Making matters worse, in July 2025, ED announced that it would reject 460,000 applications in the backlog because those applications had requested that the borrower be placed in the “lowest monthly payment option” when that option would have been the SAVE plan.²⁵ The ED OIG should investigate ED’s motive for making that decision, including by evaluating whether it was meant to artificially reduce the backlog—while preventing borrowers from obtaining access to more affordable payments—in the absence of capacity to adequately process applications.²⁶

The Dismantling of ED May Leave Students Vulnerable to Predatory For-Profit Institutions

A key responsibility of ED is to protect students from predatory for-profit colleges that lie about employment outcomes or provide low-quality, high-cost vocational programs that fail to advance students’ employment prospects.²⁷ The ED OIG’s investigation should evaluate the extent to which the dismantling of ED has compromised this objective.

For instance, the ED OIG should investigate any changes in the Department’s procedures or standards when evaluating institutions applying to participate in Title IV financial aid programs and whether the Department’s dismantling may have led to those changes. During my investigation, ED suggested it was “streamlining processes” to more rapidly approve institutions’ Title IV aid applications.²⁸ Given the vagueness of this assertion and ED’s decision to shut down most School Participation Division offices, which are responsible for certifying Title IV aid

²³ Protect Borrowers, “New Court Filing Reveals Backlog of Nearly 2 Million Student Loan Borrower Payment Plan Applications,” press release, May 16, 2025, <https://protectborrowers.org/new-court-filing-reveals-backlog-of-2-million-borrower-payment-plan-applications/>.

²⁴ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, June 4, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_secretary_mcmahon_re_ew-mcmahon_meeting1.pdf; Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ed_response.pdf; Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

²⁵ Letter from Senator Wyden, Senator Warren, et al. to ED Secretary McMahon, September 7, 2025, https://www.wyden.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/wyden_mcmahon_idr_letter.pdf.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Roosevelt Institute, “The Fall of the Department of Education and the Rise of For-Profit Colleges,” Emily DiVito, February 12, 2025, <https://rooseveltinstitute.org/blog/the-fall-of-the-department-of-education-and-the-rise-of-for-profit-colleges/>.

²⁸ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ed_response.pdf

eligibility,²⁹ I am concerned that the Department may simply be lowering its quality standards for Title IV approvals. This could lead to low-quality or fraudulent for-profit programs being approved to receive federal funding. Worryingly, when asked what share of newly approved Title IV-eligible colleges are for-profit, ED failed to respond.³⁰

In addition, the ED OIG's investigation should examine the extent to which ED may have deprioritized enforcement actions against fraudulent or predatory for-profit institutions—especially those that misled students about employment outcomes or financial aid availability—and how any such prioritization decisions may have been affected by the Department's dismantling. ED has stated that it is working to “ensure postsecondary programs are effectively educating the future workforce”; yet, when prompted, it failed to report whether it had launched or paused any enforcement actions against predatory or fraudulent schools.³¹ This silence is especially concerning given ED's choice to fire workers responsible for ensuring that Title IV funds are not used fraudulently.³²

The Dismantling of ED May Leave Students Vulnerable to Illegal Discrimination

The ED OIG's investigation should scrutinize how the Department's dismantling may have led to changes in the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)'s workflows and priorities, impeding OCR's ability to fulfill its mission to “ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence through vigorous enforcement of civil rights in our nation's schools.”³³ Since the March 2025 RIF, ED has dismissed Office for Civil Rights (OCR) complaints at an unprecedented rate.³⁴ During my investigation, ED stated that it is creating “efficiencies and improved processes” to evaluate OCR complaints and that “certain OCR workflows have been reworked to more effectively target subject matter expertise to the particular facts of each case.”³⁵ However, when asked, ED refused to provide additional detail on what particular processes or workflows had been changed, raising

²⁹ State of New York et al. v. Linda McMahon et al., No. 25-10601-MJJ (D. Mass. May 22, 2025) (order granting preliminary injunction), pp. 75-76, <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.mad.282419/gov.uscourts.mad.282419.45.0.pdf>.

³⁰ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

³¹ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

³² The Institute for College Access and Success, “An Emerging Threat: States Need to Protect Students from Harmful Short-Term Certificate Programs,” Chris Madaio, June 9, 2025, <https://ticas.org/accountability/consumer-protection-state-action-blog-june-2025/>.

³³ U.S. Department of Education, “Office for Civil Rights (OCR),” <https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ocr>.

³⁴ Politico, Education Department dismisses thousands of civil rights complaints at an ‘unheard of’ pace,” Bianca Quilantan, Rebecca Carballo, and Juan Perez Jr., July 8, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/07/08/education-departments-civil-rights-complaint-dismissals-prompt-concern-from-trump-opponents-00439118>.

³⁵ Letter from ED Acting Assistant Secretary Ursprung to Senator Elizabeth Warren, July 21, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ed_response.pdf.

concerns that the Department is failing to protect students who have encountered illegal discrimination.³⁶

ED Has Refused to Explain How It Determined Who to Fire During RIFs

The ED OIG's investigation should also include a review of ED's decision-making prior to the RIFs and an evaluation of whether ED is misleading Congress regarding the scope of the RIFs and the dismantling of ED. During my investigation, ED repeatedly refused to explain how it determined who to fire during the March RIFs. However, it did claim that "No employees working on the core functions of FAFSA or student loan servicing were subject to the Reduction in Force (RIF)," which is demonstrably false given the extensive layoffs at FSA's technology division and Product Management Division—both of which played key roles related to FAFSA—and at the division responsible for overseeing the performance of loan servicers.³⁷

ED's October 2025 RIF Would Have Compromised the Department's Functioning

The ED OIG's investigation should address the alarming RIF that ED announced on October 10, 2025, which would have fired an additional 466 employees at the Department.³⁸ This RIF targeted workers at six of ED's 17 offices, including the vast majority of employees at ED's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and all employees at the office administering grants for "arts, civics, and literacy instruction."³⁹ While this RIF was ultimately reversed by Congress,⁴⁰ at least temporarily, as part of the deal that ended the recent government shutdown on November 12, 2025, the ED OIG's investigation should examine how ED decided to initiate this RIF and determined which employees to try to fire—and whether the Department plans to undermine the agreement by finding other avenues to eliminate these employees.

ED's November 2025 Interagency Agreements Further Threaten the Department's Functioning

Lastly, the ED OIG's investigation should encompass ED's decision, announced on November 18, 2025,⁴¹ to move a range of ED's functions outside of the Department. ED has entered into six interagency agreements entailing the transfer of responsibilities to the Department of Labor,

³⁶ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, August 6, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_letter_to_secretary_mcmahon.pdf; Letter from ED Under Secretary Nicholas Kent to Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/response_from_the_department_of_education_on_office_of_federal_student_aid_and_student_loan_repayment.pdf.

³⁷ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to ED Secretary McMahon, June 4, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_secretary_mcmahon_re_ew-mcmahon_meeting1.pdf.

³⁸ Education Week, "Ed. Dept. Offices Will Be Virtually Wiped Out in Latest Layoffs," Mark Lieberman and Brooke Shultz, October 13, 2025, <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/ed-dept-offices-will-be-virtually-wiped-out-in-latest-layoffs/2025/10>.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ NPR, "Federal special education staff may get their jobs back. But for how long?," Cory Turner, November 13, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/13/nx-sl-5608038/shutdown-special-education-department-layoffs>.

⁴¹ U.S. Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education Announces Six New Agency Partnerships to Break Up Federal Bureaucracy," press release, November 18, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>.

Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior, and State Department. Those responsibilities include the administration of Title I-A funding⁴²—the single largest source of federal funds for K-12 education⁴³—and the management of over fifty⁴⁴ grant programs for rural schools,⁴⁵ veterans’ education,⁴⁶ teacher training,⁴⁷ literacy instruction,⁴⁸ and a range of other purposes.⁴⁹ Moving these functions to agencies that lack experience or expertise in education policy could be disastrous, threatening the timely administration of technical assistance and grant funding that schools, educators, students, and families across the country rely on.

In addition, ED may be breaking federal law by moving its statutory functions outside of the Department without the consent of Congress. Under federal law,⁵⁰ the Department is statutorily required to manage the allocation of Title I-A funding for public K-12 schools,⁵¹ career and technical education grants,⁵² child care funding for parents enrolled in postsecondary education,⁵³ and other critical funding streams. Furthermore, appropriations law that allocates ED’s funding generally prohibits the Department from transferring that funding to other agencies.⁵⁴ And, more

⁴² U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) Elementary and Secondary Education Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-elementary-and-secondary-education-partnership-112465.pdf>.

⁴³ Bipartisan Policy Center, “U.S. Department of Education 101: Federal Funding in K-12 Education,” Christy Wolfe, August 19, 2025, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/u-s-department-of-education-101-federal-funding-in-k-12-education/>.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) Elementary and Secondary Education Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-elementary-and-secondary-education-partnership-112465.pdf>; U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) Postsecondary Education Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-postsecondary-education-partnership-112464.pdf>; U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of State (State) International Education and Foreign Language Studies Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-and-department-of-state-international-education-and-foreign-language-studies-partnership-112461.pdf>.

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) Elementary and Secondary Education Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-elementary-and-secondary-education-partnership-112465.pdf>.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) Postsecondary Education Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-postsecondary-education-partnership-112464.pdf>.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Education, “Fact Sheet: Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) Elementary and Secondary Education Partnership,” <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-elementary-and-secondary-education-partnership-112465.pdf>.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Education, “U.S. Department of Education Announces Six New Agency Partnerships to Break Up Federal Bureaucracy,” press release, November 18, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>.

⁵⁰ Congressional Research Service, “A Summary of Federal Education Laws Administered by the U.S. Department of Education,” Rebecca R. Skinner, David P. Smole, and Adam Stoll, December 12, 2024, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10551>.

⁵¹ 20 U.S.C. 6301–6577.

⁵² Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, Public Law 115-24.

⁵³ 20 U.S.C. 1070e.

⁵⁴ Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Public Law 118-47.

broadly, Secretary McMahon’s crusade to dismantle ED entirely⁵⁵—which these interagency agreements appear to be a step toward—would be blatantly illegal without an act of Congress.⁵⁶

The ED OIG’s investigation should examine how ED determined which responsibilities to relinquish through the interagency agreements, whether ED has violated federal law, and how the interagency agreements are affecting ED’s ability to administer its programs efficiently and effectively.

Conclusion

The dismantling of ED—including ED’s recent move to transfer a range of statutory duties to other agencies⁵⁷—threatens devastating consequences for students, borrowers, and families. I request the ED OIG expand its investigation to encompass the impacts of those policies on the range of issues described in this letter. In addition, I request an update on the present status of the ED OIG’s investigation, including any preliminary findings that will help shed light on the impact of the dismantling of ED on students and families in Massachusetts and beyond. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

⁵⁵ Department of Education, “Statement on President Trump’s Executive Order to Return Power Over Education to States and Local Communities,” press release, March 20, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/statement-president-trumps-executive-order-return-power-over-education-states-and-local-communities>.

⁵⁶ EducationWeek, “Can Trump Do That? Which Actions on Education Are Legal, and Which Ones Aren’t,” Mark Lieberman and Brooke Schultz, March 11, 2025, <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/can-trump-do-that-which-actions-on-education-are-legal-and-which-ones-arent/2025/03>.

⁵⁷ EducationWeek, “Trump Admin. Was Moving Ed. Dept. Programs Elsewhere Before a Court Intervened,” Brooke Schultz, June 11, 2025, <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/trump-admin-was-moving-ed-dept-programs-elsewhere-before-a-court-intervened/2025/06>; United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, “Senate & House Education Leaders Statement on Trump Admin Illegally Moving Department of Education Programs to DOL as Part of Its Efforts to Dismantle the Department,” press release, July 16, 2025, <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/minority/senate-and-house-education-leaders-statement-on-trump-admin-illegally-moving-department-of-education-programs-to-dol-as-part-of-its-efforts-to-dismantle-the-department>; U.S. Department of Education, “U.S. Department of Education Announces Six New Agency Partnerships to Break Up Federal Bureaucracy,” press release, November 18, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy>.