

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-3100

Secretary McMahon:

We write to express our deep concern regarding the future of the Department of Education and the imminent challenges facing New Jersey students, educators, and parents. The Department's mission is to promote student achievement and global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access to high-quality learning opportunities. President Trump's recent executive order<sup>1</sup>, the Department's proposed budget cuts, and mass layoffs of more the half of the Department's workforce illegally bypass Congress's clear funding instructions and must be immediately reversed to avoid further damage to our nation's public education system.

For decades, Congress has supported the Department's goals to enrich the lives of our nation's children and provide students with the educational resources they need to succeed. Federal funding for education has received consistent bipartisan support because these investments are in the best interest of students, parents, and educators. Since its creation, the Department of Education has been a stalwart partner for states and local school districts, serving as a central access point that provides resources, training, and funding for educators and schools to improve teaching methods and educational outcomes. Drastic cuts to the Department's funding and staff will harm students in New Jersey and around the country for years to come.

If the Department of Education is dismantled and federal funds are unlawfully withheld, millions of students and their families in New Jersey will suffer. Local school districts will face massive budget shortfalls leading to teacher layoffs, increased classroom sizes, and higher property taxes. Students, families, and local taxpayers will bear the burden of these irresponsible and unlawful actions. We take special offense that as billionaires, you, Elon Musk, and Donald Trump refer to public support for the education of New Jersey's children as "bloat." If the billionaire cabinet is looking for government efficiency, they should start by cutting Elon Musk's taxpayer-funded contracts rather than our children's education and future.

New Jersey students have benefited tremendously from the relationship between the federal government, the State, and our local school districts. Our public schools have consistently ranked among the best in the nation, particularly for K-12 students, as a direct result of this partnership.<sup>2</sup> According to the Nation's Report Card, fourth graders in New Jersey are ranked tenth in

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<sup>1</sup> ["Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities" The White House](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Nation's Report Card, New Jersey State Profile, U.S. Department of Education](#)

mathematics and third in reading scores, while eighth graders ranked second in both categories last year.

Specifically, we urge you to protect and preserve Title I funding that provides vital financial resources to local education agencies (LEAs) to ensure students from low-income families or disadvantaged backgrounds can accomplish their academic goals. In Fiscal Year 2024, Congress appropriated \$18.4 billion to Title 1 Part A programs, including \$457 million awarded to New Jersey with an additional \$32 million awarded for school improvements. Over 556,000 New Jersey students from low-income backgrounds – 43 percent of New Jersey’s student population – have benefited from these critical investments.


We also urge you to preserve Title II Part A programs that help LEAs improve the quality of education by supporting professional development, recruitment, and retention for teachers, principals, and education support staff. These programs are vital, especially as the nation faces a significant teacher shortage that is already having a devastating impact on our classrooms. Congress appropriated \$2.19 billion toward this program in Fiscal Year 2024, including \$46 million awarded to New Jersey to help ensure our educators have the qualifications and resources necessary to provide our students with the highest quality education.

Additionally, Special Education Programs like Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs are also critical as they support 7.4 million students with disabilities nationwide, including 243,000 students in New Jersey. The Department of Education provided \$464 million to New Jersey last year to support these students, who collectively reflect 19 percent of New Jersey’s student population. Reductions in IDEA funding would rob special needs students and those with disabilities of the vital resources they need to succeed in the classroom, while also burdening families and limiting access to special education services.

We appreciate the work that the Department of Education has done for decades to support students and propel our education system forward. We applaud the work of the public servants at the Department and educators in New Jersey and around the country who have dedicated their careers to improving the lives of students. We strongly urge you to reconsider your plans to shut down the Department of Education. This misguided proposal will only increase costs, reduce access to education, and harm America’s students. We hope you will take these concerns seriously and work with us to strengthen the Department of Education’s ability to achieve its mission.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



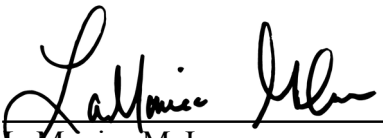
Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



Nellie Pou  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress