



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 250183

Introduced March 6, 2025

Councilmember Thomas

RESOLUTION

Opposing any attempts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education or slash federal funding for public school programs that support low-income students and students with disabilities.

WHEREAS, The Trump administration has begun dismantling the U.S. Department of Education without transparency or the required consent of Congress. In a bicameral letter to the Acting Secretary of Education sent on February 21, 2025, members of Congress demanded answers for 'what appears to be a series of steps intended to achieve the illegal elimination of the Department that will undermine the ability of the Department to effectively administer and oversee federal education programs and funds, exposing them to increased risk for waste, fraud, and abuse; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Education and its more than 4,000 federal employees have never set or imposed curriculum on locally authorized public school districts. Rather, the Department of Education enforces civil rights law and provides support to local districts to ensure equal access to education for all students, including those with disabilities and those from low-income households; and

WHEREAS, Gutting the Department of Education would mean fewer teachers and support staff, more crowded classrooms, and fewer pathways to higher education for middle- and working-class students; and

WHEREAS, Gutting and slashing the Department of Education would increase the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse while hurting students and communities:

- 26 million vulnerable kids in every school district across the nation - rural, suburban and urban - will lose critical services designed to get them ahead and on grade level.
- 7.5 million students with disabilities (15 percent of students) in every community in America will lose access to special education services funded by the federal government.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 250183 continued

- 10 million students from working-class families could lose needs-based Pell Grants or subsidized loans, increasing college costs for working-class families.
- 12 million students across all 50 states would lose access to career and technical education programs designed to help them master the skills and knowledge required for employment in today's rapidly changing economy; and

WHEREAS, The impact of gutting the Department of Education would be disastrous for Philadelphia public schools and their vulnerable student populations. The School District of Philadelphia currently receives \$178 million in Title 1 funding for low-income students, \$56 million in IDEA funding for students with disabilities and special needs, \$7 million in Perkins funding for career and technical education programs, and \$86 million in reimbursements for school meals; and

WHEREAS, Dismantling the Department of Education and gutting federal support for education and healthcare will put a tremendous strain on communities (rural, suburban, and urban) across the nation. Students will either lose services they rely on, or states and communities will have to raise taxes to maintain them; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia educators, elected officials, and residents fought long and hard to win back local control of public schools, and they will not back down in the face of bullying or intimidation from elected or unelected opponents of public education in Washington; and

WHEREAS, On March 4th, 2025, Philadelphia public school educators, staff, and families participated in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) National Day of Action to stand up against attacks on public education and opportunity for America's youth. Community leaders and allies are invited to help distribute informational materials outside of Philadelphia public schools in the morning and afternoon, and are invited to join a rally in defense of public education at 10:30 a.m. at Widener Memorial School, the only public school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania wholly dedicated to serving students with special needs and disabilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the U.S. federal government to preserve its longstanding commitment to supporting public education and education access to all students regardless of wealth, race, disability, or origin.