



## ITCA Update

March 24, 2025

This week's update reports on activities occurring in Washington DC directly related to our mission and purpose. The Congress returns to Washington DC this week and focus will return to the budget resolution process. ITCA will continue to provide federal updates on Monday of each week.

**Executive Order to Dismantle The Department of Education** On March 20, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order, "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities," stating that the "Department of Education's main functions can, and should, be returned to the States."

The order directs the Secretary of Education, "to the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law, to take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education and return authority over education to the States and local communities while ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs, and benefits on which Americans rely."

Further, the order directs the Secretary of Education to "ensure that the allocation of any Federal Department of Education funds is subject to rigorous compliance with Federal law and Administration policy, including the requirement that any program or activity receiving Federal assistance terminate illegal discrimination obscured under the label "diversity, equity, and inclusion" or similar terms and programs promoting gender ideology." The order can be found at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/improving-education-outcomes-by-empowering-parents-states-and-communities/>

**Secretary's Press Release** Following the release of the President's Executive Order, Secretary of Education Linda McMahon released a press statement, reinforcing the Executive Order saying that the administration "will empower states to take charge and advocate for and implement what is best for students, families, and educators in their communities." The press release does not share any details on the plans or timelines for changes to the programs administered by the Department of

Education. The statement does reassure the public that closing the department "does not mean cutting off funds from those who depend on them—we will continue to support K-12 students, students with special needs, college student borrowers, and others who rely on essential programs. We're going to follow the law and eliminate the bureaucracy responsibly by working through Congress to ensure a lawful and orderly transition."

The press release is located at: <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/statement-president-trumps-executive-order-return-power-over-education-states-and-local-communities>

**Next Steps** There are no public details about how the Executive Order will be implemented, including the plans and activities that will occur or their timing. A question that needs to be answered such as "What does it mean to return these programs to the states and communities given the statute is very clear on federal and state roles and responsibilities?",

Some information has been released verbally since the order was issued. Last Friday, in a press discussion at the White House, the President said that student loans will move under the Small Business Administration, and Special Education services, along with nutrition programs, will move to the Department of Health and Human Services. He suggested the moves would occur "immediately." In addition, the Secretary appeared on one of the Sunday news shows discussing the Executive Order saying it would not lead to "any defunding for those programs."

Congressional action is needed to eliminate the department. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), the Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee, has announced his plans to introduce a bill to eliminate the department.

**Rud Turnbull Has Passed Away** ITCA is sad to announce the passing of H. Rutherford (Rud) Turnbull 111, a lifelong advocate for children with disabilities and their families. Rud's work was as a teacher, legal scholar, visionary and mentor for so many who work in early intervention and special education. His advocacy for children with disabilities and their families deeply inspired many. He worked alongside his wife, Ann P. Turnbull, contributing so much to the field that will always be grateful. To learn more about Rud's life and contributions, see the tribute at: [Special Education Today Tribute](#)