

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 1018

What Would Happen to Public Education in America in a 2nd Trump Presidency?

Australian politicians and policy makers have a habit of making American mistakes 5 to 10 years after they have been introduced in that country. If only for that reason Australian supporters of public education should be both aware and worried by the plans for Education under a second Trump Presidency. These are spelt out in some detail in what is commonly called "Project 2025".

[The Heritage Foundation-led Project 2025](#) has conservative plans for every corner of the federal government, including the Department of Education. [The Project 2025 document](#) outlines four main aims:

restore the family as the centrepiece of American life;

dismantle the administrative state;

defend the nation's sovereignty and borders;

and secure God-given individual rights to live freely.

It is one of several policy papers for a platform broadly known as Agenda 47 - so-called because Trump would be America's 47th president if he won.

Heritage says Project 2025 was written by several former Trump appointees and reflects input from more than 100 conservative organisations.

Donald Trump's campaign haven't outlined many specifics, but this recently published document details conservative plans to completely remake the executive branch offers some possibilities. Among them:

- Title I, the \$18 billion federal fund that supports low-income students, would disappear in a decade.
- Federal special education funds would flow to school districts as block grants with no strings attached, or even to savings accounts for parents to use on private school or other education expenses.
- The U.S. Department of Education would be eliminated.
- The federal government's ability to enforce civil rights laws in schools would be scaled back.

The proposals are contained in a comprehensive policy agenda that's part of a Heritage Foundation-led initiative called [Project 2025: Presidential Transition Project](#), which includes nearly 900 pages of detailed plans for virtually every corner of the federal government and a database of potential staffers for a conservative administration. It will also feature a playbook for the first 180 days of a new term.

Project 2025 involves former Trump administration officials and other allies of the former president, as well as [dozens of aligned advocacy organizations](#). One of those is Moms for Liberty, [the Florida-based group that rose to national prominence](#) fighting school boards over COVID-19 safety protocols and has endorsed conservative school board candidates across the country in recent years.

On the campaign trail, [Trump has said that parents should elect school principals](#), called for merit pay for teachers and the abolition of teacher tenure, promised to cut federal funding to schools pushing progressive social ideas, and [pledged to establish universal school choice](#).

But because he's released little in the way of detailed plans, Project 2025's [44-page agenda for the U.S. Department of Education](#) offers the clearest picture yet of the education priorities Trump could pursue in a second term, and how a second Trump administration could use the federal government to advance conservative policies like [private school choice](#) and [parents' rights](#) that have taken root in many Republican-led states.

Despite the involvement of so many Trump allies, the former president's campaign hasn't officially endorsed Project 2025. His campaign didn't respond to requests for comment from Education Week.

Nothing more than 'a statistics-gathering agency'

Project 2025's education agenda revolves around shrinking the federal government's footprint on public education.

"The federal government should confine its involvement in education policy to that of a statistics-gathering agency that disseminates information to the states," the document reads.

Under the Project 2025 agenda, states would be able to opt out of federal education programs, whose "regulatory burden far exceeds the federal government's less than 10 percent financing share of K-12 education," the document asserts.

States would also have full authority to decide how to spend Title I funds, which currently go to schools with large populations of low-income students.

Under the Project 2025 plan, those funds would first flow to states as "no-strings-attached" block grants before they're phased out in a decade. Parents of students attending Title I schools could even have access to the federal funds in "micro-education savings accounts" to pay for private education or supplemental services for their kids. The plan outlines similar ambitions for funds distributed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the nation's special education law, though it doesn't propose phasing them out.

"The future of education freedom and reform in the states is bright and will shine brighter when regulations and red tape from Washington are eliminated," the document reads.

Rick Hess, director of Education Policy Studies at the right-leaning American Enterprise Institute, said he's sympathetic to the goal of reducing administrative requirements that accompany federal programs,

but he hasn't seen evidence that there's enough support among congressional Republicans to end or radically transform Title I or IDEA.

([House Republicans approved a budget last year that would cut Title I by 80 percent](#), but that plan was bound to fail with Democrats in charge of the Senate and White House.)

Project 2025 is a sign that Republicans, once they've returned to power, intend to use the tools of the executive branch more deliberately to achieve their education goals.

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