



Washington, DC Update Higher Education Policy and Politics in 2025

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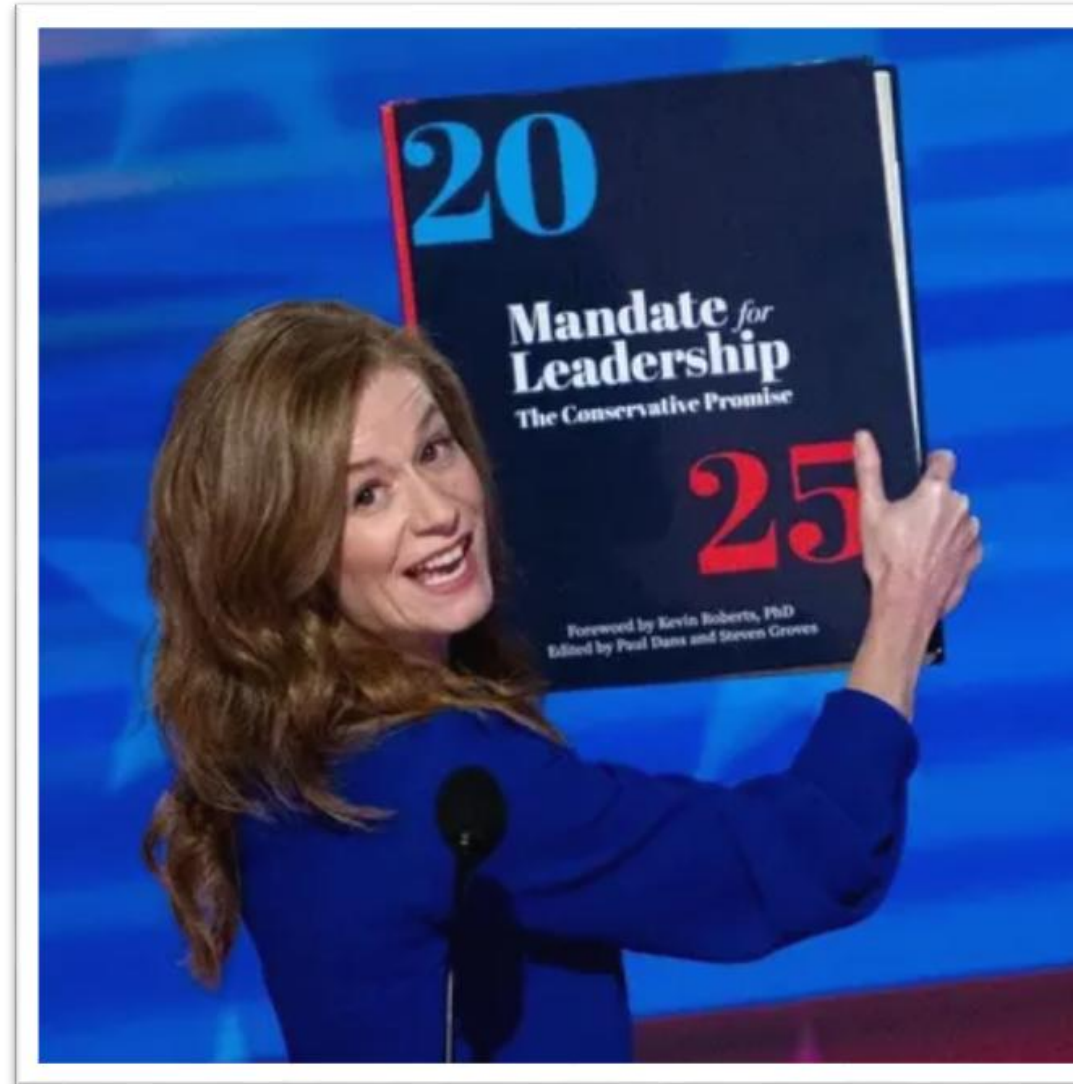
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Agenda

1. Project 2025 Overview - Higher Education Implications
2. This Isn't Normal - What's At Stake?
3. U.S. Department of Education Update
4. NEA's Reputation and Effectiveness on Capitol Hill
5. Congressional Update
6. Story Sharing & [NEA.org/Protect](https://www.nea.org/Protect)
7. NEA Framework Against Threats
8. Q&A

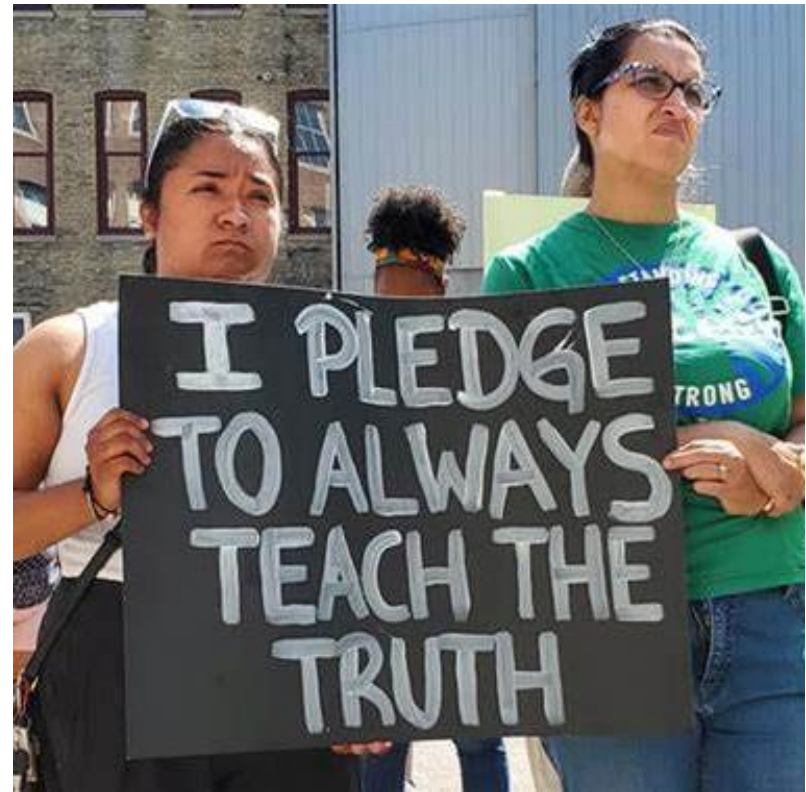
Project 2025 – Trump's Blueprint

- Attacks on academic freedom, limiting what students and faculty can learn and research
- Elimination of Income-Based Repayment Plans
- Elimination of Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)
- Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education
- Removing guardrails on college accreditation
- Rollback essential Title IX protections for LGBTQ students and women



No, This Isn't Normal – What's At Stake

- Separation of Powers and Executive Orders
- Threats to Academic Freedom
- Research-chilling policies and practices
- Threats to academic workers and faculty
- Dismantling protections for students and taxpayers



No, This Isn't Normal – What's At Stake?

- Freedom of Speech, Academic Freedom, Assembly
 - Directed threats of deportation for international students and faculty that participate in protest
 - Mahmoud Khalil
- Dismantling Protections for Students with Disabilities
 - Gutting Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
- Threatening the Higher-Ed Triad - Federal, State, Accreditation

No, This Isn't Normal – What's Already Happened?

- Office of Civil Rights Investigation into 60 institutions
- Executive order on Public Service Loan Forgiveness eligibility
- Linking federal research funding to political priorities.
 - NIH
 - NSF



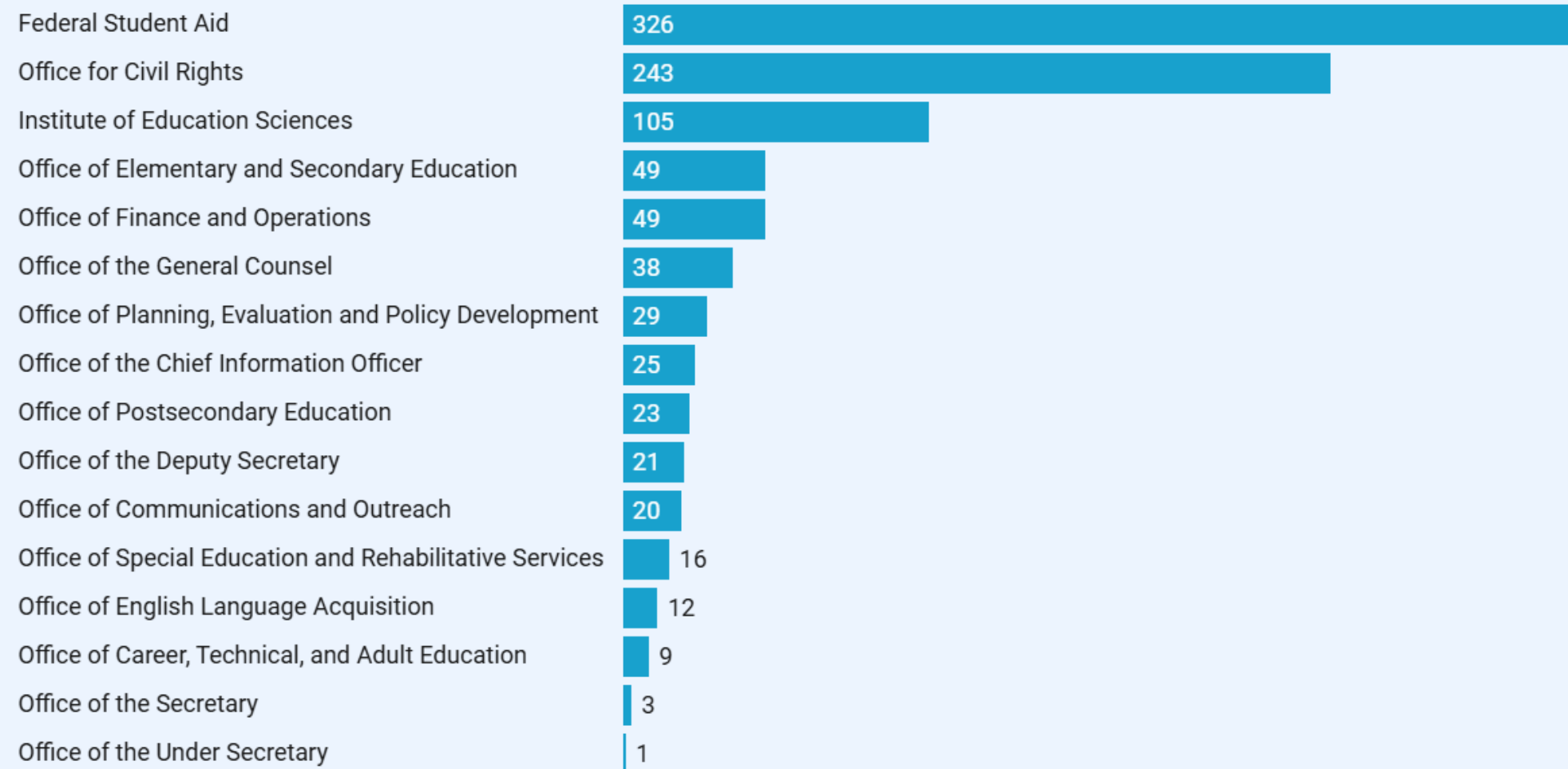
U.S. Department of Education Update

- March 11 RIF
- DOGE
- Effect of Executive Orders
- Dear Colleague "DEI" Letter
- The "End DEI Portal"



A Snapshot of who Got Cut at ED on March 11

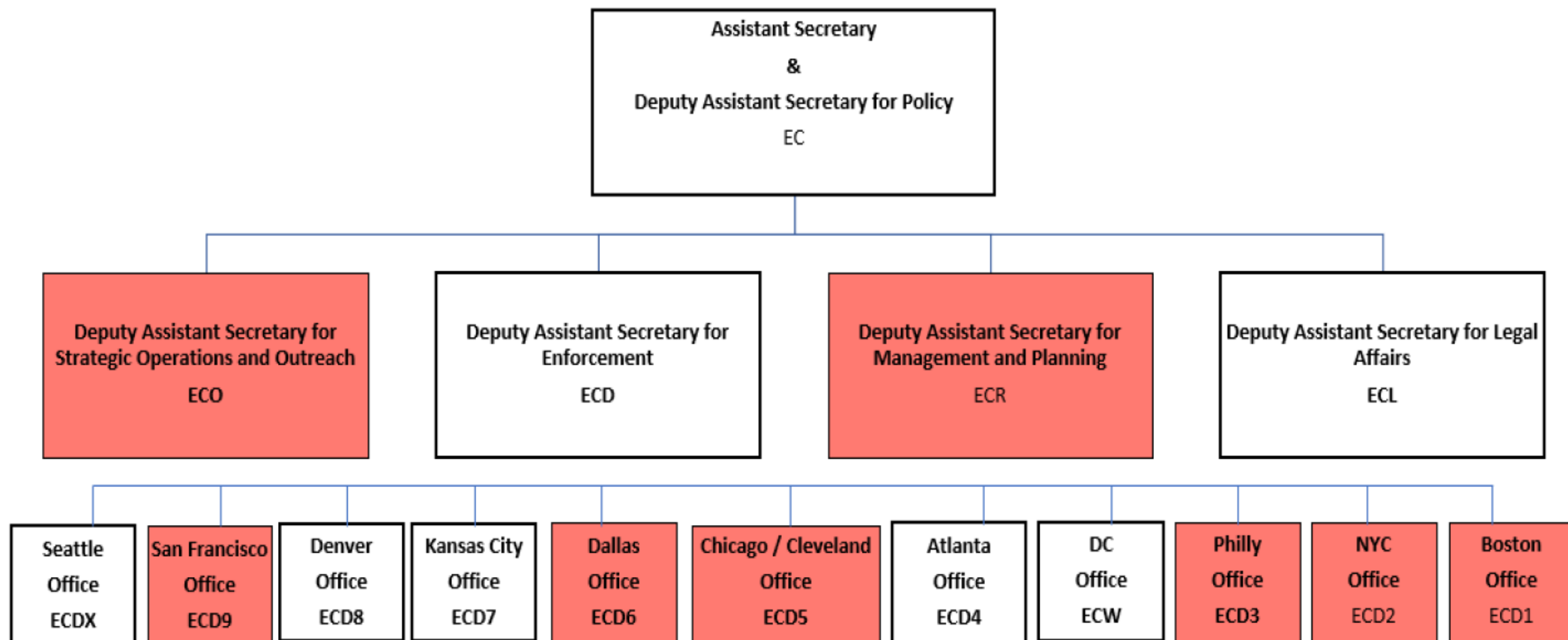
The number of employees who received notification they were being put on leave.



Source: <https://edreformnow.org/2025/03/12/three-charts-showing-who-secretary-mcmahon-cut-at-the-department-of-education/>

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)



Institute of Education Sciences
(IES)

Org: ER

Director
Matthew Soldner (A)

National Board for
Education Sciences

Org: ERB

Deputy Director for
Administration & Policy
Jonathan Bettis

Deputy Director
For Science
Anne Ricciuti

Org: ERA

Org: ERD

Deputy Director for
Communications
Management
Beth Greene

Data Sciences Unit
VACANT

Org: ERR

National Center for
Education Research
Elizabeth Albro

Org: ERRP - Policy &
Systems Division

Org: ERRT – Teaching &
Learning Division

Org: ERN

National Center for
Education Statistics
Peggy Carr

Org: ERN1 – Annual Report &
Information Staff

Org: ERN2 – Stats standards &
Data Confd Staff

Org: ERNB – Administrative Data Division

Org: ERND – Sample Surveys Division

Org: ERNS – Assessments Division

Org: ERT

National Center for
Educational Evaluation &
Regional Assistance Matthew
Soldner

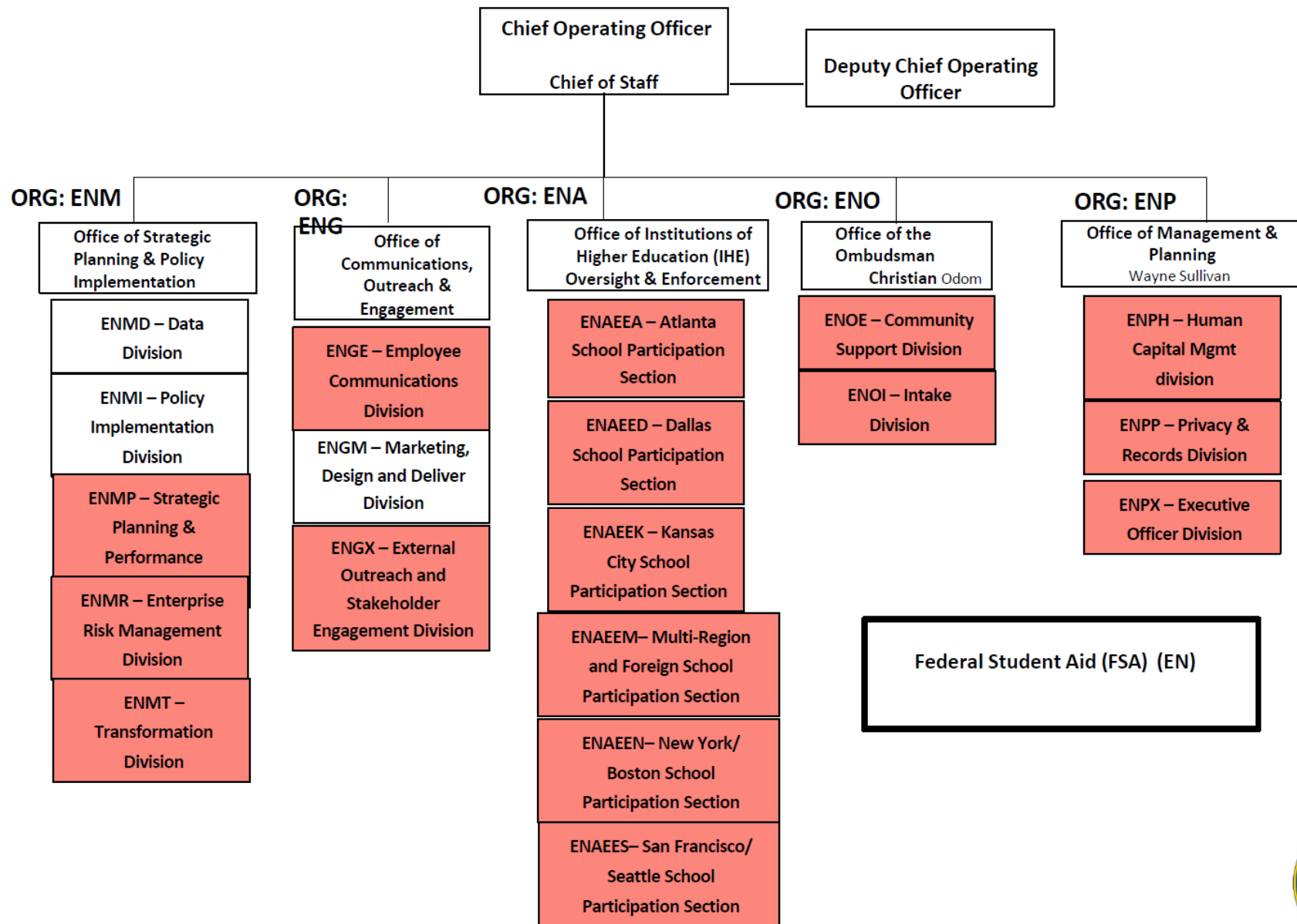
Org: ERTE – Evaluation
Division

Org: ERTK – Knowledge
Use Division

ERH

National Center for
Special Education Research
Nathan Jones





February 2025

Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)

Office of Postsecondary Education (EP)

James Bergeron (D)*

*Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Chief of Staff
(vacant)

Office of Postsecondary Education

Management & Planning (EP)

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Tiwanda Burse

**Executive Office
(EP1)**
Executive Officer
LaKisha Reid

**Management Support Unit
(EP2)**
Director
(vacant)

Policy, Planning & Innovation (EPA)

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Victor Shirley

**Policy Development, Analysis & Accreditation Service
(EPAE)**
Senior Director
Scott Prince
Administrative and Auxiliary Services
Director - Valerie Lafor

**Policy Coordination Group
(EPAE1)**
Director
Tamy Abernathy

**Policy Development Group
(EPAE2)**
Director
(vacant)

**Accreditation Group
(EPAE3)**
Director
Elizabeth Duggett

**Policy Analysis & Forecasting Group
(EPAE4)**
Director
(vacant)

**Special Initiatives Group
(EPAE5)**
Director
(vacant)

International & Foreign Language Education (EPF)

Deputy Assistant Secretary
(vacant)

International & Foreign Language Education (EPF)

Senior Director
Cheryl Gibbs

**Advanced Training & Research
Group
(EPFR)**
Director
Sarah Beaton

**International Studies Group
(EPFS)**
Director
Gary Lima

Higher Education Programs (EPH)

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Gaby Watts

**Institutional Service
(EPHP)**
Senior Director
James Laws (Acting)

**Student Service
(EPHS)**
Senior Director
James Davis (Acting)

**Institutional Group A
(EPHP1)**
Director
James Laws

**Student Group A
(EPHS1)**
Director
Sharon Easterling

**Institutional Group B
(EPHP2)**
Director
(vacant)

**Student Group B
(EPHS2)**
Director
James Davis

**Institutional Group C
(EPHP3)**
Director
Stacey Slijepoevic

**Student Group B
(EPHS2)**
Director
ReShone Moore

**Fund for the Improvement of
Postsecondary Education
(EPHP4)**
Director
(vacant)

**Student Group C
(EPHS3)**
Director
(vacant)

**Institutional Programs Development
Group
(EPHP5)**
Director
(vacant)

**Student Programs Development Group
(EPHS4)**
Director
Emory Morrison

Boards and Committees

Jacob K. Javits Fellow Program Fellowship Board
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity- George Smith, Executive Director (reports directly to Senior Director of Policy Development, Analysis & Accreditation Service)
National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation- George Smith, Executive Director (reports directly to Senior Director of Policy Development, Analysis & Accreditation Service)
Historically Black College and University Capital Financing Advisory Board- Donald Watson, Executive Director (reports directly to Senior Director of Institutional Service)
National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

Project 2025 – Trump's Blueprint

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Penta

2024 Policymaker Research NEA's Federal Policy Brand Insights

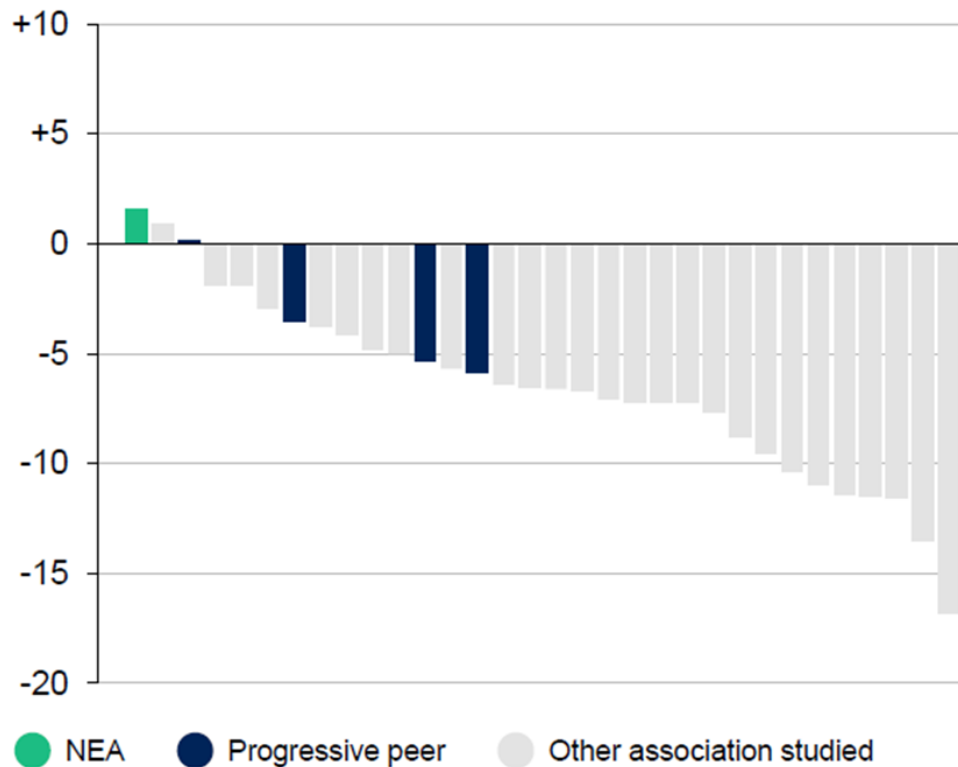
November 2024



However, most progressive peers also declined with Democrats, and NEA was one of only two organizations to strengthen its reputation in 2024

Change in overall policymaker reputation

All assns. studied from 2023 to 2024, among Dems.



NEA ranked in the Top 25% of associations studied, on every measure of long-term policy reputation (Respect, Access, Influence, and Authority)



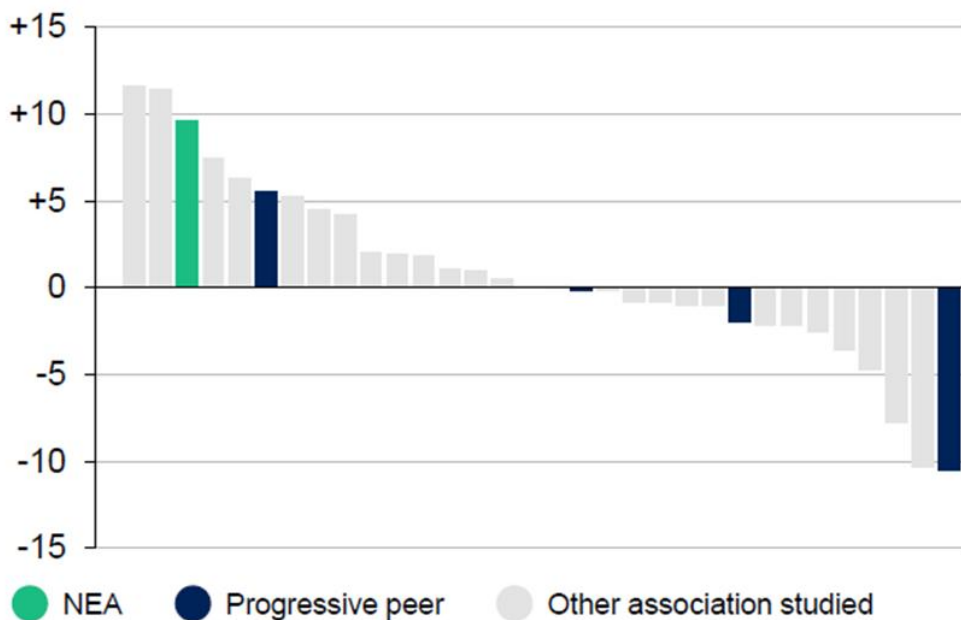
"NEA is a strong force with significant influence. They can be really helpful in certain situations, particularly when weighing in on what teachers are seeing and what schools need."

— *Education Expert,
Private Sector (D)*

NEA also made substantial progress in building its reputation and credibility with Republicans, where its gains again outpaced each of its peers

Change in overall policymaker reputation

All assns. studied from 2023 to 2024, among GOP



"NEA serves as a huge voice in education. We don't really hear from other organized education groups, especially when it comes to funding in the education sector. Their representation of teachers and the broader sector is pretty balanced. They do as much as they can on the federal level for teachers, advocating primarily for things like paid leave, though the reach is somewhat limited."

— Legislative Assistant, House (R)

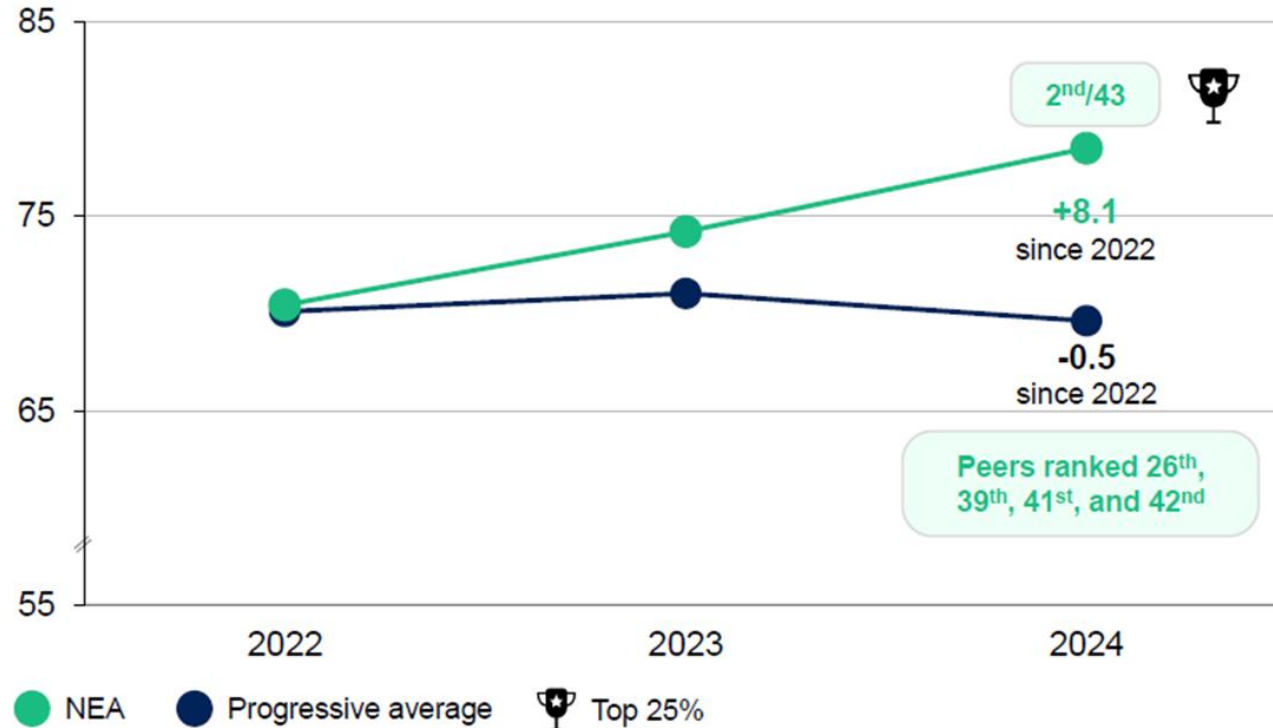


NEA was the only association that improved its reputation with Republicans and Democrats in 2024

Republicans valued the "perspective" and "credibility" of NEA's members, whose engagement drove further improvements in NEA's grassroots advocacy effectiveness (in absolute terms and relative to other progressive groups)

Grassroots: Does NEA effectively mobilize individual stakeholders?

NEA vs. progressive average from 2022 to 2024 among Republicans



"NEA often brings constituents into meetings, which adds a layer of credibility and provides an on-the-ground perspective that we wouldn't see otherwise."

— Policy Advisor,
House (R)

The engagement of NEA's leadership further bolstered the association's profile among Republicans and established additional credibility

"**The national NEA is visible**, especially through **interviews with their president** on television programs and similar platforms."

— *Senior Staff, Senate (R)**

"NEA's leadership is **very credible** and everything they send is **factually well-supported**."

— *Legislative Assistant, House (R)*



A nighttime photograph of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The building is illuminated with warm white lights, highlighting its classical architecture, including the large dome and the portico with columns. In the foreground on the left, a decorative, lit-up lamp post is visible. The sky is a deep, dark blue. The text "Congressional Update" is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

Congressional Update

Secretary of Education Linda McMahon

- Linda McMahon is a billionaire with **no significant background in education**, nor any understanding of what it takes to help students thrive.
- Spent most of her career as CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment, a company accused of shady business practices and abusive treatment of employees.
- During her confirmation hearing she shared actions to carry out the Project 2025 plan and suggested measures to enact despite lack of congressional approval.
 - The Department of Education is NOT a national school board. Nor does it control the power of the purse—*that is the role of Congress*.
- Secretary of Education is not a “learn on the job” position



NEA in Action





Budget Reconciliation

What is Reconciliation?

- ✓ “Reconciliation” is a budget process used nowadays to pass **partisan legislation**.
- ✓ Generally, because of the **filibuster**, it takes 60 votes to pass a bill in the Senate—but not a reconciliation bill.
- ✓ Reconciliation plays by **special rules** that require only a simple majority—51 votes instead of the usual 60, or just 50 votes when the vice president is of the same party as the majority.
- ✓ The reconciliation process begins with each chamber passing an **identical budget “resolution”** that is not law and not signed by the president.
- ✓ The budget resolution contains **reconciliation instructions** that direct some committees to achieve certain budgetary effects over a specified period of time. Committees then write legislation consistent with the instructions.
- ✓ Provisions of the reconciliation bill must involve **spending, taxes, or both**.
- ✓ Generally, the **Senate parliamentarian** decides what stays in the bill and what goes.
- ✓ The reconciliation process cannot be used to cut funding for **Title I or special education**—for that, lawmakers must use the annual budget process called “appropriations.”

Reconciliation Timeline



March: House and Senate GOP work to reconcile significant differences in budget resolution to agree on one resolution.



Early April: Optimistic timeframe for the House to vote on reconciled resolution. Senate would follow.



Remainder of April: Committees of jurisdiction craft and vote on the details of what becomes the reconciliation bill.



Early May: Most optimistic timeframe for House and Senate votes on reconciliation bill.



NOTE: Congress usually takes longer than leadership hopes and projects; this could drag out to Memorial Day or even beyond.

Billionaires Don't Need More Giveaways

- Biggest beneficiaries of **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act** passed during first Trump administration were households with incomes in the **top 1 percent**.
Republicans look to extend this.
- Extending provisions of the law that expire at the end of 2025 would cost **\$4.3 trillion**.
- Over the long term, it is counterproductive to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations by slashing investments in the **students who are our nation's future**.

Threats to Higher Education in Reconciliation

The Republican Roadmap - The College Cost & Reduction Act

- Diminish access to postsecondary education
 - Make student loan repayment less affordable
 - Efforts to privatize student lending and reduce the federal role in providing financial assistance
 - More delinquency and default rates
 - Taxes on scholarships
- Hamstring the effectiveness of Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)
- Remove essential safeguards against proprietary institutions

Limit Federal Role in Student Lending

Capping the total amount of federal student aid a student can receive annually at the “median cost of college.”

- \$50,000 for undergraduate students
 - \$100,000 for graduate students, and;
 - \$150,000 for students in graduate professional programs.
- Other proposals even call to eliminate federal lending all together for graduate and professional student loans.
 - Exceptions would be made for programs that demonstrate "strong student outcomes" related to employment and completion

Where NEA stands?

- *Any caps on federal borrowing will bar many students in underserved communities from receiving a federal financial aid package sufficient to cover the cost of college.*
- *Disadvantaged students would resort to private loans, exposing them to higher interest rates and other predatory practices.*
- *While some proposals provide exceptions to the caps that vary by degree program, we are concerned that the criteria are too focused on potential earnings and discourage students from pursuing careers in public service, such as education.*



Hamstringing Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)

PSLF has provided loan forgiveness to more than **1 million** educators, firefighters, police officers, armed service members, nurses, and numerous other public sector workers.

Despite this, Republicans will seek to either end, limit, or hamper the effectiveness of PSLF by:

- 1) Enact a cap to how much can be forgiven under PSLF;
- 2) Make only undergraduate loans be eligible for forgiveness;
- 3) Further limit which professions would be eligible for the program; and
- 4) Reducing the effectiveness of income-driven repayment programs.





Ending Safeguards & Loose Accreditation

- 1) Repeal the 90/10 rule and gainful employment.
 - If they are lifted, for-profit and other proprietary institutions will be free to take even greater advantage of the lower-income students they predominantly serve.
- 2) Eliminate the borrower defense to repayment rule - it provides relief to defrauded borrowers if they attended an institution that closed, misled them, or engaged in misconduct.
- 3) Weaken the nation's higher education accreditation system:
 - Requiring an accreditor's board or governing body to have business representation
 - Fast track outsourcing programs
 - Lowering accreditation standards
 - More leeway for struggling or failing programs

Share Your Story – What's Happening on Your Campus?

- Recent federal executive orders - particularly those titled “**Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling**” and “**Restoring America’s Fighting Force**” - are having real consequences for students, educators, and communities.
- We need more than just numbers—we need ***real stories*** to illustrate the human and systemic impact of these measures.



Share Your Story – Aid Our Legal Battles

- If your affiliates, members, or students have been affected, we encourage you to share your experience.
- To share, use this [form](#).
- Please include details that help illustrate the broader impact—whether it's attendance numbers, resource shortages, grant rescissions, policy changes, or shifts in school climate.
- By submitting a story, you are indicating your interest in sharing information that NEA may wish to use in litigation. NEA staff will follow up for more details as needed.



One day of news – how to manage it all

POLITICS

U.S. Postal Service will cut workforce by 10,000 after signing deal with Elon Musk's DOGE

● March 13, 2025

PUBLISHED THU, MAR 13 2025 2:46 PM EDT | UPDATED THU, MAR 13 2025 2:29 PM EDT

POLITICS

'I'm not going to bend at all': Trump doubles down on tariff plans as stocks sink

PUBLISHED THU, MAR 13 2025 1:23 PM EDT | UPDATED THU, MAR 13 2025 2:29 PM EDT

Assessing the Damage After the Education Department's Mass Layoffs

The Trump administration's deep cuts at the department hit some offices harder than others, but the effects will likely be felt by students, families and institutions across the country.

Trump Wants to Speed Up Deportations With Alien Enemies Act *What to Know*

The Alien Enemies Act of 1798 gives the president wartime powers to deport undocumented immigrants with little to no due process.

Trump freezes \$1 billion in food aid given to local schools and food banks to help low-income families

Monitoring the Federal Landscape

Executive Order or
Presidential Directive

Congressional
Legislation

Agency
Guidance
Documents

Agency
Enforcement/Non
Policymaking
Actions

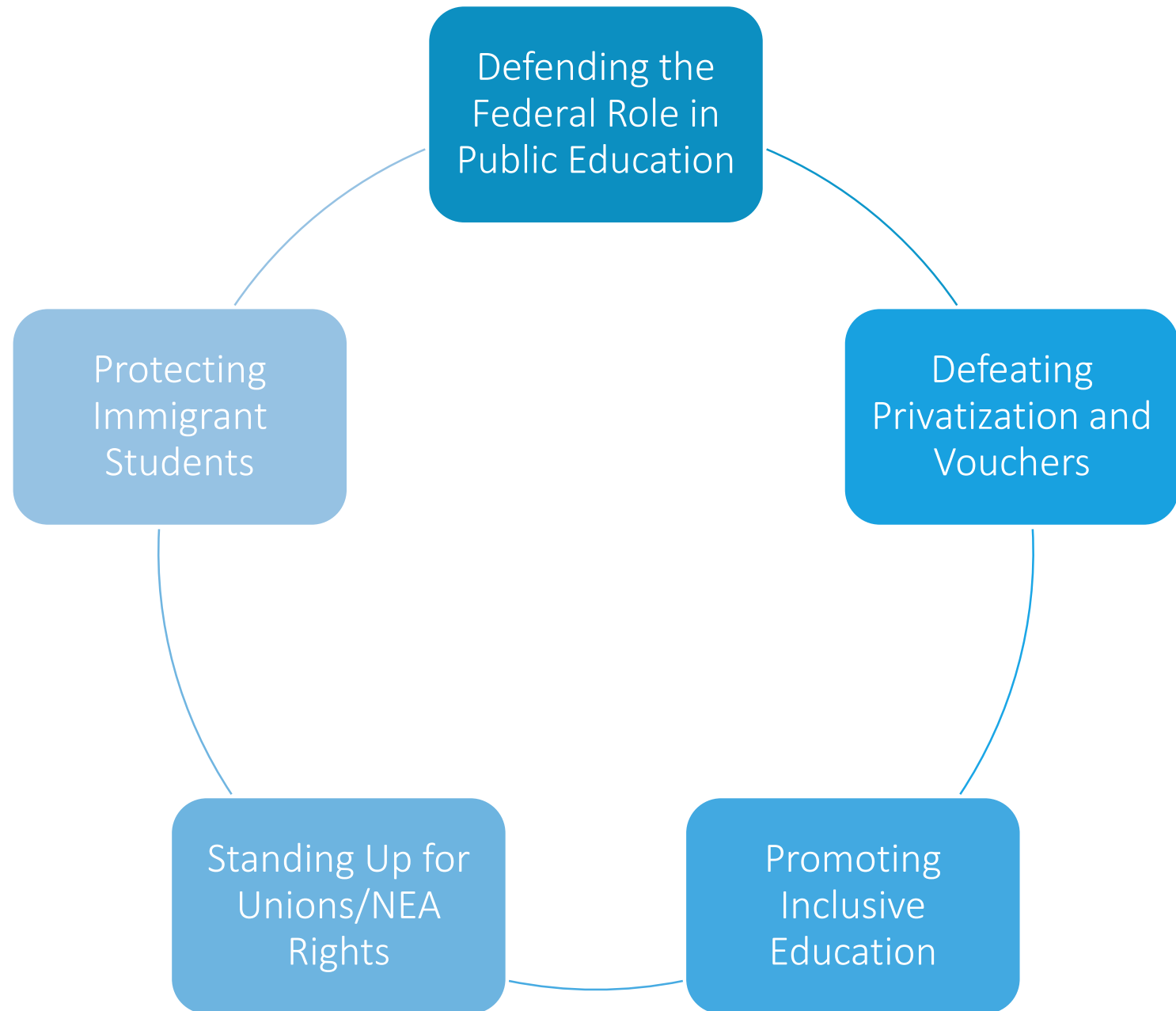


New/Amend
Regulations

Recission
of Existing
Regulations

Agency Grant
Conditioning &
Prioritization

Issue Area Teams



Response Evaluation – NEA Core Values

EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY

A JUST SOCIETY

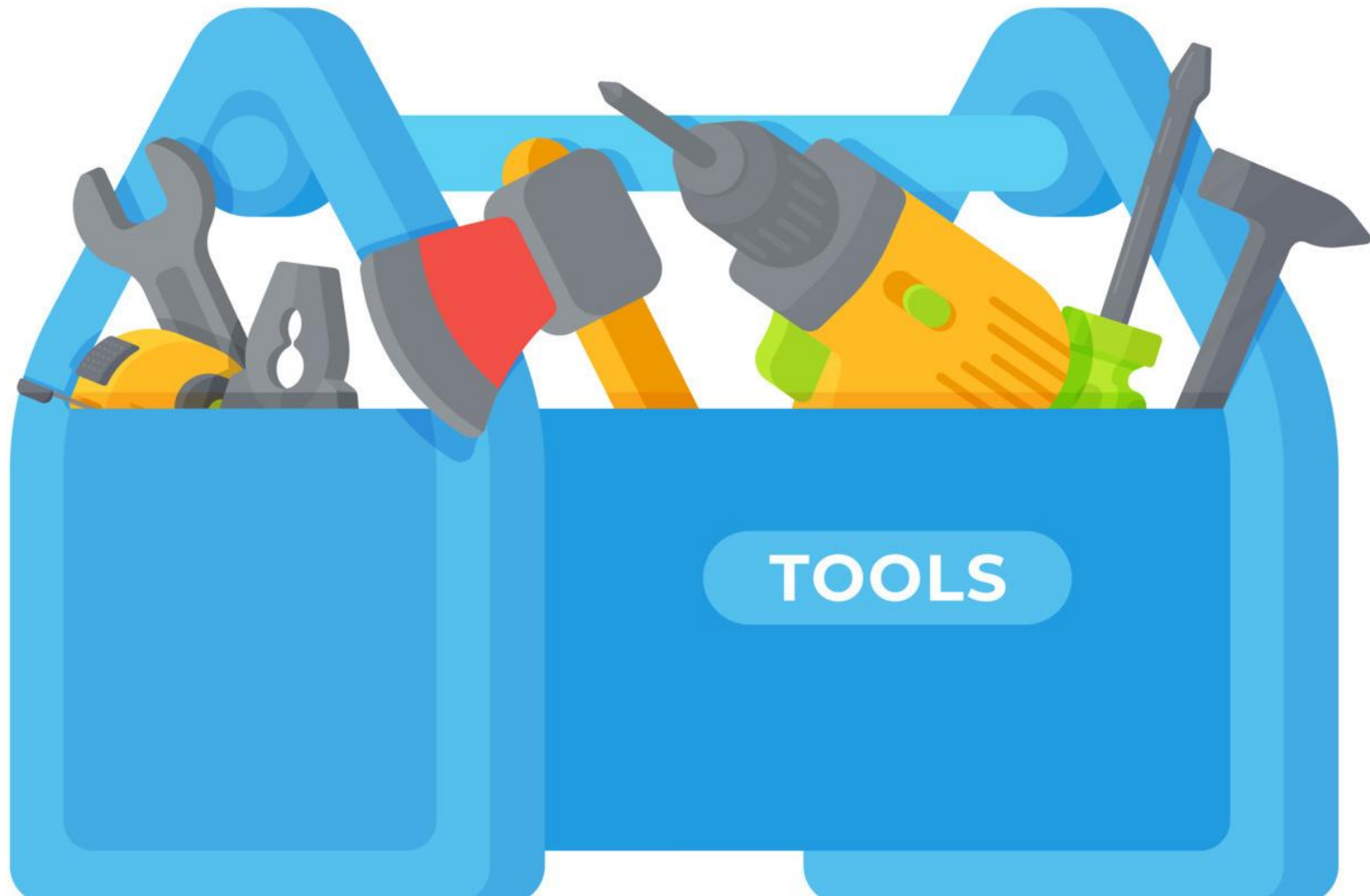
DEMOCRACY

PROFESSIONALISM

PARTNERSHIP

COLLECTIVE ACTION

How do we respond?





www.NEA.org/Protect



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