



## Trump's education cuts could devastate local public schools. You should care.

*By, Keith Poston, President, WakeEd Partnership*

Most Americans may not follow the daily political drama in Washington, but one alarming proposal demands your attention: the push to slash federal education funding and eliminate the U.S. Department of Education.

This plan, championed by President Trump and advanced through budget cuts and layoffs led by Elon Musk and the Department on Government Efficiency (DOGE), could have devastating consequences for students in the Wake County Public School System.

**Federal Funding: A Lifeline for Wake County Public Schools** -- While North Carolina's public schools are primarily state and locally funded, federal dollars play a crucial role. In

Wake County, about 6% of the district's operating budget—roughly \$141.2 million—comes from federal funds. These dollars cannot be replaced locally. If the Department of Education and its funding disappear, students and families will suffer. Here's what's at risk:

**Students with Disabilities** -- More than 20,500 Wake County schools students with disabilities rely on federally funded services. These programs include speech therapy, autism support, and other critical classroom resources. Without federal aid, these students could lose essential services they depend on daily, making it harder for them to succeed in school and beyond.

**Title I and Pre-K Programs** -- Federal Title I funding supports schools with a high percentage of low-income families. Wake County receives \$28 million for Title I schools and Pre-K programs, ensuring students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to qualified teachers, academic interventions, and essential resources. Losing this funding would leave some of Wake's most vulnerable students without the support they need to succeed.

**Teacher Recruitment and Retention** -- This past week the Trump Administration eliminated millions in teacher training and recruitment grants, including an \$11.8 million Wake County Schools grant that has been critical in modernizing hiring practices and funding dedicated recruitment staff. This grant has helped reduce teacher vacancies, particularly in high-need schools. Wake County Schools credits the grant to contributing to their current low teacher vacancy rate compared to the years before new recruiters and teacher supports were added. Without these resources, teacher shortages could worsen, impacting education quality across the county.

**Wake County's Magnet Schools** -- Wake County's nationally recognized magnet programs depend on competitive federal grants. Currently, \$16.1 million supports magnet programs at 13 of Wake's 61 magnet schools:

- Dillard Drive Magnet Elementary & Middle
- East Cary Magnet Middle
- Smith Magnet Elementary
- Centennial Campus Magnet Middle
- East Millbrook Magnet Middle
- Wake Forest Magnet Elementary
- Wildwood Forest Magnet Elementary
- East Wake Magnet High
- Wendell Magnet Elementary & Middle
- Zebulon Magnet Elementary & Middle

These schools offer specialized academic opportunities that attract students from across the district. Without federal support, many of these unique programs could be eliminated, limiting educational options for all families.

**Support for Homeless and At-Risk Students** -- Federal dollars provide crucial assistance for homeless students and school-based mental health services. These programs help students facing trauma, abuse, and housing instability stay in school and receive the support they need. Without federal funding, Wake County Schools may struggle to provide these services, putting already at-risk children in an even more precarious position.

**School Meals at Risk** -- Over 40 Wake County schools currently provide free breakfast and lunch to all students using federal funding. Additionally, all other schools depend on federal dollars for free and reduced-price meal programs. If these funds disappear, many children will go hungry during the school day, impacting their ability to focus, learn, and succeed in the classroom.

**Why You Should Speak Out Now** -- The elimination of the U.S. Department of Education is not just a bureaucratic change. Cutting federal education funding means fewer teachers, fewer resources, and fewer opportunities for Wake County children. If you care about public education in Wake County, now is the time to act. Contact your congressional representatives and urge them to protect federal education funding. Demand that state and local officials stand up for our public schools. The decisions made in Washington will have real, immediate effects in our classrooms. We can't afford to stay silent.



*Public Schools First NC*

*The views and opinions expressed in guest blog posts are those of the guest bloggers and do not necessarily represent the views of Public Schools First NC, its affiliates, or staff.*

publicschoolsfirstnc.org \* info@publicschoolsfirstnc.org  
Instagram: @publicschoolsfirstnc \* Facebook.com/publicschoolsfirstnc \* Twitter: @PS1NC \*TikTok  
@pulichschoolsfirstnc