

## 1. K. A Brief History of the US Department of Education

The Federal Government has been involved in public education since [1787](#), when the Northwest Ordinance gave land so that education institutions could be created. As the nation grew, so did the amount of money given to fund education.

The first “Department of Education” was created by Congress in 1867 as a response to the push by the National Teachers Association, which later became the National Education Association. It had four employees and was not a cabinet level agency.

States remained largely responsible for educating the children within their boundaries. However, by 1965 the Office of education had grown to 2,113 employees and had a [budget of \\$1.5 billion](#).

Funding for K-12, higher education and vocational education continued to massively expand and then in 1979, in a very narrow vote, Congress created the official Department of Education. It grew to 6,400 employees and was a direct result of a campaign promise former President Jimmy Carter made to the two major teachers unions in order to get their support against the Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Part of Reagan’s platform was to eliminate “President Carter’s new bureaucratic boondoggle,” but he was unable. Republicans instead took a different tact – to push for accountability through goals, testing and standards over the next 40 plus years.

The question remains: should Republicans push for reform, or the abolition of the US Department of Education? There is no evidence in the Constitution that the federal government has any role to play in educating young Americans. To the contrary, the [10<sup>th</sup> Amendment](#) makes it clear that roles not designated in the Constitution belong to the states.

Meanwhile, the US Department of Education’s [4,400 employees are spending \\$68 billion](#) and what does America get for that “investment”? We get a Biden Education Secretary, Miguel Cardona, who [solicits](#) a letter from the National School Boards Association comparing protesting parents to domestic terrorists. We also receive an [embarrassing ranking](#) internationally on the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA. The US is not even in the top 10. That’s what American taxpayers get for their investment.

Perhaps it’s time to revive the idea of eliminating the US DOE.

## TOP 10 SCORES - Mean scores in PISA 2018

READING	
China*	555
Singapore	549
Macau	525
Hong Kong	524
Estonia	523
Canada	520
Finland	520
Ireland	518
South Korea	514
Poland	512
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>487</b>

MATHEMATICS	
China*	591
Singapore	569
Macau	558
Hong Kong	551
Taiwan	531
Japan	527
South Korea	526
Estonia	523
Netherlands	519
Poland	516
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>489</b>

SCIENCE	
China*	590
Singapore	551
Macau	544
Estonia	530
Japan	529
Finland	522
South Korea	519
Canada	518
Hong Kong	517
Taiwan	516
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>489</b>

NOTE: \*China is represented by four provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

For a complete timeline beginning in 1787 of federal involvement in education, visit Downsizing the Federal Government at: [https://www.downsizinggovernment.org/education/timeline-growth#\\_edn1](https://www.downsizinggovernment.org/education/timeline-growth#_edn1)  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/what.html>