



## Opposition to Trump's Education Budget Mounts

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More than 20,000 people emailed the Department of Education to voice opposition to the president's fiscal 2018 budget proposal Tuesday afternoon in the hours after it was released, mirroring the deluge of public outcry that flooded Congress during the confirmation process for Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The spending plan, which would slash education funding by more than \$9 billion and eliminate dozens of programs, also proposes a handful of new spending measures aimed at increasing school choice as well as a new private school voucher program.

The emails to the Education Department were prompted in part by the National Education Association, which urged members to express concern with the funding proposal.

The proposal also prompted outcry from dozens of education organizations, including teachers unions, civil rights groups, the education reform camp, and associations representing state education chiefs, superintendents, school boards and principals. Even charter school organizations, which would get a \$167 million boost under Trump's budget, decried the overall gutting of education, health care and other social service programs.

Department of Education officials called the budget proposal a "down payment" on Trump's campaign promise to direct \$20 billion in federal funding to school choice policies, including private school choice policies, and that the plan reflects "a lot of tough trade-offs."

Among other things critics blasted the spending bill for:

- A \$1 billion boost to Title I for low income students, specifically to be awarded to local school districts that promise to allow those dollars to follow students to the school of their choice
- A new \$250 million federal program for states to replicate, expand and research the effectiveness of private school voucher programs
- The elimination of \$1.2 billion for after-school programs
- The elimination of \$2.4 billion for teacher preparation and class size reduction

The school choice proposals included in the budget go against calls from several conservative education policy experts for the administration to not go down that path. Policy analysts from the Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, Cato and others have argued private school choice programs should be left to states and that initiating a federal role would be an invitation to regulating them.