



College Success Forum

William Lindsey

February 4, 2025

Did You Know?

- JD Vance – became 1st millennial vice-president
 - First Marine to serve as VP
- Trump joins short list of Republicans to have won both Electoral College and popular vote
 - George W. Bush, George H. W. Busk, and Ronald Regan
 - Trump is only the 2nd president to win non-consecutive terms
 - Oldest person ever elected president

Education Department – Linda McMahon

- Co-chair of the Transition; has had long-standing relationship with Trump
- Helped start the America First Policy Institute (AFPI)
- In Trump's first term, she was confirmed easily --81-19 –as head of the Small Business Administration
- Promotion of literacy has long been a personal issue for her
- She served on the Connecticut Board of Education, a role she departed when she ran for Senate – first against Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and then later against Chris Murphy (D-CT)
- She is known to support charter schools and school choice, parental rights, and local control
- Re: higher ed, she is expected to push for eliminating degree requirements from public sector jobs – something Trump has talked about and on which AFPI has written
- An op ed she wrote in support of the Workforce Pell Act was published in September in The Hill
- *Penny Schwinn – nominee for Deputy Secretary of Education*
- *Denise Carter to lead Department in Interim as Secretary of Education*

Education - Legislation

- **FAFSA Deadline Act.** President Biden signed into law the FAFSA Deadline Act, a bipartisan bill that makes October 1 the official launch date of the FAFSA each year
- **Stop Campus Hazing Act.** President Biden signed the Stop Campus Hazing Act into law. Gives institutions several requirements to track and report hazing incidents reported by campus security or local police on campus
- **Antisemitism Awareness Act.** Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is expected to attach this bill, which passed the House with strong bipartisan support, to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). It requires the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to consider the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism when reviewing/ investigating complaints of discrimination
- **College Cost Reduction Act (CCRA).** Passed out of the House Education and Workforce Committee, Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) is pushing Leadership for a floor vote before the end of the session; she would also like to see the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization completed before she passes the gavel



Education – More Specifics

- **Eliminating the Education Department.** Would require a vote of the Congress [not in the cards] but various functions could be moved to other agencies
 - But..... H.R. 899 was introduced to terminate the Department of Education
 - Introduced by Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY)
 - The Department of Education shall terminate on December 31, 2026.”
- **Student Loan Debt Forgiveness.** Efforts sought by the Biden administration and criticized by Hill Republicans will not continue
- **DEI.** We expect the administration to pick up on agenda items pursued by outgoing Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) and Sen. Cassidy (R-LA), who will now hold the gavel on HELP, as it relates to colleges and universities and their handling of DEI and other issues
- **School Choice and Charter Schools.** Policy and regulation will showcase strong support for school choice and charter schools

What is expected?

Deregulation is the name of the game. Transition to review all Biden era rules and guidance and determine what stays and what needs to go. Expectations that deadlines will be delayed/ not enforced

Policy Considerations

- **Tax Cuts**
 - Key provisions of Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) expire end of 2025; it's expected GOP Congress will try to extend –if not expand -tax cuts
- **Immigration**
 - Trump signed executive order on deportations, but his plans require funding from Congress to hire border agents/ build larger portion of the wall
- **Energy and Climate**
 - Reduction of clean-energy funding; bipartisan support in Congress for streamlining the permitting process to help oil, gas, and clean energy
- **Tariffs**
 - Trump campaigned on implementing tariffs and as recently seen is acting on this effort
- **Voter-ID**
 - Congressional Republicans are likely to pass legislation requiring ID to register to vote
- **Ukraine**
 - Congressional Republicans are skeptical about providing more aid for Ukraine's defense against Russia

Department of Education Staff Updates



- FAFSA Executive Advisor—Jeremy Singer
 - Temporarily left College Board through end of year – received notification
 - Leading the relaunch of the 2025-26 FAFSA
 - Acting Chief Operating Officer – Denise Carter
 - Richard Cordray stepped down in June
 - **Update – Denise Carter now serving as acting Secretary of Education**
- **New FAFSA Executive Leadership**
 - **Aaron Lemon-Straus – FAFSA Program Executive Director**
 - **Chris Cummings – Acting Technical Advisor for the FAFSA form**
- Committee on Education & the Workforce – Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI)
 - Rep. Burgess Owens (R-Utah)
 - PA members: Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson and Rep. Ryan Mackenzie
 - Rep. Ryan Mackenzie defeated

Recent Updates

- Hold on Federal Financial Assistance
 - Pell Grants, direct loans spared in federal aid freeze
 - ED to still complete comprehensive analysis despite OMB rescinding memo dictating Federal Funding Pause
- Department of Justice asks Supreme Court to pause pending case on Borrower Defense to repayment regulation

Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE)

- A federal court prevented the U.S. Department of Education (ED) from implementing parts of SAVE and other income-driven repayment (IDR) plans
- ED is prohibited from using the SAVE formula to calculate monthly payments and from forgiving loans after years of payments under SAVE, Pay As You Earn, and Income-Contingent Repayment Plans
- Borrowers are on a general forbearance
 - Borrowers do not have to make monthly payments
 - Interest is not accruing
 - Time spent in this forbearance does not provide credit toward Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)
- PSLF Buyback
 - Must still have outstanding balance on loan(s)
 - Have approved qualifying employment for these same months
 - Buying back these months will complete the total 120 qualifying PSLF payments

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

- Head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) announces departure
 - Rohit Chopra was on a five-year term that was scheduled to run through late 2026
 - Zixta Martinez named Interim Director
 - Joined the Bureau in 2010
 - Currently serves as the Senior Advisor to the Associate Director for Supervision, Enforcement, and Fair Lending
 - ***Update: President Trump designated Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent as Acting Director of the CFPB (2/3)***

2025-26 FAFSA Updates as of January 15, 2025

- Over 4.6 million individuals have submitted a 2025–26 FAFSA form to date
- 89% of those who complete a FAFSA form report that it takes a reasonable amount of time to complete
- 94% of users say they are satisfied with their experience submitting the form
- 17 million student records have been successfully processed and delivered to institutions of higher education and states
- The Department officially released the 2025–26 FAFSA form 10 days before its Dec. 1 goal
- The Department also created new, permanent FAFSA leadership positions to oversee the technology and process going forward
- FAFSA Student Support Strategy: [FAFSA Student Support | ECMC](#)

Questions ?



Contact

William Lindsey



william.lindsey@pheaa.org



717-720-1529