

Federal Action on the U.S. Department of Education Implications for the ELT Field and MLEs

TESOL International Association
Advocacy Panel Webinar
4 April 2025

Panelists

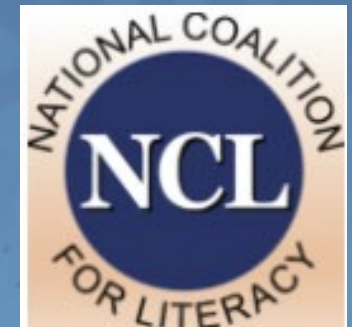
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Overview

Overview of Federal Actions

Implications for the ELT Field and MLEs

- **PreK-12 and Public Education**
- **Higher Education**
- **Adult Education**

Observations, Questions, Actions

U.S. Federal Actions on U.S. Department of Education

- Funding for Research and Programs
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- English as the Official Language
- Rescission of Language Access
- Rescission of Protected and Sensitive Locations
- Workforce Reduction
- Call to Dismantle/Abolish the Department



NATIONAL CENTER ON
IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY

Implications of Recent Administrative Actions on K-12 English Language Teaching

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Federal Actions on the US Department of Education: Implications for the ELT Field and MLEs
TESOL International Association
April 4, 2025



Three Focus Areas of Concern in K-12

- Shrinking and reorganizing the U.S. Department of Education
- Termination of grants and contracts
- ESSA waivers



Shrinking/Reorganizing USED: *What Is the Context?*

- U.S. Department of Education (USED)
 - Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)
 - Administers \$890m in state grants and national activities under Title III
 - Established by *Department of Education Organization Act* (§209)
 - Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
 - Investigates violations of civil rights based on national origin (among other protected characteristics)
 - Works with the Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice



Shrinking/Reorganizing USED: *What Has Happened?*

- ✓ Reduction in force (3/11/25)
 - 50% of USED workforce laid off
 - All but one senior staff at OELA dismissed
 - 7 of 12 OCR regional offices closed
 - Massive cuts to Institute of Education Sciences
 - Memo (3/14/25)
 - Move OELA back under the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, commitment to fulfilling statutory obligations of OELA
- ✓ Executive order to close USED (3/20/25)
 - Directs secretary to “facilitate the closure” of USED



Shrinking/Reorganizing USED: *What Has NOT Happened?*

- ✘ Changes to Title III funding or rules
- ✘ Changes to civil rights obligations
- ✘ Closure of USED or elimination of offices required by statute
 - Requires congressional action (60 votes in the Senate)



Shrinking/Reorganizing USED: *What Are Possible Impacts?*

- Insufficient staff/expertise to provide technical assistance and oversight
- Loss of momentum from department under Miguel Cardona
 - Focus on multilingualism for all
 - Investment in bilingual teacher development
- Loss of dissemination of data and best practices
- States and districts already reluctant to prioritize English Learners may feel justified in further reducing services



Termination of Grants and Contracts: *What Is the Context?*

- USED grants and contracts
 - Institute for Education Sciences (IES)
 - Research centers and individual grants
 - What Works Clearinghouse
 - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
 - Discretionary grants
- Some cancellations target “radical indoctrination”
 - Trump administration position that “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (DEI) prioritizes group identity over merit and promotes divisiveness



Termination of Grants and Contracts: *What Has Happened?*

- ✓ DEI executive orders
 - Terminates all federal activity related to DEI (1/20/25)
 - Offices must report federal funding or support for DEI (1/29/25)
- ✓ Termination of grants and contracts
 - Immediate termination of funding
 - Administration cites DEI, misalignment with priorities, waste and duplication
- ✓ Includes
 - Comprehensive Centers, Regional Education Labs, Equity Assistance Centers
 - National Comprehensive Center for English Learners and Multilingualism (new)



Termination of Grants and Contracts: *What Has NOT Happened?*

- ✘ Cancellation of Title III funding, including
 - National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition
 - National Professional Development grants
 - Native American & Alaska Native Children in School Program
- ✘ Cancellation of annual federal data collection (although almost all NCES staff eliminated)
- ✘ Cancellation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (although Long Term Trend Assessment cancelled)



Termination of Grants and Contracts: *What Are Possible Impacts?*

- Cancellation of additional discretionary grants
- Loss of critical funding for large-scale, multi-year research and collaborative initiatives
- Reduction in data collection, quality, and dissemination; technical assistance services



ESSA Waivers:

What Is the Context?

- *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*
 - Section 8401 allows the Secretary of Education to waive almost any provision in ESSA; exceptions include:
 - Funding formulas
 - Supplement not supplant
 - Parental participation
- What's not included?
 - Civil rights obligations
 - IDEA (*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*)
 - *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*
 - *Higher Education Act*
- See [All4Ed/EducationFirst brief](#)



ESSA Waivers:

What Has Happened?

- ✓ State chiefs memo to Linda McMahon ([1/28/25](#))
 - Signed by 12 state superintendents in “red states”
 - Requested secretary prioritize flexibility of federal funds and block grants
- ✓ Iowa and Oklahoma waiver requests



ESSA Waivers:

What Has NOT Happened?

- ✘ Approval of any waivers or disclosure of what Secretary McMahon is likely to approve
- ✘ Congressional changes to ESSA allowing block grants



ESSA Waivers:

What Are Possible Impacts?

- Loss of information about English Learners through assessment, accountability, and data reporting systems
 - But not requirement to use a standardized English language proficiency assessment for identification and monitoring
- Removing rules around funding effectively allows block grants with no guardrails to protect the use of funding like Title III
 - But not supplement not supplant
- Lack of USED oversight could act as tacit waivers



Additional Considerations

- Several provisions in law prevent federal interference in curriculum, instruction, teacher credentialing, etc.
- The executive order declaring English as the national language does not prevent schools' use of other languages
- Title III was level-funded in the FY25 continuing resolution
- Most of the federal protections of English Learners and immigrant students are rooted in civil rights law



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www.migrationpolicy.org/.

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Impacts of Federal Actions on English Language Programs and Higher Education

Daryl Bish

President, EnglishUSA





Represent and support English Language Programs (ELPs) in the U.S.

Diverse Program Types / Diverse Students

Advocacy Role



Impact of Department of Education Actions

- TBD for English Language Programs
- **DoEd Dear Colleague Letter Directs Schools to End Racial Preferences.**
 - On February 14, 2025, the Department of Education (DoEd) issued a "Dear Colleague Letter" on the prohibition on "using race in decisions pertaining to admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life."
- DoEd Initiates Title VI Investigations into 51 Universities.



Impact of Department of State (DOS) & Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Actions

- Visa Interview Wait Time Info No Longer Available on DOS Web Pages (last updated January 7, 2025)
- DOS Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Funding Freeze
 - This effectively suspends international education and exchange programs, including Fulbright.
- INA 212(f) Travel Ban Expected Soon
 - Media reports have identified numerous countries that may be subject to a ban, but there have been no official or public government communications on what countries might be included or the scope of any bans on particular countries.



Impact of Department of State (DOS) & Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Actions

- ICE-Initiated SEVIS Record Terminations
 - Numerous reports of SEVIS record terminations done by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)
- Student and Exchange Scholar Visa Revocations





Impact of Department of Education Changes on Education for Adult Multilingual Learners of English



Deborah Kennedy

TESOL Online Panel

4 April 2025

(c) Key Words

TOPICS

- The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Ability to Benefit, a provision of the Higher Education Act (HEA)
- The Survey of Adult Skills, conducted by the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Skills (PIAAC)
- The Department of Education Organization Act



WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Administered by **DOL Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA)**

- **WIOA Title I. Workforce Development Activities**
 - One-Stop System and American Job Centers
 - Workforce Development Boards
 - References: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/american-job-centers>,
<https://www.careeronestop.org>

- **WIOA Title III. Amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933**
 - Employment Service
 - Reference: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/american-job-centers/wagner-peyser>

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Administered by the **Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)**, Rehabilitation Services Administration

- **WIOA Title IV. Vocational Rehabilitation**
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Act (Rehabilitation Act of 1973)
 - Resource: <https://rsa.ed.gov/>

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Administered by **Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)**, Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL)

➤ **WIOA Title II. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

- “Supports programs that help adults get the basic skills they need including reading, writing, math, English language proficiency, and problem-solving to be productive workers, family members, and citizens.”
- Funding streams: Block grants to states, national leadership activities
- Resources: <https://aefta.ed.gov/>,
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/index.html>,
<https://nrsweb.org>

WIOA TITLE II. ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT

Types of programming:

- Adult education
- Literacy
- English language acquisition
- Workplace literacy
- Family literacy
- Integrated Education & Training (IET)
- Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)



HIGHER EDUCATION ACT - ABILITY TO BENEFIT

The Ability to Benefit (ATB) provision in Title IV of the Higher Education Act gives adults without a high school diploma or equivalent access to federal student aid.

Under ATB, eligible adults can receive federal student aid (primarily Pell Grants) to simultaneously complete their high school credential while earning a postsecondary credential.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT - ABILITY TO BENEFIT

ATB is a critical dual enrollment strategy for ensuring equitable access to postsecondary education for adults working to complete their secondary credential.

Resources:

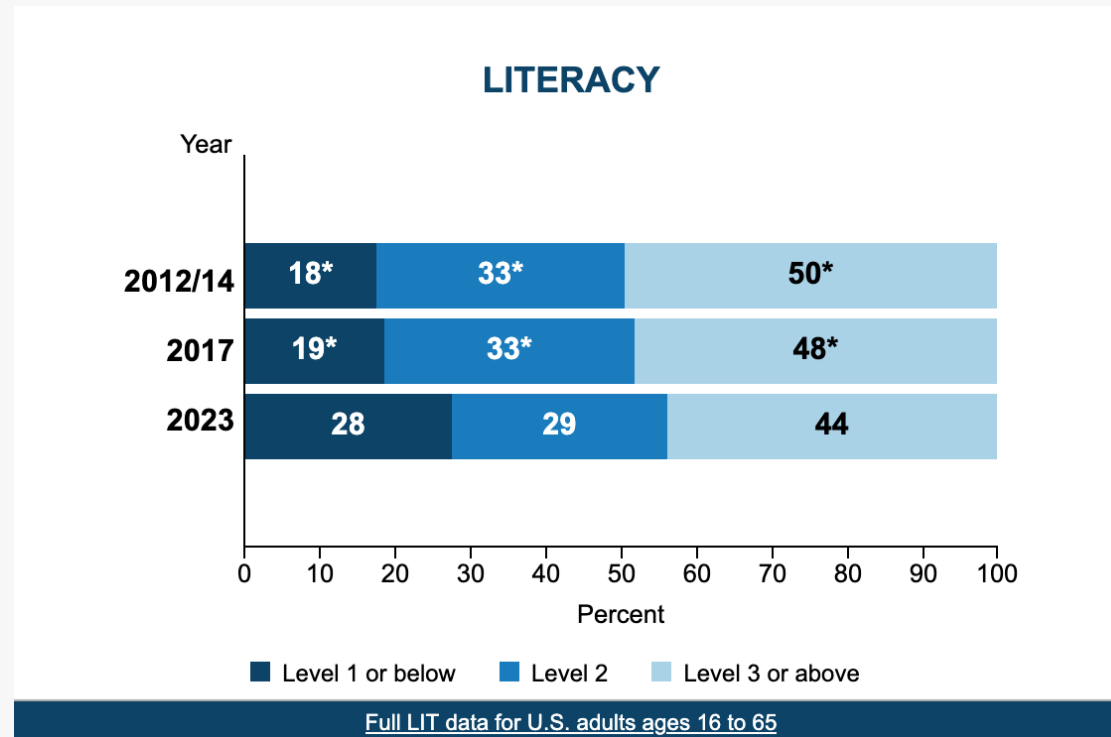
- <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45418>
- National College Transition Network
<https://www.collegetransition.org/career-pathways/featured-projects/ability-to-benefit/>

SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS (PIAAC)

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), also known as the Survey of Adult Skills, is a large-scale international household study conducted under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

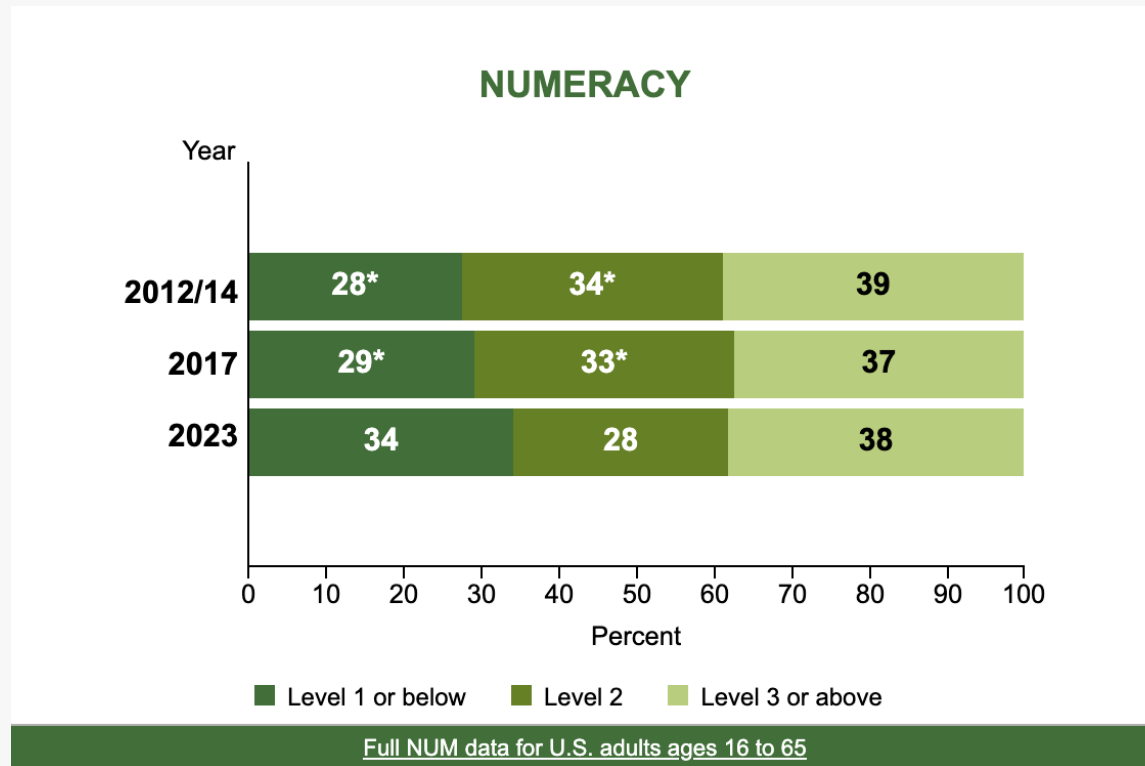
PIAAC assesses the key cognitive and workplace skills that adults need to participate successfully in 21st-century society and the global economy. In the United States, PIAAC is funded and led by the **National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education**.

SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS (PIAAC)



https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/2023/national_results.asp

SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS (PIAAC)



https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/2023/national_results.asp

SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS (PIAAC)

Deborah Kennedy

The Role of PIAAC in Adult Education in the United States

ProLiteracy Journal, Summer 2024

<https://www.proliteracy.org/resources/the-role-of-piaac-in-adult-education-in-the-united-states/>

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION ACT

Mandates establishment of

- Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)
- Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/senate-bill/210>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/politics-elections/2025/03/31/what-federal-law-says-about-department-eds-functions>



THANK YOU!



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<https://www.nationalcoalitionforliteracy.org>

(c) Key Words

TESOL Advocacy Action Days

Washington, D.C.

**TESOL
Advocacy
Action Days**

16-18 June 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C.



Information and
Registration



TESOL Resources

Supporting the ELT Field and MLEs




TESOL Priorities TESOL Position Statements Take Action Community & Colleague Resources TESOL Advocacy Assistance

TESOL Priorities and Statement for Current U.S. Administration


As an association representing the English language teaching (ELT) profession and the multilingual learners of English it serves across the globe, TESOL International Association serves its members and the profession to amplify our voice and impact in advocating for the issues that impact our communities, schools, and learners.

Advocacy Action



Tell Congress to Support the U.S. Department of Education

TESOL International Association condemns the attempts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education through both the executive order that seeks to abolish it and the drastic and historic reduction in the workforce of the U.S. Department of Education. The president...



Make the Protected and Sensitive Areas Policy the Law

Since 2011 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s Sensitive Locations policy, also known as the Protected Areas policy, prohibited immigration enforcement actions in places that provided vital services important to well-being. In 2021, DHS announced a "protected..."

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TESOL Advocacy Actions and Request

Public Comment

Position Statement

Advocacy Action

Resources



Thank you for your advocacy

