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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON TEACHER QUALITY (NCTQ) OPPOSES EFFORTS TO DISMANTLE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NCTQ President Heather Peske comments on USED layoffs

Washington, D.C. — The proposed layoffs of half the staff of the Department of Education (USED) would significantly impact the quality of teachers in America's classrooms and cripple our work to improve outcomes for students across our nation. Without a federal backstop, states are likely to weaken or abandon commitments to maintaining high standards for student learning and accountability for student outcomes.

At the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), we are on a mission to ensure every child has effective teachers and every teacher has the opportunity to be effective. Many of us are former teachers, district and state policymakers. In these roles, we have experienced the value of a strong federal education agency. Our mission depends on four essential functions that are currently executed by USED:

1. **Administering National Assessments:** We count on USED to administer national assessments and report on student outcomes. The Nation's Report Card has long been a critical tool to track the performance of our education system, provide transparency, and identify the leaders and the laggards in each state. Without NAEP, we will not know to what extent children in Massachusetts are reaching the same standards of performance as children in Mississippi. It is the federal government's role to provide us with this critical data. At NCTQ, we use these data to learn from leading states and call on laggards to improve.
2. **Data Collection and Research:** The Department regularly gathers and publishes comprehensive data on student achievement, workforce trends, and teacher quality. The Department commissions research on which instructional methods and interventions work (and which do not). This information is essential for researchers, policymakers, and educators to identify areas needing improvement and to develop targeted interventions. For example, NCTQ relies on the federal Title II data to give us insights into how many teachers are entering and persisting in teacher preparation—a valuable tool as states identify their needs and the extent of their supply and demand.
3. **Funding and Financial Aid:** Federal programs such as Title I funding for low-income schools and Pell Grants for higher education are administered by the Department, ensuring that resources are allocated to support all students.
4. **Civil Rights Enforcement:** The Department plays a pivotal role in enforcing civil rights laws within educational settings, safeguarding all students from discrimination and ensuring equal access to educational opportunities.

As a nonpartisan organization dedicated to teacher quality, NCTQ calls on the Trump administration and Congress to maintain these essential functions of the U.S. Department of Education. It is imperative that the federal government protect and ensure transparency on student outcomes, access to research and data on what works (and what does not) in schools, equitable funding, and maintaining all students' civil rights. Gutting the Department of its staff will weaken the agency's capacity to perform these critical functions—and will likely contribute to worsening results for students.

We remain committed to collaborating with federal, state, and local entities to promote policies that enhance teacher quality and, in turn, increase positive student outcomes and accelerate opportunity for all students and our nation.

— NCTQ President Heather Peske
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About the National Council on Teacher Quality: NCTQ is a nonpartisan research and policy organization on a mission to ensure every child has access to an effective teacher and every teacher has the opportunity to be effective. We believe a strong, diverse teacher workforce is critical for providing all students with equitable educational opportunities. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.