



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 27, 2017

## Trump Orders Review of Federal Overreach in Education

President Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) on April 26 that is ostensibly aimed at curtailing unlawful federal meddling in K-12 education across America. But it may not actually accomplish that much, depending on how top education officials implement it.

“Previous administrations have wrongfully forced states and schools to comply with federal whims and dictate what our kids are taught,” Trump declared. “But we know that local communities do it best and know it best.”



According to the order itself, the goal is “to restore the proper division of power under the Constitution between the Federal Government and the States and to further the goals of, and to ensure strict compliance with, statutes that prohibit Federal interference with State and local control over education.” Whether that will happen, though, remains to be seen.

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Trump said it was the policy of the administration to protect state and local control over curriculum, instruction, personnel, schools, and more. However, in the order, he cited the [Every Student Succeeds Act, which Obama’s Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, said put Obama’s entire educational agenda into federal law for the first time](#).

While GOP lawmakers deceptively claimed the bill restored state control over education, it actually did the opposite, cementing Common Core in place and purporting to grant the feds the power to approve or reject standards selected by state governments. In fact, Obama called the bill a “Christmas miracle,” and [his education chief boasted of conspiring with Republican leadership to deceive voters](#).

Trump’s order also calls for a review of federal regulations and guidance issued by previous administrations to ensure that they are in compliance with federal laws. Any that are not are supposed to be rescinded or revised. The Constitution’s Tenth Amendment, which prohibits any federal involvement in education, was never mentioned.

In a phone call with reporters, Rob Goad, a senior Department of Education official, claimed the order “delivers on [Trump’s] commitment to ensure education decisions are made by those closest to students.” He also correctly noted that since America’s founding, education was always supposed to be a state and local responsibility.

“In recent years, however, too many in Washington have advanced top-down mandates that take away autonomy and limit the options available to educators, administrators, and parents,” he said. “Today’s executive order puts an end to this overreach, ensuring that states and localities are free to make educational decisions as required by law. This executive order makes certain that local leaders will be making the decisions about what happens in the classroom. Parents will no longer have to worry about the federal government enacting overreaching mandates or requiring states to adopt a federal curriculum at the expense of local education innovation.”



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Goad said the order would take the next step toward “identifying and eliminating D.C.-driven regulations that attempt to control what students are or aren’t taught.” The Education Department has 300 days to comply, he added. In questions, when asked what would change, he merely pointed to a “comprehensive review” being ordered.

“With this executive order, President Trump has reaffirmed his commitment to getting the federal government out of the way and to returning control over education back where it belongs, at the state and local level,” Goad concluded before taking questions. “When communities and parents make the educational choices, students win. Today’s executive order puts us firmly on that track.”

While that all sounded good, in reality, the order does not accomplish all of that. Instead, by ordering a study, it may be a good first step in the right direction. But it may also be effectively meaningless — especially considering that U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos [has been a major supporter of Common Core and other such schemes](#). Education watchers should carefully monitor developments.

Trump [talked about abolishing the Department of Education while campaigning for president. He also vowed to eliminate Common Core](#). At this point, [despite statements to the contrary from DeVos, neither of those two goals is any closer to becoming reality](#) than it was before the November election. But Trump still has at least four more years to deliver.

*Photo shows President Trump displaying his education executive order: AP Images*

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