

Mission and Organizational Structure

Our Mission

The U.S. Department of Education's (the Department's) mission is *to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

History. In 1867, the [federal government](#) recognized that furthering education was a national priority and created a federal education agency to collect and report statistical data. The Department was established as a cabinet-level agency in 1979.

Our Public Benefit. The Department is committed to ensuring that students throughout the nation develop the skills they need to succeed in school, college, and the workforce, while recognizing the primary role of states and school districts in providing a high-quality education, employing highly qualified teachers and administrators, establishing challenging content and achievement standards, and monitoring students' progress against those standards. The Department is also [setting high expectations](#) for its own employees and working to improve management practices, ensure fiscal integrity, and develop a culture of high performance.

What We Do. The [Department](#) engages in four major types of activities: establishing policies related to federal education funding, including the distribution of funds and monitoring their use; supporting data collection and research on America's schools; identifying major issues in education and focusing national attention on them; and enforcing federal laws prohibiting discrimination in programs that receive federal funds.

Who We Serve. [During school year \(SY\) 2012–13](#), America's schools and colleges are serving larger numbers of students as the population increases and enrollment rates rise. As of the fall of 2012, more than 49.8 million students attend public elementary and secondary schools. In fall 2012, a record 21.6 million students are expected to attend the nation's 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities.

Organizational Structure. To achieve our Strategic Goals, our staff is organized as shown in the organizational chart. The Department's program offices support aspects of external Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Our administrative offices support external Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, as well as Goal 6, which is the Department's internal goal. Links are provided to web pages that provide a detailed [description of the principal offices](#) and [overview of the activities of the Department](#).

Regional Offices. The [Department has ten regional offices](#) that provide points of contact and assistance for schools, parents, and citizens. The primary support within the regional offices is that of communications, civil rights enforcement, and to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the programs and operations of the Department. In addition to enforcement offices in federal regions, enforcement offices are located in Washington, D.C. and Cleveland.

Web Presence. The Department maintains a [comprehensive website](#) that focuses on most popular searches, latest news and events, and links to social media. A partial list of Education Resources of the Department and Selected Department Web Links can be found in the appendices of this report.

Our Organization in Fiscal Year 2012

The Required Supplementary Stewardship Information section of this report contains summary information about offices within the Department. Links are provided to web pages that provide a detailed [description of the principal offices](#) of the Department and an [overview of Department activities](#). This chart reflects the Department organization as of September 30, 2012.

