Federal Funding and Public Schools...A Very Brief History

1791
The federal government creates the original Department of Education (ED) to conduct studies and gather data on schools and teaching methods. It soon begins funding higher education.

1867
It wasn’t until the civil rights era that the ED began funding K-12 public education and creating equal opportunity programs.

1965
The issue of federal funding of and federal involvement in public schools remains a controversial political issue.

Now

Should the U.S. federal government increase its funding of K12 public education?

Yes

- Most states cut school funding when the 2008 recession hit and many states have continued cutting education budgets each year since.
- Close to 500,000 public school teacher and worker positions have been eliminated since 2008, while the number of students has grown by more than 800,000.
- Some studies show that increased funding of low-income public schools results in significant gains in student academic achievement.
- Low-income schools cannot afford the high-level technology and faculty to meet the rigorous educational environments.
- Children in low-income communities who attend wealthier schools are more likely to complete high school and enter higher wages in adulthood.
- Federal government involvement in the public school system helps hold schools accountable for maintaining high standards.
- Federal government involvement in the public school system ensures standardized education criteria and monitoring of states’ educational standards.

No

- Federal funding of K12 public education under the Department of Education rose from $4.5 billion in 1970 to $440 billion in 2016 (constant 2016 dollar value).
- Despite increases in federal funding to public schools since 1965, some studies show little or no academic improvement or gains in academic achievement.
- Increased federal funding comes with federal mandates for public schools, meaning more rules and requirements for schools to follow and fulfill.
- Increased federal funding and resulting mandates can stifle public school innovation and suppress innovation.
- Federal funding of public schools is supported by taxpayer dollars of which billions are wasted when funneled through the federal bureaucratic system.
- Federal funding supports the creation of federal education programs for public schools, which more often than not assessments and interventions.
- Federal funding of public schools is intended to supplement state and local funding, increasing federal funding is dependent state and local funding.

What are your feelings about the topic of education reform? Want to know more? Visit ProQuest’s SIRS Issues Researcher.

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...arguments, and each public and private school has its own history. This is the first of a series with a brief history of the history of education, including decisions by the Supreme Court, the U.S. Constitution, and states' constitutions that affected education, including the role of the federal government. (ProQuest)

SOURCES
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