

As Fed Ed Data Disappears, Users Scramble to Preserve It



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Since [1867](#), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has collected data on American schools. That stream of information informs everything from funding services for students with disabilities to municipal planning to legal actions. But this information and other data and analyses from the Department of Education, which houses NCES, are now in danger of being cut off at the source.

Soon after President Trump's inauguration, the administration [removed access](#) to more than 8,000 web pages related to the federal government, many of which touch upon or impact education.

NEPC Fellow [Bruce Baker](#) of the University of Miami said earlier this month that he had downloaded and preserved archives from several data sets including: (1) an annual school finance survey; (2) Census data that informs the dissemination of funding Congress allocates based on the number of students from low-income families served by districts and schools; (3) the Common Core of Data, which provides basic information about K-12 education—such as the number of students enrolled in American districts and schools; (4) NCES Comparable Wage Index (CWIFT); and (5) NCES/EDGE Neighborhood Poverty Index.

Other [organizational efforts](#) to preserve data include: (1) [DataLumos](#), a crowd-sourced repository maintained by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research

housed at the University of Michigan; (2) the [Data.Gov Archive](#) at Harvard; (3) the [End of Term Web Archive](#) maintained by Internet Archive, Stanford, the University of North Texas and Webrecorder, and (4) [PolicyMap](#).

Meanwhile, the Department of Education also recently announced that it was cancelling nearly \$900 million in contracts, most of which were administered by the department's research arm, the Institute of Education Sciences. The cancellations [impact programs](#) including the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (which collects data on higher education), the Digest of Education Statistics (which provides data on K-12), and data that informs funding of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

“Canceling NCES contracts impacts our ability to understand the conditions and progress of schools toward meeting educational goals enshrined in laws like ESSA, IDEA, and the Equal Education Opportunity Act and mandated by court decisions like *Lau v. Nichols*,” NEPC Fellow [Bill Penuel](#) of the University of Colorado Boulder [wrote on LinkedIn](#) last week.

“We continue to monitor, [act on](#), and track developments happening across the federal government relating to federal data accessibility, collection, and reporting,” American Educational Research Association executive director Felice Levine stated last week in a message to members. But what’s become clear is that the federal government—long the key player in the collection and maintenance of information about the nation’s schools—has become an obstacle to many of those very efforts.

NEPC Resources on Politics

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