

What Happens If FY 2025 IES Funding Lapses?

What's at Stake for States, Schools, and Students in Every State

The Law Is Clear

Under the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) receives two-year funding authority. Congress deliberately provides this extended availability so that IES can plan, compete, award, and carry out research, data collection, and technical assistance that is responsive to the needs of States, local education agencies, and communities.

Funded IES programs are **not optional**. Federal law requires that these activities be designed to meet real-world education needs and provide actionable, relevant, and timely information to policymakers and educators. This includes:

- **Generating evidence that addresses priorities identified by educators, States, and communities**, ensuring research is grounded in real-world challenges and informs decision making;
- **Collecting and reporting national and State-relevant data** that policymakers and the public rely on to understand local conditions, track progress, and allocate resources effectively;
- **Providing regionally driven research, evaluation, and technical assistance through the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs)**, which are required to work in partnership with States and local education agencies and are guided by regional advisory committees and jointly developed research agendas.
- **Conducting independent evaluations of Federal education programs** ensuring that States and communities have objective, trustworthy evidence on whether programs are improving student outcomes and can adjust course when needed.

If fiscal year (FY) 2025 IES funding lapses before it is obligated, it will hurt students, teachers, and families.

What Will Be Lost if FY 2025 IES Funding Lapses?

Here are just a few examples of what disappears when IES funding is withheld or allowed to expire:

- **No new guidance for schools on “what works” to improve student outcomes:** The *What Works Clearinghouse* will stop adding new studies, leaving districts to make high-stakes decisions without up-to-date evidence.
- **Fewer answers about how students are doing nationwide:** Key National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments have already been cancelled, including long-term trend exams that track learning since the 1970s. Lost tests mean no insight into how students are doing.
- **States and teachers lose direct support:** Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs), which work directly with States on their expressed priorities like literacy, math, absenteeism, and workforce readiness, are being reduced or stalled. Projects already underway in every State would be cancelled mid-progress, leaving States without the support to finish work they requested.
- **Critical research on students with disabilities is halted:** Long-running special education studies tracking students into college and the workforce have been shut down after years of investment. This leaves policymakers flying blind on how to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- **Major national data collections disappear:** Studies like the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) have stopped, cutting off insight into how young children are developing academically and socially.
- **States can't meet Federal education requirements:** Without IES-supported data, research, and evaluation, States struggle to implement and comply with laws like ESSA, IDEA, Perkins V, and Title programs.

The Bottom Line

These aren't abstract losses. They are real, irreversible gaps in knowledge, support, and progress for students, teachers, and schools in every State.