



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

CHIEF OF STAFF

MEMORANDUM

To: Department of Education Senior Leadership Team

From: Joshua Venable, Chief of Staff /s/

Date: May 5, 2017

Re: Appointment of Steering Committee to develop the Department of Education's response to the Presidential Executive Order on a Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch

Background: On March 13, 2017, the President of the United States signed Executive Order 13781, "*Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch*" (Reorganize EO), directing the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to submit a comprehensive plan to reorganize Executive Branch departments and agencies. On April 12, 2017, OMB issued a "Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies" (OMB Memo) providing guidance on implementing the Reorganize EO. In moving forward to implement the Reorganize EO, the Department is establishing a Steering Committee to coordinate the development of the Department of Education's response to the Reorganize EO and the OMB Memo.

Purpose of the Steering Committee: Improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Guiding Principles: The work of the Steering Committee will be guided by principles that coincide with ED's goals and include the following:

- Reduce redundancy, maximize employee and organizational efficiency and reduce workforce, when appropriate, while meeting ED's statutory obligations and mission;
- Maximize transparency and employee involvement and input to the extent practicable while meeting required deadlines;
- Leverage ED colleagues' knowledge and expertise and treat colleagues with respect and dignity; and
- Maximize use of creative problem solving and teamwork while adhering to legal requirements, including our collective bargaining obligations.

Steering Committee Membership: The committee will be comprised of the following individuals:

Robert Eitel (co-chair), Senior Counselor to the Secretary
Joseph Conaty (co-chair), Delegated the Duties of the Deputy Secretary
Sue Betka, Deputy Director for Administration and Policy, Institute of Education Sciences
Jason Botel, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Denise Carter, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management
Holly Ham, Assistant Secretary for Management
Candice Jackson, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights
Ebony Lee, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy
Lynn Mahaffie, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Post-Secondary Education
James Manning, Acting Under Secretary
Elizabeth McFadden, Deputy General Counsel for Ethics, Legislative Counsel, and
Regulatory Services
Erica Navarro, Director, Budget Service
Phil Rosenfelt, Acting General Counsel and Deputy General Counsel for Program Service
Ruth Ryder, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative
Services
Matthew Sessa, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Federal Student Aid

Reporting and Engagement: The Steering Committee will periodically report to the Secretary and regularly consult with agency leadership. The Steering Committee expects to work with the leadership and staff of all of ED's Principal Operating Components (POCs).

Short and Longer Term Deliverables: As outlined in the OMB Memo, the expected deliverables are:

- By June 30, 2017, draft a high level plan to maximize use of Department resources which will include items such as: (1) a high level draft of an ED Reform Plan including initial areas of reform; (2) a draft plan to maximize employee performance; and (3) initial areas for workforce reduction.
- By September 2017, develop and submit a full Agency Reform Plan as part of the FY 2019 ED Budget Submission to OMB that includes a long-term workforce reduction plan and aligns with ED's draft FY2018-22 Strategic Plan.
- The high-level draft of the strategic plan is also due on June 30, 2017 and the full draft due is in September (same timeline as the items in this memo). Although the Strategic Plan will not be the responsibility of this Steering Committee, the OMB memo states that the ED Reform Plan must be aligned with the draft Strategic Plan.

Employee Engagement: Responding to the Reorganize EO and the OMB Memo gives us the opportunity to “do fewer things better, while eliminating inefficiencies and being more productive.” We are establishing an email box, ED_Reform@ed.gov and will invite all employees to provide ideas, recommendations, and advice on such questions as:

- What activities or functions are duplicative? Redundant? Better carried out elsewhere?
- What activities or functions can be combined?
- What activities or functions should be eliminated or dramatically modified? What office or agency is best positioned to deliver the service or product? What is the best vehicle for delivery of each service or product?
- What new activity or function should be initiated?
- How can the agency be flattened? What is the optimal supervisor to staff ratio?
- What types of training/retraining programs will be needed?

Although emails will not receive an individual response, each email will be read and considered. Based on the responses received, the Steering Committee will develop a work plan for addressing such ideas, particularly where there is overlap and will report out to all staff, where appropriate.

ED’s mission remains: *promoting student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness, fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access*. Through reform and restructuring, ED can not only manage programs and deliver high quality services more effectively, but also create a more productive and rewarding work environment.