

Example Student

Example Professor

AP US Government

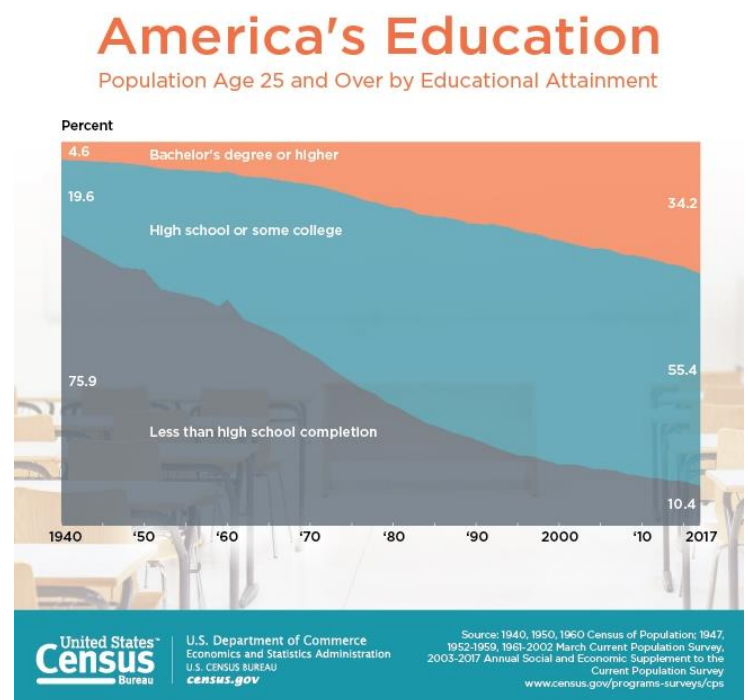
Day Month Year

Devolution in Public Education

Public Education has been an important asset for the United States since at least the 19th century, when all states began possessing established public institutions for learning, and as such, the United States had an incredibly high literacy rate relative to the rest of the world. But increasingly, the forces behind managing and maintaining American public education has not been the local or state governments, but the federal government, which has had both its merits and its demerits. Unfortunately, this increasing federal involvement has had at times disastrous effects, as can be observed from the much publicly maligned Common Core and a consistent decline in student educational quality. The federal government's overreach in public education is a blatant misuse of their power and an obvious diminishment of the independence of state governments. Education is important and has been a great boon to this country, but it is not a constitutional right and therefore has no legal basis for being so heavily controlled by the federal government. The benefits of federal involvement in public education are questionable at best, and the evidence shows that it would potentially be more cost effective for states to create and manage more efficient, independent school systems themselves.

Historically, education was not a federally mandated thing at all. It was placed under the jurisdiction of the state and local governments as per the language of the 10th amendment to the Constitution. It was never expressly delineated that participation in a government-sponsored educational institution was a right or privilege. All states did decide to put into their constitutions specific language regarding education by the 20th century, but it was never intended to be a federal power (Findlaw, 1). Some point to how the majority of countries in the world possess constitutional language regarding education when arguing in favor of a greater centralization of power (Lurie, 2), but it would be remiss to assume that the United States operates like other countries. We are of the same species on the same planet, but we are not of the same mindset, history, or culture; America historically placed high importance on education despite it not being a government managed aspect of society (A.U.C. , 2). Put simply, we are a different beast requiring a different set of rules. Before demanding a federal implementation, any new educational practices must first be tested in our laboratories of democracy, the states, to decide what's best for us.

Unless the Department of Education sees significantly meritorious effects produced by its instituted educational plans, it remains an unnecessary apparatus in the educational system. Census Bureau statistics show that the number



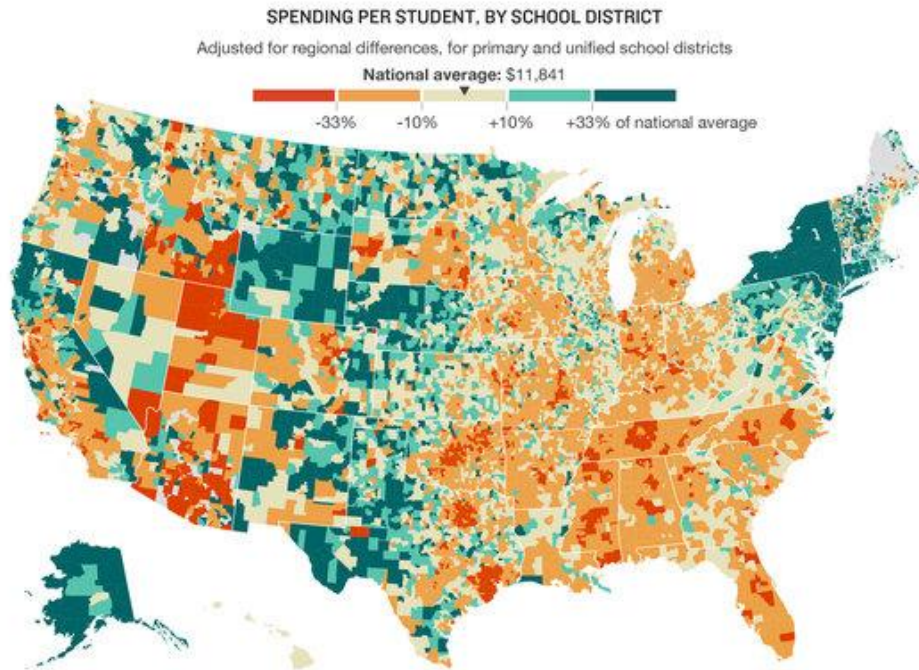
of high school graduates increased at approximately the same rate between 1980-1990 as 1960-1970, and may have even slowed down, which calls into question what, if any, net positive effect the Department of Education has had at all. Language capabilities amongst college graduates have seen a decline alongside critical reasoning. (Vedder, 19)

There may also be financial incentives to devolve power over education back to the states. Prior to the Department of Education's creation, student loans only numbered one million in 1978 at a cost of less than \$2 billion (Vedder, 13), while we have only seen the cost of educational funding go up; the 2019 Fiscal Year requested budget for the Department for Pell Grants alone was \$22.5 billion (Department of Education, 6). By attempting to provide college for everyone, less can be spent per capita on students, and more is spent overall, taxing our

	Tuition and Fees in 2017 Dollars						Tuition and Fees and Room and Board in 2017 Dollars			
	Private Nonprofit Four-Year	Ten-Year \$ Increase	Public Four-Year	Ten-Year \$ Increase	Public Two-Year	Ten-Year \$ Increase	Private Nonprofit Four-Year	Ten-Year \$ Increase	Public Four-Year	Ten-Year \$ Increase
1987-88	\$15,160		\$3,190		\$1,590		\$22,490		\$9,030	
1997-98	\$21,020	\$5,860	\$4,740	\$1,550	\$2,390	\$800	\$29,530	\$7,040	\$11,390	\$2,360
2007-08	\$27,520	\$6,500	\$7,280	\$2,540	\$2,700	\$310	\$37,600	\$8,070	\$15,930	\$4,540
2017-18	\$34,740	\$7,220	\$9,970	\$2,690	\$3,570	\$870	\$46,950	\$9,350	\$20,770	\$4,840
	Private Nonprofit Four-Year	One-Year % Change	Public Four-Year	One-Year % Change	Public Two-Year	One-Year % Change	Private Nonprofit Four-Year	One-Year % Change	Public Four-Year	One-Year % Change
2007-08	\$27,520		\$7,280		\$2,700		\$37,600		\$15,930	
2008-09	\$27,620	0.4%	\$7,340	0.8%	\$2,650	-1.9%	\$37,610	0.0%	\$15,990	0.4%
2009-10	\$29,260	5.9%	\$8,040	9.5%	\$2,920	10.2%	\$39,860	6.0%	\$17,320	8.3%
2010-11	\$30,050	2.7%	\$8,570	6.6%	\$3,080	5.5%	\$40,940	2.7%	\$18,160	4.8%
2011-12	\$30,210	0.5%	\$8,970	4.7%	\$3,220	4.5%	\$41,140	0.5%	\$18,590	2.4%
2012-13	\$30,970	2.5%	\$9,240	3.0%	\$3,370	4.7%	\$42,150	2.5%	\$19,040	2.4%
2013-14	\$31,570	1.9%	\$9,310	0.8%	\$3,400	0.9%	\$42,920	1.8%	\$19,260	1.2%
2014-15	\$32,140	1.8%	\$9,400	1.0%	\$3,430	0.9%	\$43,610	1.6%	\$19,450	1.0%
2015-16	\$33,180	3.2%	\$9,670	2.9%	\$3,490	1.7%	\$45,010	3.2%	\$20,070	3.2%
2016-17	\$34,100	2.8%	\$9,840	1.8%	\$3,530	1.1%	\$46,150	2.5%	\$20,500	2.1%
2017-18	\$34,740	1.9%	\$9,970	1.3%	\$3,570	1.1%	\$46,950	1.7%	\$20,770	1.3%

finances and degrading the quality of education that pervades. Looking at statistics collected by the Collegeboard, since the 1980s tuition, as well as room and board fees, have increased by \$6,000 on average, even accounting for inflation, indicating that financial strain on students and

aid programs has worsened.



Devolution of power over education to the states may be the best course of action to take, but at a reasonable pace. Mandating standard education maintained by the federal government is taxing on it and largely ineffective as it sees costs rise and quality fall. It is neither legally the federal government's responsibility to manage educational systems nor should it be logically. Any change, however, must be done gradually, but based on the net negative observable effects of the Department of Education, the lack of legal basis for the federal government's power, and financial benefits of devolution, returning power to the states over time is extremely advisable for the future of the United States and for the sake of our progeny.

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