

February 14, 2017

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
LBJ Education Building
Washington DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

I am writing in response to your voice mail. I'm an elementary teacher from Utah. I've taught in middle-class suburbs. I've taught homeless children and hard-to-place foster kids in a residential home. I know how important it is for my students to have education leaders who understand their lives and the support they need. As president of the 3-million-member National Education Association, I look for partners to stand with us as we protect the rights of all our students.

NEA will continue to fight for students, educators, and public schools. I will make sure the voices of educators are heard and that policymakers understand that investing in public schools is an investment in the next generation of teachers, scientists, welders, and even politicians.

It's important for educators, parents, and communities to know where you stand on some of the most critical work of the federal Department of Education. I must ask you to give us the substantive answers that I did not hear you give to the senators at your hearing on issues critical to our students:

1. Do you agree that all schools receiving public dollars must be held to *the same* accountability and transparency standards?
2. Will you agree not to privatize funding for Special Education or Title I?
3. Will you stand with educators and protect our most vulnerable students from discrimination, including LGBT students, immigrant students, students of color, girls and English language learners?
4. Will you focus, as educators are focused, on the civil rights of all children, regardless of their zip code, by challenging the inequities so many face in equal access to programs, services and support?

For us, there is a wrong answer to these questions. Privatizing and profiting from public education has not moved us toward equity, equal access, non-discrimination, and opportunity for *all* students. NEA members will never waver in our determination to create a system that works for ALL children. Educators, students, and parents deserve to know that the U.S. Secretary of Education will do the same.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Lily Eskelsen García
1989 Utah Teacher of the Year
President, National Education Association