



September 20, 2017

Dear Secretary DeVos,

Texas Appleseed is a public interest justice center that seeks to change unjust laws and policies that prevent Texans from realizing their full potential. We have spent years researching and advocating for changes to the laws and practices that push students out of their schools through the use of punitive discipline and the criminalization of school behaviors.

We believe all children deserve a great education and to feel safe and welcomed in their classrooms. When a school or a school district doesn't treat students fairly and allows discrimination, civil rights laws require the Department of Education to step in. In order to make sure that schools understand what the law requires of them, and to make sure that everyone understands the protections students have, regulations (or rules) and guidance have been developed over the past several years to clarify the law. I support our civil rights laws and these tools that help to make sure students receive the protections and supports they deserve.

Our education system is unfair to many students and communities. Students who are Black, Latino, Asian American, Native American, immigrants, English learners, girls, LGBTQ or students with disabilities face too many barriers to educational success. We need to use all of the tools we can to change that problem and make sure ALL children get the education they deserve. Now is not the time to take these tools away or weaken them.

**We oppose any effort to rescind, modify or replace regulations and guidance that clarify our civil rights and education laws.** We have relied on guidance related to school police, school discipline, and the exclusion of young children from their classrooms. We use these tools to advocate for important policy changes at the school district and state levels, including a recent statewide ban on out-of-school suspensions for pre-K through second graders. Anyone who cares about the success of young people can understand the importance of keeping all students, including our youngest students, in their classrooms and on the path to graduation—federal regulations and guidance have been an important component of our work to achieve this goal.

It is the Department of Education's job to help our nation's schools provide high-quality education for all children. America should be a place where every child, no matter their unique challenges, their unique needs, or where they come from, can grow up to be what they dream. We urge you to protect

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the important regulations and guidance that ensure access to education for our students.

Sincerely,

Morgan Craven  
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Texas Appleseed