



PARENTS DEFENDING EDUCATION

ACTION

Chairman Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Ranking Member Bernie Sanders
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

January 7, 2025

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders,

The past several years have been frustrating and enraging for millions of parents across the country. Shuttered schools left their children without adequate schooling – some for as long as two years. Parents were then villainized by the federal government and likened to “domestic terrorists” by the Department of Justice for simply speaking up on behalf of their families.¹ In addition to dealing with an education system that failed to carry out its basic responsibilities, they also had to stress about the divisive, and at times inappropriate, content that was being pushed on their kids in schools.

The Biden administration’s Department of Education has been the source for the outrage many families have felt. His education officials pushed an anti-female Title IX policy that compromised the safety and security of girls and women across federally funded academic institutions – a rule so dangerous that federal courts have blocked it in most of the country. *See Dep’t of Educ. v. Louisiana*, 603 U.S. 866 (2024) (unanimously upholding those injunctions). They gave the teachers unions unfettered access to shape policy decisions at the expense of the academic needs of children. They used their authority to push race and gender programming in schools. *See Proposed Priorities – Am. History and Civics Educ.*, 86 Fed. Reg. 20348 (Apr. 19, 2021); *Applications for New Awards – Am. History and Civics Educ. Nat’l Activities Program*, 86 Fed. Reg. 38055 (July 19, 2021). They neglected their responsibilities to examine egregious complaints submitted to their Office of Civil Rights. They botched the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) rollout, creating significant hurdles for students applying to college, especially low-income families.²

¹ U.S. House of Reps. Comm. on the Judiciary, *Joe Biden “Excited” About “Going After Parents” with “Domestic Terrorism” Letter* (June 14, 2022), perma.cc/8WTY-8BXT.

² Government Accountability Office, *Botched FAFSA Rollout Leaves Uncertainty for Students Seeking Financial Aid for College* (Sept. 24, 2024), perma.cc/QUW6-FJNH.

It should also be no surprise that American students' test scores continue to lag.³ International test results showed a steep drop in math scores for 4th and 8th graders in the U.S., and at least 12 other countries performed better than American students.

Parents have had enough and for millions of families, January 20th, 2025, cannot come soon enough. They are excited for a new era of education in America. They are looking forward to leadership, both in the White House and in Congress, that will finally get rid of disastrous DEI policies, return to a meritocracy, and increase school choice for families. At Parents Defending Education Action, we are particularly excited to see Linda McMahon, President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Education, take the helm to launch a resurgence of learning and efficiency into our schools.

Parents in America deserve an education system that will make their children's learning and parental involvement a cornerstone of its mission. That is exactly what they can expect from Ms. McMahon. She is a smart, innovative, and fearless business leader who knows what it takes to run a successful company. As one of the co-founders of WWE, she helped take what started out as a 13-person operation and grew it to a powerhouse that had hundreds of employees around the world. She also served as the 25th Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration where she worked to represent 30 million small businesses across the country.

On top of her impressive and impeccable business credentials, she also spent time serving on the Connecticut Board of Education and was a member of the Board of Trustees at Sacred Heart University. She also has more than 15 years working in and around politics, making her well suited to navigate her new role in the administration.

As an organization that advocates on behalf of parents' concerns and the quality of education, we urge you to expedite and prioritize Ms. McMahon's nomination. She has already gone through a confirmation process and received an impressive 81 votes in support of her nomination to the Small Business Administration just a few years ago. Even in a partisan process, there was overwhelming support for Ms. McMahon. There is no reason to delay – let's ensure there is a swift confirmation process, so we can have officials in place to start tackling the education crises the Biden administration left behind.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michele Exner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michele Exner
Director of Federal Affairs
Parents Defending Education Action

³ Erica Meltzer. "U.S. math scores drop on major international test". *Chalkbeat*, December 4, 2024, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2024/12/04/timss-international-test-result-us-math-scores-decline-post-pandemic/>