



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March 17, 2017

Secretary Betsy DeVos
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos,

Here in Pennsylvania we have seen first-hand the consequences of budgets that indiscriminately reduce or eliminate education programs. Our schools are still recovering from the state-level cuts made under the previous gubernatorial administration.

The Wolf Administration, which fought to restore those damaging cuts, is steadfast in its opposition to cuts to education such as those proposed by the Trump Administration at the federal level, and rejects the notion of shifting funds from already under-resourced public schools to fund vouchers for private education. Further, Governor Wolf is asking Pennsylvania's congressional delegation to carefully review the devastating cuts in this proposal and help stop them. The Department has conducted a preliminary analysis of how the proposed cuts at the federal level would impact schools, students, and families across the commonwealth, and can provide you and your staff with this information at your request.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education remains focused on improving education equity across the state and is committed to ensuring every student has access to the tools and resources they need to thrive and are prepared to succeed when they graduate. After two years of securing a historic \$640 million in increased education funding in Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf continues to advocate for further investments in K-12 and postsecondary schools.

As a former principal and superintendent and now as the Secretary of Education for Pennsylvania, I know all too well how these proposed cuts would undermine our most vulnerable students and communities, eliminating afterschool programs, creating crowded classrooms, and removing access to evidence-based literacy programs. As the first in my family to graduate from college, I was especially disappointed to learn of the proposed cuts to postsecondary education which will only serve to put the dream of a college degree or a meaningful pathway to a good career further out of reach for thousands of first generation and low-income students here in the commonwealth.

The department intends to continue working with our communities, partners, and districts to maintain the progress we've made already, and to advance the initiatives and programs we believe best serve our students and our state's future. I join with Governor Wolf in asking you to do everything in your power to put Pennsylvania's students first, and reverse course on the proposed cuts to these vital programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pedro Rivera".

Pedro A. Rivera
Secretary of Education