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February 23, 2017

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

We are reaching out to you on behalf of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), the nation's oldest and largest education coalition. CEF is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that reflects the broad spectrum of the education community. Our more than 100 member organizations represent early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, higher education, and adult and workforce education including students, teachers and faculty, parents, administrators, counselors, other school employees, librarians, school board members, and trustees from both the public and private sectors.

On behalf of our membership, we urge you to support a strong federal investment in the nation's public education system. The federal education investment is crucial to ensure access to high quality education from pre-school to higher education, fill gaps where local and state funding is insufficient or where new priorities and needs arise, and help with the costs of federally mandated services, such as special education. Federal funding is targeted to where it is most needed - almost two thirds of appropriations for the Department of Education support teaching in low-income communities or aid for low-income college students.

Education programs have already been the target of deep cuts; Congress has eliminated 50 education programs since 2010. Any additional funding cuts or program eliminations would jeopardize the federal responsibility and commitment to ensure an equitable education for all students. Funding for the Department of Education is now below what it was in 2010, excluding the Pell grant program, and the appropriations bills that Congress is considering for

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fiscal year 2017 would cut funding even more deeply. Further cuts to federal education funding will only compound the current constraints caused by continuing decreases in state and local education budgets; almost half of the states are on track to provide less formula funding this year than they did 10 years ago.

Spending on education accounts for just 2 percent of the federal budget even though public schools are struggling to meet the needs of all of their students, costs make college unattainable to many, and graduates are now burdened with \$1.3 trillion of student loan debt. Investing in education pays dividends for both the students themselves and the economy as a whole. Those with more education earn dramatically more over their lifetime, pay more in taxes, and have higher employment rates. Countries with higher educational achievement have greater economic growth. Accordingly, we urge you to increase, not cut, the federal investment in education.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our goals and your priorities for education funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Bissonnette
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director