

**LINDA MCMAHON**

**SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

**NOMINEE OPENING STATEMENT**

Thank you, Chairman Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, and the distinguished members of the committee. I'm honored to have your consideration to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Education.

And I would like to thank both Senators Scott and Britt for their introductions, and for the opportunity to welcome my friends and family – thank you all so much for being here today.

I would also like to thank President Trump for his confidence in me to lead a Department whose mission and authority were a special focus of his campaign. He pledged to make American education the best in the world, return education to the states where it belongs, and free American students from the education bureaucracy through school choice. November proved that Americans overwhelmingly support the President's vision—and I am ready to enact it.

Education is *the issue* that determines our national success and prepares American workers to win the future. I've been passionate about education since my earliest college days, when I studied to earn a teaching credential. This has continued through my business career as a Connecticut State board of education member, as a university trustee, and as the chair of the America First Policy Institute, which advocates for workforce development, parental choice, and accountability in higher education. Most importantly, I'm also a mother and grandmother—and I join millions of American parents who want better schools for our kids and grandkids.

The legacy of our nation's leadership in education is one that every person in this room embraces with pride.

Unfortunately, many Americans today are experiencing a system in decline.

The latest scores from the Nation's Report Card show achievement in K12 math and reading at their lowest levels since 1971, the first year of testing. More than two thirds of public colleges are beset by violent crime on campus every year. And most tragically, student suicide rates have dramatically increased over the last two decades.

We can do better:

For the elementary and junior high student by teaching basic reading and mathematics.

For the college freshman facing censorship or antisemitism on campus.

And for parents and grandparents who worry that their children and grandchildren are no longer taught American values and true history.

In many cases, our wounds are caused by the excessive consolidation of power in our federal education establishment.

The remedy?

Fund education freedom, not government-run systems.

Listen to parents, not politicians.

Build up careers, not college debt.

Empower states, not special interests.

Invest in teachers, not Washington bureaucrats.

If confirmed as Secretary, I will work with Congress to reorient the Department toward helping educators, not controlling them.

My experience as a business owner and leader of the Small Business Administration, as a public servant in the state of Connecticut, and more than a decade of service as a college trustee has taught me to put parents, teachers, and students, not bureaucracy, first. Outstanding teachers are tired of political ideology in their curriculum and red tape on their desks. This is why school choice is a growing movement across the nation: it offers teachers and parents an alternative to classrooms that are micromanaged from Washington, DC.

We should also emphasize career-focused education, especially in cutting-edge STEM fields where American companies need high-skill employees. Our workers deserve more postsecondary pathways: career-aligned programs, apprenticeships and on-the-job learning, and jobs in tech, skilled trades, and healthcare for non-college degree holders.

Those who do attend college deserve transparent costs and courses of study aligned to workforce demand. The United States is the world leader by far in emerging technologies like AI and blockchain—and we need to invest in American students who want to become tech pioneers. We should encourage innovative new institutions, develop smart accountability systems, and tear down barriers to entry so that students have real choice and universities are not saddling future families with insurmountable debt.

We must protect all students from discrimination and harassment. If I am confirmed, the Department will not stand idly by while Jewish students are attacked and discriminated against. It will stop forcing schools to let boys and men into female sports and spaces. And it will protect the rights of parents to direct the moral education of their children.

The opportunity before us these next four years is momentous. I look forward to working with this committee, our nation's parents, teachers, and students, and education leaders from all political perspectives to build a better future for every American learner.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome your questions.