



Parents Groups Urge Trump to Appoint Anti-Common Core Education Secretary

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Grassroots parents groups are urging President-elect Donald Trump to choose an education secretary who has been opposed to the Common Core standards and will scale back the federal education department.

“While campaigning, President-elect Trump sent a strong message that he planned to end Common Core and dismantle the U.S. Department of Education,” Dr. Anna Arthurs, a parent activist in Louisiana, tells Breitbart News. “If this is his true intent, then it comes as quite a surprise to see that his ‘short list’ of Secretary of Education nominees includes so many pro-Common Core individuals. His voters want him to keep his promise.”

The grassroots groups have been fighting against federal intervention in education for years. They’ve activated email alerts in light of what has been released as Trump’s shortlist of possible candidates for U.S. Education Department (USED) secretary. The list includes:

- U.S. Rep. Luke Messer of Indiana, a supporter of school choice who backed Jeb Bush in the GOP primary and has been an ardent supporter of the new massive education law, Every Students Succeeds Act;
- Former Florida education commissioner Gerard Robinson, who was also a member of Jeb Bush’s Chiefs for Change and is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.
- Eva Moskowitz, the pro-Common Core CEO and founder of Success Academy Charter Schools;
- Michelle Rhee, the pro-Common Core former chancellor of Washington, D.C. public schools and the founder of Students First, an organization whose board of directors once included Common Core architect David Coleman and math standards writer Jason Zimba.

- Tony Bennett, the ousted Indiana superintendent of public education who was investigated for fraud and resigned later as Florida commissioner of education;
- Dr. Ben Carson, former neurosurgeon and 2016 GOP presidential candidate;
- Williamson M. Evers, Hoover Institution education expert who has been vocal in his opposition to Common Core and federal intervention in education.

“Some of the names being floated as possible Secretary of Education are troubling,” explains Jane Robbins, education fellow at American Principles Project, adding:

Trump’s most consistent education-related commitment during the campaign was to end Common Core and restore local control, and that won’t happen if the Department of Education is run by someone who has supported or protected Common Core in the past. Mr. Trump needs to listen to the grassroots forces who are relying on him to restore local autonomy in education.

“The grassroots believe Trump to be a man of his word, and they don’t doubt that he would reject any candidate with a questionable track record on Common Core,” Erin Tuttle of Indiana says. “With the recent rumors of pro-Common Core candidates being floated for the position, the grassroots is concerned that the proper vetting isn’t taking place.”

Parent activist Heidi Huber of Ohio sent the following statement to Breitbart News:

President-elect Donald J. Trump’s promise to return education to local communities rests in his appointment of a Secretary of Education who truly understands the corruption and cronyism within the education reform swamp, and who has been on the front lines fighting against FedEd a.k.a. Common Core. Williamson (Bill) Evers, President-elect Trump’s education transition team leader, is just that individual. I know Mr. Evers personally and was so grateful for his two testimonies before the Ohio legislature to warn of the harm of Common Core centralization and the historical success of competitive federalism.

“When Donald Trump talked on the campaign trail about ‘the forgotten men and women’ of America, many of us who have been fighting Common Core in the trenches felt like he was talking to us,” says Heather Crossin of Indiana, who adds that many parents have lost a voice in their children’s education.

“We are counting on President-elect Trump to stand up and fight for us against the powerful special interests, who not only profit off of Common Core but who pull the strings of the vast majority of politicians in both parties,” she explains.

Dr. Karen Effrem of Florida also points to Trump’s promise to end Common Core and make education local once again.

“Choosing pro-Common Core, establishment people like Tony Bennett, Michelle Rhee, or Eva Moskowitz would be a complete betrayal to those parents in every state who helped elect him,” she says.

While on the campaign trail, Trump said Common Core is a “disaster” and that Washington, D.C. should leave education to states and local school districts. Most of Trump’s recent discussion about education has been in the area of school choice.

Lance Izumi, director of the Center for Education at Pacific Research Institute, told Breitbart News that while school choice as a central strategy for success for all students is very positive, it should not come about with government “strings” attached.

“Trump said that states should come up with their own formulas and programs as to how to implement choice, so it is imperative that both the federal government and the states ensure that private schools are protected from intrusive government regulations and mandates,” he said.

The Cato Institute’s Neal McCluskey also told Breitbart News that school choice is “the key to empowering parents to get the education that is best for their unique children, and for educators to teach how they want and try new, innovative approaches.”

“But this is not something that should come from Washington,” he warned, adding:

The federal government has no constitutional authority to meddle in education, and as it has proven over the last several decades—including by coercing states to adopt the Common Core—once it starts paying for education it starts controlling it, telling everyone what to do and how to do it. The federal government should be withdrawn from education except in Washington, DC, itself, federal installations, and prohibiting state and local discrimination in providing education.

“It is what the Constitution demands, and fifty-plus years of experience with federal spending and interference tells us is right,” McCluskey said.