



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on December 7, 2016

Trump Team Touts “National Standards” After Opposing Common Core

While some of Donald Trump’s appointments  so far have been celebrated by his supporters, the president-elect’s nominee for U.S. education secretary, Betsy DeVos (shown), has raised serious concerns, even among Trump’s most loyal backers. From concerns about her involvement with pro-[Common Core](#) organizations and establishment figures, to growing doubts about whether President-elect Trump’s administration intends to follow through on pursuing candidate Trump’s call for shutting down the unconstitutional U.S. Department of Education, the controversy has only grown in recent days. [Trump’s team even said in a statement that it was pursuing “higher national standards.”](#) DeVos has tried to ease concerns by speaking out against Common Core, and some conservative education leaders have called for giving her a chance. Others have vowed to fight her nomination to the end.

On the campaign trail, Trump was crystal clear in his opposition to Common Core. “Common Core is a total disaster,” he said in a video during the election. “We can’t let it continue.” In a separate video, he vowed to end the radical scheme, which is being used to nationalize and even globalize American education. “We’re going to end Common Core, we’re going to have education an absolute priority,” Trump promised. In one of many, similar comments, Trump also suggested he would work to shut down the unconstitutional U.S. Department of Education. “A lot of people believe the Department of Education should just be eliminated. Get rid of it,” Trump said. “If we don’t eliminate it completely, we certainly need to cut its power and reach.” The solution, he suggested, would be to go back to what the Constitution explicitly requires — absolutely no federal role.

“Education has to be run locally,” Trump said. “Common Core, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top are all programs that take decisions away from parents and local school boards. These programs allow the progressives in the Department of Education to indoctrinate, not educate, our kids. What they are doing does not fit the American model of governance. I am totally against these programs and the Department of Education. It’s a disaster. We cannot continue to fail our children — the very future of this nation.” In separate comments, asked what departments he would cut, Trump said: “I may cut Department of Education. Common Core is a very bad thing. I think that it should be local education.” He then blasted Jeb Bush and other candidates, who he said “want children to be educated by Washington, D.C. bureaucrats.”



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Then, after crushing the pro-Common Core Bush and Clinton dynasties, he picked an education secretary with links to both. The controversy and outrage began almost as soon as the appointment was announced. Even Breitbart News, which has emerged as a sort of pro-Trump counterweight to the pro-Clinton establishment media, immediately pounced on the news of DeVos' selection. "[Donald Trump Announces Pro-Common Core Betsy DeVos as Education Secretary](#)," read the explosive headline at Breitbart. The increasingly prominent media outlet, which dwarfs much of the establishment media in terms of readership, was so overtly pro-Trump that its former chief, Steve Bannon, even went to work in the Trump campaign and now the Trump White House. That made the headline blasting DeVos especially noteworthy.

The article highlighted numerous links between DeVos, whom the Trump Transition Team touted as a "brilliant and passionate education advocate," and the establishment groups behind the radical national "education" standards foisted on states by bribes and bullying from Obama. Among other points, Karen Braun of Stop Common Core in Michigan noted DeVos' close ties to the pro-Common Core Great Lakes Education Project (GLEP). Separately, Breitbart pointed out that DeVos served as an at-large delegate for pro-Common Core globalist-minded Republican John Kasich, the governor of Ohio and failed presidential candidate. DeVos has also been a key booster of "charter" schools, which, due to government funding, also use the extraordinarily unpopular Common Core.

As outrage grew among Trump's supporters, DeVos immediately sprang into action, releasing a public statement disavowing Common Core after years of battling supporters of local control in Michigan and beyond. "I am not a supporter [of Common Core] — period," she wrote in a statement on social media and her website. "I do support high standards, strong accountability, and local control. When governors such as John Engler, Mike Huckabee, and Mike Pence were driving the conversation on voluntary high standards driven by local voices, it all made sense. Have organizations that I have been a part of supported Common Core? Of course. But that's not my position. Sometimes it's not just students who need to do their homework. However, along the way, it got turned into a federalized boondoggle."

Trump and his team also jumped in to defend the education nominee, a wealthy heiress who has donated huge sums to the establishment wing of the GOP, to the Clinton Foundation, to globalist Jeb Bush's "education" schemes, and other questionable causes. "Under her leadership we will reform the U.S. education system and break the bureaucracy that is holding our children back so that we can deliver world-class education and school choice to all families," Trump said. Under the guise of "school choice," though, critics have warned that the real agenda is to coerce all private, Christian, and independent schools into accepting tax money, along with Common Core and other unpopular government decrees.

A spokesman for the Trump transition team, Jason Miller, also released a statement claiming that, by joining the administration, DeVos had agreed to adhere to Trump's positions. "The President-elect has been consistent and very clear in his opposition to Common Core," Miller was quoted as saying. "Anybody joining the Administration is signing on to the President-elect's platform and vision for moving America forward." Still, in a readout from the transition team summarizing the meeting between Trump and DeVos, the discussion was described as being "focused on the Common Core mission, and setting higher national standards and promoting the growth of school choice across the nation." Setting "higher national standards" immediately raised alarm bells across America, making it sound as though Trump and DeVos were plotting Common Core 2.0 in defiance of the Constitution and campaign pledges of local control.



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Unsurprisingly, perhaps, more than a few establishment figures have celebrated Trump's pick, also raising alarm bells. Her biggest cheerleader so far appears to be establishment operative and failed GOP presidential candidate Jeb Bush, who [called DeVos an "outstanding pick."](#) "I cannot think of a more effective and passionate change agent to press for a new education vision, one in which students, rather than adults and bureaucracies, become the priority in our nation's classrooms," Bush gushed in a statement on DeVos, who served on the board of Bush's "education" outfit, the Foundation for Excellence in Education (FEE), and provided huge sums of money to it as recently as 2015.

The former governor of Florida has been among the leading supporters of the politically toxic nationalization, globalization, and further dumbing-down of education via the Obama-backed Common Core. And in large part due to that radical activism, Bush was massively rejected by voters, despite having one of the largest campaign war chests and a vast web of establishment connections. Bush's support for DeVos, and the longtime connections between the two on education, has contributed to the fact that some critics are wondering aloud whether the former president's brother might actually be involved in helping to select Trump's cabinet.

DeVos is also reportedly close to establishment globalist-minded Senator Lamar Alexander, a key "education" point-man responsible for the radical Every Student Succeeds Act that Obama last year described as a "Christmas miracle." DeVos is also linked to various far-left Democrat lawmakers, and her family has even helped finance the scandal-plagued Clinton Foundation. More than a few Trump supporters have seized on the web of establishment connections to sound the alarm.

In an e-mail to this writer, a surrogate for DeVos avoided direct answers to a series of questions. The questions included: News reports say DeVos is a Common Core supporter, Clinton donor, etc. What's the deal? Will DeVos help wind down the Education Department, which is not authorized by the U.S. Constitution, as Trump proposed on the campaign trail? What will this process look like? How long do you expect it to take? What will DeVos' top priorities be at the helm of the Education Department?

The surrogate, Phillip Stutts, was also asked to respond to the many concerns among libertarians, conservatives, and Trump supporters about "school choice" and "vouchers" providing a rationale for extending government regulations into once-private, independent schools; along with studies that show such policies crowd out genuinely independent schools from the market. Finally, he was asked to respond to concerns raised by former U.S. Education Department senior adviser Charlotte Iserbyt, who served in the Reagan administration, surrounding the dangers of the "school choice" agenda.

No direct response to any of the questions was offered. "The President-elect laid out his primary vision and she looks forward to moving it forward: advancing school choice and ensuring local control," Stutts said. "There are plenty of policy areas within the Department of Education that need to be revisited and as announced last week, the Trump transition team is already on the ground. Once the President-elect or Secretary-designate announce policy decisions, I'd be happy to discuss." *The New American* will keep readers updated.

In the meantime, critics have expressed outrage over the pick. "DeVos is the perfect candidate for using our children to spin off profits for the global elite," charged Iserbyt, the former education adviser under Reagan and the author of *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America*. "Shame on Trump for appointing her. DeVos and her associates at the Heritage Foundation and its spin-off tax-exempt buddies have finally pounded the final nail in our nation's heart: taxation without representation. Slippery slope indeed." In a follow-up e-mail, Iserbyt told *The New American* that she and others had pushed Dr. Patrick Huff, a veteran educator, for the position. "They didn't want a real educator," she



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said, calling Huff a “true, fine academically oriented educator with over thirty years of service in the public school trenches.” Along with her vast network of education researchers and activists, Iserbyt vowed to urge the U.S. Senate to reject DeVos for the post. With Democrats in a tizzy, a coalition between liberty-minded Republicans and Big Labor-controlled Democrats may be able to stop her.

Separately, U.S. Parents Involved in Education (US PIE), a nationwide group opposed to federal involvement in education, decided, despite serious concerns with DeVos, not to oppose her nomination, but to advise Trump “of our grave concerns with her past positions on Common Core, data-collection, digital learning, and her support of other policies that undermine privacy, and local control,” said US PIE leader Sheri Few. “However, we are willing to give her a chance and will feel more comfortable with the nomination if President-elect Trump will nominate one of our recommendations for Deputy Secretary of Education,” she added. The group plans to recommend education experts Peg Luksik and Jim Blockey, one for deputy secretary and the other as adviser to DeVos, Few explained.

In a report on whether Trump and DeVos can really end Common Core, the Heritage Foundation’s Daily Signal suggested that the two might encourage state governments to drop the controversial scheme by continuing to speak out against it and expose it. Because Heritage has been working closely with the Trump transition team, Common Core critics hope that Trump would make good on his pledge to oppose the Obama-backed scheme. However, based on what is known so far, it seems that Trump supporters hoping to end the Department of Education and its radical agenda may be left disappointed. And even if Common Core died tomorrow, it would still not solve the monumental crisis in American education, generations in the making, that Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education said threatened America’s very future as a nation.

For supporters of the Constitution, de-funding and abolishing the unconstitutional U.S. Education Department should still be pursued through Congress. The House controls the power of the purse, and the ostensibly anti-Common Core, anti-Education Department GOP controls the House. And for those opposed to DeVos, the U.S. Senate must still confirm her nomination, providing opportunities to stop her. Making American education great again will be an incredibly difficult task, but it can and must be done. Unfortunately, though, it remains unclear whether Trump will be willing and able to do what is necessary to even begin that process. In the meantime, [homeschooling](#) and [independent schools](#) offer [hope for those with school-age children](#).

Photo of President-elect Donald Trump with Betsy DeVos: AP Images

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