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RALPH MARINO, JR., Ed.D.
Superintendent

January 30, 2017

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand,

On behalf of Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools, we would like to express our concerns regarding the potential confirmation of Mrs. Betsy DeVos as the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Mrs. DeVos does not possess the qualifications necessary to serve in this most critical capacity. She has not earned a degree in education, not served as a teacher, administrator, or public school board member. She has no understanding of education policy, pedagogy, standard creation, or school accountability. Her testimony at her hearing solidified the fact that she is unfamiliar with current Education Law. Equally as concerning was her inability to demonstrate her knowledge of the difference between “proficiency” and “growth.”

Consider the words of Mr. Nelson Mandela, *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”* We most certainly concur. Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools is one of the most successful school districts in the state of New York. We teach our students to think creatively, to ask the tough questions, to communicate effectively, and to collaborate with other peers and adults. We take pride in assisting each member of our diverse community of learners to reach their maximum potential, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status.

The notion that “America’s schools are failing” is inaccurate. There are many successful school districts, just as there are those in need of improvement. We need a Secretary of Education qualified to recognize the difference and enact meaningful change to ensure success for ALL districts. It is not our belief that Mrs. DeVos would be the advocate that American students need to remain competitive well into the future.

We respectfully request that you oppose the confirmation of Mrs. DeVos to a position in which is unqualified and will possess great influence on the education of our nation’s youth. The future of public education in the United States hangs in the balance.

Thank you for your attention to this most important matter.

Sincerely,

Board of Education

Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott McInnes", written over a horizontal line.

Scott McInnes, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cheryl May", written over a horizontal line.

Cheryl May, Vice President