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United States Senate

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The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

Congratulations on being confirmed as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Serving as Secretary of Education is a great honor and I look forward to working with you to help promote local control of education and ensure all students and families, whether in K-12 or in higher education, are able to have options and access to a high quality education.

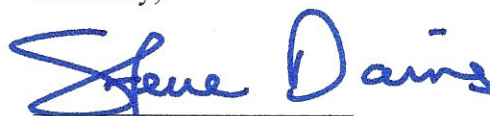
Parents and educators across Montana frequently share concerns about the 'one size fits all' student performance mandates and reporting requirements that have played too large a role in federal education policy for far too long. While well-intended, many of these metrics and mandates have proven difficult for schools in rural areas to achieve and I am confident that you will return the decision-making process over education closer to local jurisdictions.

As you develop your priorities for the Department of Education, I would like to highlight a few priorities important to Montana. I urge you to adopt or implement the principles detailed in S. 221, the Academic Partnerships Lead Us to Success, or A-PLUS, Act. This measure will help expand local control of our schools and return federal education dollars where they belong: closer to the classrooms. Advancing the A-PLUS Act or similar policies would go a long ways towards returning the responsibility for our education system closer to home and reduce the influence of the federal government over our classrooms. I also call on you to support robust funding for Impact Aid. This program provides direct, flexible funding to school districts within Indian Country or military installations and is critical for schools where federal activity has reduced the available tax base.

With your leadership, the Department of Education can increase local control of our schools with policies that originate with the parents, teachers and administrators who are closest to the classroom.

Congratulations again on your confirmation, and I look forward to continuing to dialogue with you and your administration.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator