



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

April 9, 2018

Kate McDonough  
Girls for Gender Equity  
25 Chapel St.  
Suite 1006  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Ms. McDonough:

Thank you for your March 23, 2018 letter to Secretary Betsy DeVos expressing (1) concerns that girls and certain transgender or gender-nonconforming students have been subjected to discriminatory discipline practices and (2) expressing support for retaining the January 8, 2014 Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) on the *Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline* jointly issued by the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Given the issues raised, your letter was shared with the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and I am pleased to respond.

We appreciate the input provided by Girls for Gender Equity and thirty-nine other organizations regarding how to ensure that school discipline is free from discrimination, and that schools are safe for all students. We share your concerns regarding the need to ensure that all students have a safe and inclusive learning environment, and that no child is subject to discriminatory discipline, including discipline of students because they do not conform with sex stereotypes. There is no place for discrimination in our schools. OCR will continue to fulfill its important mission of ensuring equal access to education and promoting educational excellence throughout the nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.

The Department has held stakeholder outreach sessions recently to discuss solutions that will promote student safety and ensure that school disciplinary practices are non-discriminatory. We have engaged with superintendents, school boards, principals, educators, counselors, law enforcement, researchers, civil rights groups, parents, and students, among others. These meetings will inform the steps that the Department takes to ensure that every child is respected and can learn in an accepting environment.

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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

OCR will not compromise its deep commitment to ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. These core goals—safety and nondiscrimination in school—are complementary, and both are critical to success for our nation’s students.

Sincerely,



William E. Trachman  
Deputy Assistant Secretary For Policy and Development