



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

May 6, 2020

Dear Educators:

Today, we face the significant challenge of making sure learning continues in new and different ways while steps to ensure health and safety take priority. I applaud everything you are doing to help your students during these unprecedented times.

I write to you today about another significant matter of student safety and steps the Department is taking to help make all of our schools safer places for students to learn and grow. In September 2017, I publicly pledged to address the critical topic of sexual harassment in education. The Department of Education embarked on an ambitious effort to strengthen protections against sexual harassment, including sexual assault, and restore due process rights for all students. Those regulations were released on May 6, 2020, and will carry the force and effect of law as of August 14, 2020. A link to the Final Rule is available [here](#).

Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments Act bars discrimination on the basis of sex in schools that receive federal taxpayer funds. Now, for the first time, the Department's regulations expressly recognize sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination and require schools to respond promptly and appropriately when incidents of sexual harassment occur.

The Final Rule is clear, predictable, and effective at ensuring schools have the tools they need to address incidents of sexual harassment in their programs and activities. Under our Rule, schools know the importance of responding to such incidents appropriately by supporting survivors, as well as by providing a fair, transparent process for investigating and adjudicating sexual harassment matters. At the same time, the Final Rule clarifies a school's responsibility for handling incidents of sexual harassment, such as where a student who alleges sexual harassment requests only supportive measures from the school.

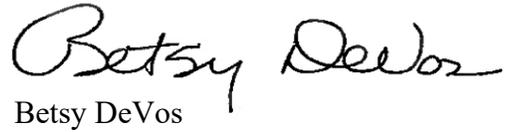
The Final Rule protects all students, while offering a clear path forward for schools. We look forward to helping you implement the Rule, which may include necessary changes to your processes.

Understandably, there will be questions about our Final Rule. And I know you are simultaneously focused on limiting disruptions to learning and on adapting to changing circumstances during these challenging times. As the school year comes to an end, you can use the summer to both plan for the next school year and to implement our Final Rule. The Department is prepared to assist educators and the public, which includes the creation of a new "Open Center." The Open Center is ready to field questions regarding the Final Rule and can be reached at this e-mail address: open@ed.gov.

My most sincere goal is that we will never go back to an era where survivors are ignored or abandoned or where schools wonder what the law requires of them. For more detailed information about the Final Rule, I urge you to read the Summary of the Major Provisions of the Department of Education's Title IX Final Rule, available [here](#).

Thank you for what you do every day for students and for the difference you make in their lives. I look forward to our continued cooperation and our continued focus on doing what's right for students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy DeVos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Betsy DeVos