

# Trump Announces Intent to Nominate Betsy DeVos to Head the Department of Education

By Don Sutherland

Today, President-elect Donald Trump [announced](#) that he would nominate Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education. In nominating her, Trump declared, “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.”

Ms. DeVos has been an advocate of K-12 school choice. To date, she has not played a significant role in Higher Education. Nevertheless, her position will give her oversight over Higher Education, so some insight into her approach toward colleges and universities could be useful.

The Dick & Betsy DeVos Family Foundation’s funding activities could indirectly provide some insight. Based on that foundation’s Form 990, the DeVos Family Foundation has provided funding to the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI), the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, the Heritage Foundation, and the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. The policy initiatives advocated by those organizations may, at least in part, reflect Ms. DeVos’ thinking.

Based on those organizations’ work, some possibilities may include:

- Increased incentive-based funding for high school students to complete Advanced Placement (AP) and additional college-credit courses
- Greater focus on education costs including federal tax benefits, tax expenditures, grants, and loans
- Increased expectation for an enlarged role for private financing for colleges and universities
- Expanded use of performance metrics for colleges and universities
- Increased scrutiny of the use of speech codes, and efforts to restrict speakers from campuses, and other forms of “censorship.”