

**NOMINATION OF CYNTHIA MARTEN  
TO SERVE AS DEPUTY SECRETARY  
OF EDUCATION**

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**HEARING**  
OF THE  
**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**

FIRST SESSION

ON

EXAMINING THE NOMINATION OF CYNTHIA MINETTE MARTEN, OF  
CALIFORNIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

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MARCH 24, 2021

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**NOMINATION OF CYNTHIA MARTEN  
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OF EDUCATION**

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**Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in room 430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Patty Murray, Chair of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Murray [presiding], Casey, Murphy, Kaine, Hassan, Smith, Rosen, Hickenlooper, Burr, Collins, Cassidy, Murkowski, Braun, Marshall, Romney, Tuberville and Representative Davis.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MURRAY**

The CHAIR. Good morning. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will please come to order. Today we are holding a hearing on the nomination of Cindy Marten to serve as Deputy Secretary of Education. Senator Burr and I will each have an opening statement, and I will then recognize Representative Susan Davis to introduce Superintendent Marten. After Superintendent Marten gives her testimony, Senators will have five minutes each for a round of questions.

I am happy to stay for a second round if Senators have any remaining questions. Before we begin, I want to walk through the COVID-19 safety protocols in place. We will follow the advice of the Attending Physician and the Sergeant-at-Arms in conducting this hearing. We are all very grateful to everyone, including our Clerks, who have worked very hard to get this set up and help everyone stay safe and healthy. Committee Members are seated at least six feet apart. Some Senators are participating by video conference. And while we are unable to have the hearing fully open to the public or media for in-person attendance, live video is available on our Committee website at [help.senate.gov](https://help.senate.gov).

If you are in need of accommodations, including closed captioning, you can reach out to the Committee or the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services. We received Cindy Marten's formal nomination on February 22nd, her Government ethics paperwork, including our public financial disclosures and ethics agreement, on February 26th, and her Committee paperwork on March 12th. Superintendent Marten, thank you for joining us today. It is nice to be able to meet you in person. I am also pleased to welcome

your son who is with you today. Andrew, welcome. And your mother, Fern, who is behind you there, who are with you today. I look forward to hearing from you about the challenges that our Nation is facing.

The passage of the American Rescue Plan and recent announcements from the Biden administration have given hope and help to students, families, and schools across the country. However, while we have good reason for optimism, we have no room for complacency. We still have a lot of work ahead to end this pandemic, support our students in recovering from the academic, social, and emotional impacts of it, and help our Nation rebuild stronger and fairer. It is going to take all hands on deck, which is why it is so important we confirm Cindy Marten, who has a lifetime of experience that makes her well qualified to serve as Deputy Secretary of Education. She knows how important it is for every student to be able to get a high quality public education, and she has worked throughout her career to try to make this vision a reality in her community.

Marten has been an educator for over 32 years, serving as a Literacy Specialist, teacher, Vice Principal, Principal and now as Superintendent of San Diego Unified School District, the second largest public school district in California, a position she has held since 2013. As an educator and principal at Central Elementary in a mostly immigrant and working class neighborhood in San Diego, she worked to support students by establishing a successful bi-literacy program, a hands-on garden program, integrated arts education, quality afterschool and preschool programs, and a community health and wellness center for students and their families. She also worked to support her staff, educators, and their families by establishing a daycare center for employees' children.

As Superintendent, she has prioritized a qualified and experienced teaching, student literacy, health and wellness, and racial equity. And under her tenure, the district achieved the fastest reading growth in large urban districts nationwide and had the highest graduation rate of all big city districts in California last year. And, of course, like most school districts across the country, it has faced challenges in navigating this pandemic. Superintendent Marten knows firsthand the issues communities are struggling with when it comes to serving all students equitably and safely reopening schools for in-person learning. Between her decades of experience as an educator and administrator, and her record fighting for students, it is clear Superintendent Marten is an excellent choice to help Secretary Cardona, and that as the Deputy Secretary of Education, she would be a champion for students, especially those who have so sorely needed a champion at the Department these last four years, including students of color, students from families with low incomes, students with disabilities, women, LGBTQ students, English learners, and many others. I also believe she will be a valuable partner as we tackle the many challenges that lie ahead.

While those challenges may start with making good on the promise of the American Rescue Plan and helping schools safely reopen for in-person learning, our work will not end there. We have to ensure schools have access to comparable data on how students are

doing and provide funding and support for schools as they work to address the ways COVID has set back students from a typical year. We have to address the damage this pandemic has done and how it has impacted students, especially how it has exacerbated the long standing inequities rooted in systemic racism that many students face. We have to address the digital divide that left so many students, particularly students of color and those from families with low income, cutoff from their classmates during this crisis.

We have to address the fact that too many students are struggling to receive access to a high quality curriculum, counseling services such as mental health care, nutritious meals, or other resources they need. Too many families can't get quality, affordable pre-K and early education, and all of this has been made worse by COVID-19. We also have to address the student debt crisis, which is now on a collision course with the economic crisis this pandemic has caused. We have to make sure higher education is affordable, accessible, accountable and safe for every student. And we need to address the deep, systemic inequities rooted in racism, sexism, ableism and bigotry that permeate our education system and this crisis has put on painful display. We have a big task ahead, and it is going to take a full team of people like Cindy Marten who are highly qualified and deeply committed to get it done. So I hope after today's hearing, all my colleagues will join me in supporting her nomination.

Finally, I seek unanimous consent to put in the record 26 letters in support of Cindy Marten's nomination from state and Federal legislators, civil rights organization, educators, and educational institutions. I would also like to note the more than 100 emails we received from your former students, families, and colleagues sharing stories about how Superintendent Marten touched their lives. So ordered.

[The following information can be found on pages 40-101]

The CHAIR. With that, I will recognize Ranking Member Burr for his opening remarks.

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURR

Senator BURR. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for scheduling this nomination for Cindy Marten for Deputy Secretary of Education. Ms. Marten, welcome and thank you for the time we spent together this morning and for the rare opportunity to have your mother and your son there. That was a real treat for me. Earlier this month, I supported Dr. Cardona's nomination to be Secretary of Education because I felt he had the background, qualifications, and temperament to serve in that position. Most importantly, he testified that we need to get kids back into the classroom and demonstrated an understanding that one size fits all mandates from Washington won't work. He also committed to be transparent and responsive to Congress when exercising our oversight responsibilities.

I am pleased to be able to support his nomination and provide my consent. And I am glad to see that the CDC has finally caught up with the science on school reopening. I can't help but wonder if we all had Susan Collins to thank for that with her very effective

line of questioning last week at the COVID hearing. Ms. Marten, you have been nominated to serve as Deputy Secretary of Education. Under the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, the Deputy Secretary serves as Chief Operating Officer for the Department. As such, the Deputy Secretary acts on behalf of the Secretary with Senior Department leaders in developing and executing executive management and in identifying key organizational vulnerabilities and executing effective approaches to manage risk across the Department's programs, grants, loans, contracts, and related services. If confirmed as CEO—COO of the Department, you would be responsible for the operation and management of approximately 4,000 employees, a \$73.5 billion annual budget, and a \$1.6 trillion student loan portfolio.

Your experience as a teacher and a principal, and since 2013, as Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, which annually receives millions of dollars from various Federal K through 12 programs, certainly gives you experience implementing a number of programs that ultimately report into the Deputy Secretary's office. You might be possibly—the best possible Assistant Secretary of elementary and secondary education in the history of the agency. However, your record as Superintendent highlights the challenges I think you will have, should you be the Deputy. In particular, you appear to have little or no experience working in higher education systems or institutions, working on higher education policy, or managing large student loan portfolios.

I recall several questions to officials in the last administration about their experience managing a \$1 trillion student loan program, so I assume those questions will be asked of you today. Your immediate predecessor had experience not only as a State Superintendent of Education, but as a College President, and had a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Army as a Brigadier General and Chief of Staff of the Army Reserve Command. President Obama's first nominee confirmed in this position, came to it with significant experience managing multi-billion dollar grant portfolios and investment funds. And George W. Bush first nominee confirmed to this position, had been a CEO and served in the H.W. Bush administration as Chief Financial Officer for the Department. All of these former Deputy Secretaries brought significant experience and expertise in areas such as management, finance, and higher education that complemented the largely K through 12 backgrounds of the Secretaries they served.

Despite any reservations, I believe your passion for education and for kids to learn in the classroom will enable you to succeed in the position of Deputy Secretary of Education. I very much want you to succeed. I am inclined to support your nomination. I want to extend to you and offer to provide whatever assistance I and my staff can to help you succeed. Having said that, as the Ranking Member, it is important for me to point out some things. I would like to point out to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, because I firmly believe that if Ms. Marten were a Republican or was being nominated by a Republican President, they would line up in opposition against you. First, I don't believe my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would support a Republican nominee who was Superintendent of a school district with large disparities on

how minority and white students were disciplined. According to an article in the Los Angeles Times, in 2018–19 school year, Black students in San Diego Unified were suspended more than three times as often as white students, and they accounted for 18 percent of the students suspended, despite making up only 8 percent of the student body.

Second, I don't believe my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would support a Republican nominee, who disability advocates claimed has been, and I quote, "difficult to deal with in terms of transparency and sharing information with families of students with special needs," as Disability Rights California claimed about you. In fact, your district has been sued for denying students with accommodations reimbursements they are entitled to receive under their individual education plans or IEPs. And your district's been investigated by the Federal Department of Education for civil rights violations against students with disabilities. Third, I think my colleagues would vigorously question a Republican nominee who oversaw a school district where top level administrators were trained on how to delete emails from the public record in violation of state public records laws, as local news reports have claimed occurred in your school district.

Furthermore, they would be skeptical of a nominee who San Diego Society of Professional Journalists gave the San Diego Unified its Wall Award given to public officials or agencies that most ignored media requests or otherwise compromised public's right to know. The Journal has noted that San Diego Unified withheld documents about student safety and missing inventory items that other school districts delivered in weeks and ignored repeated requests to meet in person.

Fourth, I am sure that you would express concerns about a nominee heading a school district that was currently defending itself against a lawsuit filed by former students alleging that the district was negligent for failing to take appropriate action upon receiving sexual harassment complaints against its employees, or a nominee facing a lawsuit seeking the nominee's termination as Superintendent due to their alleged neglect of bullying of previous victims of sexual abuse.

Finally, I can picture the letter demanding testimony from the local NAACP that not only publicly opposed such a nomination, but stated that the nominee has, "been an ineffective leader of California's second largest school district and is ill equipped for this tremendous responsibility of serving the needs of your entire Nation's young learners." NAACP, San Diego branch President Francine Maxwell, has gone so far as to express she is greatly disturbed by the prospect of Superintendent Marten being elevated to a position of National significance and import while leaving some of the country's most vulnerable children in increasingly difficult situations.

I am glad to see that my Democratic friends have abandoned their guilt, guilty upon nomination stance, that they have taken for the last four years. And I hope they will reflect on the damage they did to the Senate by opposing any and all nominees basically just because they accepted a nomination from the last President. Now, I have had an opportunity to sit down with you and understand a

lot of what is behind some of the things that as Ranking Member I have to point out because they are in the news.

I hope you take this opportunity to help the Committee understand your background, your experience, your record of work, and the fact that it does merit a promotion. And I hope you are able to convince my Democratic friends that they should support you as well. We need you at the Department of Education, we need you as a Chief Operating Officer, and I am convinced from your background and your passion, those places that you identify you have deficiencies, you will reach out and find a way to overcome those gaps. Madam Chair, I look forward to this hearing and I thank the Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Ranking Member Burr. I will now turn it over to Representative Davis to introduce Superintendent Marten.

Representative DAVIS. Madam Chair and Ranking Member Burr, Senators, colleagues and friends, thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to you about why I believe Superintendent Cindy Marten is the education leader our Nation needs to meet this moment. I appreciate that you were taking this thoughtful time to consider the unparalleled challenges that we face in education. And I know we share a commitment to help our Nation's young people through the trauma of the past year, which is possibly the greatest disruptive time any group of students in our history have faced.

We have to ask ourselves today, who has what it takes to accelerate opportunity for all young people, hasten our recovery, and find the resilience for growth and success? Superintendent Cindy Marten is someone I have watched as a principal and now as the leader of an entire system, the second largest K-12 education system in California. She will be ready on her first day to help reopen and reenergize our Nation's schools with a new sense of purpose. Superintendent Cindy Marten is someone, as I mentioned, I had watched as a principal and I know that she is going to make an outstanding Deputy Secretary. Some refer to the Secretary as the Chief Operating Officer of the Education Department.

She has taught in public schools, in private schools, religious schools, she attended public and private schools and educated her son in both public and public charter schools. She has had the opportunity to look at original ideas and best practices throughout the country to see what works and discard what does not. Superintendent Marten has already demonstrated her ability to lead large systems at this difficult hour, distributing 80,000 Chromebook computers and more than 20 million meals to help children keep learning even as the world around them began to close. During my last year in Congress, during COVID, we worked together to get the USDA to expand its after school meal program, and I know many of you supported that effort also because this pandemic has given us both challenges and opportunities.

In this case, we created an opportunity to feed 30 percent more children. Superintendent Marten understands how to work with Congress to expand the horizons of every child. Even as Congress was voting for more relief to schools, Superintendent Marten was announcing a \$21 million summer program to help students recover from learning loss and bring joy back to the school experi-

ence. In short, Cindy Marten is a leader who works with people to meet every challenge and exceed every expectation. Having witnessed her leadership grow, I have seen her set expectations raise the bar and bring people together to meet collective goals. At the time Sidney Marten became Superintendent, the top student priority was in peril. Seven Superintendents in ten years created a crisis in confidence.

No one believes a district would meet its goal of raising graduation standards and improving college readiness as part of vision 2020. Cindy Marten met this challenge, delivered on the commitment a year early, producing the highest graduation rates for a big city district in the state, even with the higher standards and increasing college readiness among all students. College readiness among Black students, for example, increased by 50 percent. This is the kind of mission-centered leadership that has made Cindy Marten successful throughout her eight years in the post, and as mentioned, her lifetime as an educator.

Today, as students face massive educational loss and our Nation risks losing a generation of young potential, it is no exaggeration to call the task in front of us an existential one. Equity and access, issues before the crisis, can no longer be avoided. Cindy Marten takes problems head on and brings people together to solve them. Her enthusiasm to raise the potential of every student is well known. I have had the opportunity to watch her work and see how she transforms relationships for the betterment of our children.

She will be a strong asset to lead and collaborate with all involved, and I am confident that she is the kind of leader who will bring experience, dedication, and a strong work ethic to the Department, and working alongside our President and, of course, the new Secretary of Education. She will expand that role as Deputy. San Diego's loss here is our Nation's gain, and I am proud to be here to represent my community and to let you all know that America's finest city is sending you America's finest Superintendent. Thank you so much.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Representative Davis. Superintendent Marten, you may now begin your testimony. Again, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA MARTEN TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you very much. Chair Murray, Ranking Member Burr, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee as Deputy Secretary of Education. My name is Cindy Marten, and I am the Superintendent of the second largest school district in the State of California, San Diego Unified. The district is home to more than 100,000 exceptional students, where I have been honored to serve in this capacity in the past eight years. While I have worked in many roles in education, the most important job I have held in my 32 year career is that of classroom teacher.

My 17 years as a teacher provided me with the foundation and the stance for every decision I make as a leader. I am joined here this morning by my son Andrew, a proud recent college graduate,

and my mother, Fern Siegel. My passion for public service comes from my mother who has dedicated her life to serving others. She instilled in me the values of selflessness and service as I watched her care for my siblings, her two children with special needs, my brother Charley, who was born with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and my late sister Laura, who in her early 20's was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

I also want to mention my late father, Donald Cohen, who taught me the value of honesty, integrity, and accountability, and my beloved husband of 33 years, Sergio, who was the love of my life, who I recently lost. Sergio taught me the power of unconditional love. He always believed in my dream to become a teacher. I would not be here today without them. My commitment to education comes from my brother Charley, who I am proud to say is living independently and thriving with a team who supports him. Charley, I know you are watching right now from San Diego, and I want everyone to know that you are the best brother in the whole wide world. Charley's success was based on my family's core belief in focusing on what Charley can do instead of on what he can't do.

In 1975, when the typical course of action may have been to put him in an institution or a separate setting, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, which eventually became Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It was this law that changed Charley's educational journey forever. I can say from firsthand experience that my brother's success in life was based on our commitment to see his strengths and the law that guaranteed him a free and appropriate education and the protection of his and my parents' rights. I understand that this is a critical time in our Nation for public education. As our country continues to struggle with the effects of the pandemic, we face the challenges that come with getting our students back in school. President Biden has set a goal of reopening schools in the first 100 days of his administration.

I am proud to report that San Diego Unified will meet this goal as we are on track to reopen on April 12th. Our path to reopening our schools in San Diego Unified was paved by consulting scientific and medical experts. Following the best recommendations, and thanks to funding provided by Congress, we installed the latest air filtration equipment, implemented a COVID-19 testing program, and created smaller class sizes. If I am honored enough to be confirmed, I will work to use my experiences in San Diego to help support efforts across the country to reopen schools safely and bring children back to the classrooms. This pandemic did not create the inequities in our education system, but it has highlighted just how much work remains to be done. I have dedicated my life as an educator to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

In the past decade, San Diego Unified has pushed to accelerate growth in reading and has seen results. This success is because of hard work, hardworking students, and relentlessly dedicated teachers, support staff, and administrators who have worked tirelessly and are beating the odds. If confirmed, I would work to deliver on the hope and promise of public education in America. I would work to create the conditions in every single classroom where all chil-

dren grow and learn to become actively literate, contributing, participating members of society. And I would work to create—improve outcomes for all students. I have learned firsthand that equity means each and every student receives what they need, when they need it, in the way that they need it. We have experienced tremendous heartbreak and loss as a result of our collective and individual experiences over the past year, and our losses are deep, personal and difficult to quantify.

We must do what every good teacher knows how to do. Gather ourselves, assess the strengths and needs of our students, families, staff members and community, and develop a plan to implement it. If confirmed, I would work with Dr. Cardona and all Members of this Committee. I will take lessons from this year and apply them to the mission before us as we build back better.

Our future depends on how we pull together as a Nation. As President Biden said at his inauguration, my whole soul is in this. Thank you and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Marten follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA MARTEN

Chair Murray, Ranking Member Burr, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as Deputy Secretary of Education.

My name is Cindy Marten, and I am the Superintendent of the second largest school district in the State of California, San Diego Unified. The District is home to more than 100,000 exceptional students, where I have been honored to serve in this capacity for the past eight years. While I have worked in many roles in education, the most important job I've held in my 32-year career is that of classroom teacher. My 17 years as a teacher provided me with the foundation and stance for all my decisions as a leader.

I am joined here this morning by my son, Andrew, a proud recent college graduate, and my mother Fern Siegel. My passion for public service comes from my mother who has dedicated her life to serving others. She instilled in me the values of selflessness and service as I watched her care for my siblings, her two children with special needs: my brother Charley who was born with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and my late sister, Laura who in her early twenties was diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia.

I also want to mention my late father, Donald Cohen who taught me the value of honesty, integrity and accountability and my beloved husband of 33 years, Sergio, the love of my life, whom I recently lost. Sergio taught me the power of unconditional love. He always believed in me and my dream to become a teacher. I would not be here today without them.

My commitment to education comes from my brother, Charley, who I am proud to say is living independently and thriving with a team who supports him. Charley, I know you're watching today, and I want everyone to know that you are the best brother in the whole wide world.

Charley's success was based on my family's core belief in focusing on what Charley can do, instead of what he can't do. In 1975, when the typical course of action may have been to put him in an institution or separate setting, Congress passed the Education for all Handicapped Children's Act which eventually became Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It was this law that changed Charley's educational journey forever. I can say from first-hand experience that my brother's success in life was based on our commitment to see his strengths and the law that guaranteed him a free and appropriate education and the protection of his and my parent's rights.

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I am proud to report San Diego Unified will meet this goal, and we are on track to reopen on April 12. Our path to reopening our schools in San Diego Unified was

paved by consulting with scientific and medical experts. Following the best recommendations and thanks to funding provided by Congress, we installed the latest air filtration equipment, implemented a COVID19 testing program, and created smaller class sizes. If I am honored enough to be confirmed, I will work to use my experiences in San Diego to help support efforts across the country to reopen schools safely and bring children back to classrooms.

The pandemic did not create the inequities in our education system, but it has highlighted just how much work remains to be done. I have dedicated my life as an educator to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. In the past decade, San Diego Unified has pushed to accelerate growth in reading and has seen results. This success is because of hard working students and relentlessly dedicated teachers, support staff and administrators who have worked tirelessly and are beating the odds.

If confirmed, I would work to deliver on the hope and promise of public education in America. I would work to create the conditions in every single classroom where all children grow and learn to become actively literate, contributing, participating members of society. And I would work to create improved outcomes for all students. I have learned first-hand that equity means each and every student receives what they need, when they need it, and in the way they need it.

We have experienced tremendous heartbreak and loss as a result of our collective and individual experiences over the past year. Our losses are deep, personal and difficult to quantify so we must do what every good teacher knows how to do: gather ourselves, assess the strengths and needs of our students, families, staff members and communities, and then develop a plan and implement it.

If confirmed, I would work with Dr. Cardona and all Members of this Committee to find solutions and work in a bipartisan manner so we can learn and grow from one another. I will take lessons from this year and apply them to the mission before us as we build back better. Our future depends on how we pull together as a Nation, and—as President Biden said at his inauguration—“My Whole Soul is in This.”

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much. We will now begin a round of five minute questions, and I ask my colleagues to keep track of your clock and stay within those five minutes. I am happy to stay if anyone has any additional questions for a second round. Ms. Marten, our Nation’s students are facing an unprecedented crisis through no fault of their own. Some students have been out of their classrooms for over a year, navigating all the challenges that come with remote learning or hybrid learning models. Some students are back in the classroom, but far from experiencing a typical school year.

All students are facing challenges. And for students of color, students from families with low incomes, students with disabilities, or English learners, or experiencing homelessness, the challenges and inequities they faced prior to the pandemic have only gotten worse. The good news is there are strategies that can help support students, schools, and educators as they recover from this crisis as we address these inequities.

The American Rescue Plan includes \$125 billion for public education, including funds specifically to address learning loss and use evidence-based interventions to meet the challenges our students are facing. Can you tell us what steps the Department will take to ensure students and districts have the support they need to accurately identify and address learning loss among their students?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for that question, Senator Murray, and for identifying what we are facing. This is so important, that as we reengage our Nation’s schools and our children, to understand what has been lost, what has been gained, and what steps we need to take, and the identification of student needs is critical in us being

able to move forward. The investment that has been made is going to allow us to address the learning losses, and I can speak specifically to San Diego Unified in our ability to put programs in place.

Currently, as we reengage our students, a robust summer program to begin to address that learning loss, and then going forward on the fall, plans are in place. And I look forward to working with Members here and the Department to lift up the best practices, to have a very powerful, strong recovery for our students across the Nation.

The CHAIR. We have a long road ahead to support students in recovering from the educational, health, and economic consequences of this pandemic. But we have also got to be clear, our goal can't be simply to get schools back to normal in situations where normal wasn't working very well in the first place. This pandemic has exacerbated the inequities and systemic racism students across this country have been dealing with every day for far too long.

We need to commit to confronting systemic racism and long standing inequities by addressing inequitable school funding, racial and socio economic school integration, access to high quality and rigorous curriculum, school discipline, campus sexual assault, the use of seclusion and restraint, bullying, harassment and more. Ms. Marten, how has your experience shaped your perspective on what needs to be done to address long standing inequities in our education system?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator Murray, for an opportunity to talk about the longstanding inequities that you have just presented. And as a leader of San Diego Unified School District, I have great experience with what we have needed to do to interrupt the implicit things that have longstanding—long stood in the way of our students being able to achieve, and the ability for us to put systemic approaches across a large urban system gives me a great background to be able to look at best practices and lift them up across our Nation.

What is necessary for that to happen nationwide is looking at the points of light, looking at places where it is going well, and where we need to improve, and taking best practices from there and evidence based practices as well.

The CHAIR. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness was at an all-time high with 1.5 million children and youth experiencing homelessness. These students are disproportionately students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities. This pandemic has really created additional instability and economic stress for our youth who are experiencing homelessness and isolated them really from critical support systems they rely on. There is an estimated one in four homeless children that have gone unidentified and possibly enrolled in public schools due to COVID.

Congress did provide \$800 million and dedicated resources for students experiencing homelessness. Can you tell us how we can better support the educational stability and success of students who are experiencing homelessness in our country?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator, for highlighting that important need. And in San Diego Unified, as we address the pandemic and move to virtual learning, addressing the needs of our homeless

youth, 8 percent of our population needing to get access and support with the computer and access to Internet so that they can participate in their learning. Each local decision, each local area has to decide, but I can speak to what we did in San Diego in terms of distributing 80,000 tablets for our students, but specifically focusing on the students that were experiencing homelessness and working with all of the community partners, making sure that we got them what they needed, when they needed it, in the way that they needed it.

One of the things we talk about is we no longer ask if the glass is half empty or half full, we say, who needs water and how do we get it to them? And when we think about our students experiencing homelessness, we have to understand what is happening and how do we access them so they can access their learning. There are great models of that work and we need to identify what those are so that we can replicate them and take them to scale across the Nation. Our children are counting on us, especially those of our students who are experiencing homelessness.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Burr.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, Ms. Marten, welcome. Given what we all know, by the end of May, every American above the age of 16 will have had an opportunity to be vaccinated. Do you see any reason why we can't say to America's parents, next fall schools are going to be in class, students are going to be there, teachers are going to be there, and make this predictable for American's parents?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for that question, Senator Burr. Again, I do appreciate meeting with you before we started this hearing today and the way that we spoke about this is, where is there hope? Is there ability for our Nation to have some hope? Is there light at the end of the tunnel? And does the vaccination give us a path toward that? I understand the importance of this and the criticality of the cascading effect, as we spoke about, of our schools being closed. And the part of this that I can't predict is what happens to the virus. What I can say is that we pay close attention to the science, as I mentioned in my opening comments.

Locally in San Diego, we relied on a team of experts from the University of California at San Diego to give us our path forward. And that was a clear, safe, science-based path forward. And I believe, with what you have just mentioned, that there is great hope. What we have seen in San Diego is every educator that wanted to have a vaccine, we were fortunate enough to have them readily available, easily accessible, and our target date of opening now is firmly April 12th.

I think that you have forecasted what is possible for our Nation. Can't speak to all of the local conditions of every single city in the country. They have to make their decisions based on what the condition of the virus is. And I sure do hope that with what we know of this vaccine being available, the mitigations, the investments that we have made in safety mitigations, including COVID-19 testing and the filtration system, all of the things that we know works gives us great hope so that we can see the future of the fall of all of our schools reopening, as you just described, Senator.

Senator BURR. Do you think that private schools have lessons that public schools might learn from?

Ms. MARTEN. I think that all educators have lessons to learn from each other across multiple learning settings. So whether it is private schools, public charter schools, public schools, we have to learn from each other. We always learn from each other. And I believe that there is always opportunities to learn.

Senator BURR. State tests cost a lot to administer. They take a lot of time away from classroom instruction. And they are stressful for children and, quite frankly, for teachers. On top of that, the Federal accountability requirements have been waived. So why can't we also waive the Federal testing requirement just for this year, and let local school districts and classroom teachers use their normal classroom tests to measure students learning?

Ms. MARTEN. Senator, thank you for the question about the importance of assessment. As a lifelong educator and teachers across the country know, we use assessments to drive and guide our discussions and our decisions about students.

Assessments closest to the student plus large scale reportable assessments all being critically important and understanding that there are conditions right now which makes it very difficult to do the types of assessment we have been doing, but it is still important for us to know how our Nation's children are doing. We need to find the right timing to do it, but we do need to know how students are doing so that we can make the best decisions about how to serve them and how to make the investments. Assessments matter.

Senator BURR. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Chair Murray, and I want to thank Superintendent Marten for her appearance today and her willingness to continue public service. I wanted to start with maybe two questions that relate to students with disabilities, but I wanted to outline some of the factual basis for my question. We know that the No Child Left Behind, the legislation signed back in 2001, had lots of problems, but there were some achievements in that legislation as well.

One of them was to make sure that students with disabilities were taught the general curriculum and that schools were accountable for the achievements of those students. Partly because of the focus on achievement, we saw our graduation rates for students with disabilities rise, rise over 20 percent during a 15 year period.

We know, though, that the graduation rate for students with disabilities today still lags the graduation rate for students without disabilities by about 18 percentage points, 85 percent for students without disabilities, about 67 percent for those with. Graduation rates for students with disabilities in some states are woefully low, some as low as 33 percent versus the 67 percent Nationally. We know that a November General Accountability Office report found that some districts were challenged by providing special ed services remotely. We still need to measure the impact of the pandemic on students with disabilities in particular. We also saw that students, teachers, and families worked together during the pandemic to continue learning. So they should be commended for that.

Finally, we know that the American Rescue Plan provided \$2.5 billion for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA programs, \$200 million for pre-K special education, and \$250 million for Part C, early intervention services. So that is a good start, but only a start to address some of the needs of children with disabilities in our school. The pandemic certainly created great challenges, but as noted by the National Center on Learning Disabilities, it has also presented an opportunity to reevaluate how we bridge the achievement gap.

Here are the two questions. What do you think state and local Government—I am sorry, state and local education agencies need to do to better prepare and support students with disabilities and improve their outcomes? And then the second question relates to the Department of Education. How can the Department support these efforts and make sure students with disabilities are included in the broader conversation and focus on instructional learning loss?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator. As you heard in my opening testimony, students with disabilities and the meaning of that to my family, with my mother here and I know my brother Charley is still watching, and the great success that my brother has had in school and in life has to do a lot with the investments that have made, some very familiar, both as a family member, but also understanding as we address this.

It is a very important and critical issue. How do we better support our students and how can the Department of Education support our students? And it takes a commitment and a promise that is made and then kept to our students with disabilities, and especially looking at what—how we would address learning loss. In San Diego Unified, we have addressed this by having a call to action, supporting our students with disabilities and making sure that we are providing the kinds of supports that are needed, and knowing that the supports have had to change during this pandemic.

But full inclusion and providing a free and appropriate education allows us to put the professional development supports in place so teachers are able to learn how to meet the needs of all students. And that happens at the local level. And I have seen tremendous outcomes for students who have benefited from the kinds of supports that we have put in place, the kinds of professional development of both of our educators, classroom educators, special education educators, and our paraprofessionals, and seen great outcomes.

I believe the Department can also support these efforts by lifting up the best practices across the Nation. And I look forward to working with the Members of this Committee, stakeholders, and best practices that have evidence of how our students with disabilities are thriving and recovering from this pandemic.

Senator CASEY. Superintendent Marten, thank you. We wish you luck on your confirmation. And I want to thank Chair Murray.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. First of all, let me welcome you and tell you that I am pleased to have such an extensive background in the

classroom, as well as an administrator. I am concerned that San Diego, under your leadership, has closed its schools for in-person instruction this year with very limited exceptions. In February, The New York Times says 175 public health experts, mostly pediatricians with an expertise in public health, about reopening, and they have largely agreed that it was safe enough for schools to be open to younger children in particular.

Last weekend, when I was in Maine, a young mother came up to me and told me that her nine year old daughter had started crying every single day. On those days that she was not in the classroom, she cried because she missed her friends. On those two days when she was in the classroom, she cried because she was afraid she would catch COVID despite universal mask wearing in her school. Her mother took her to a counselor who said that in the last week alone she had seen ten new clients, ten new young children with emotional and behavioral problems directly related to the closure of schools.

In California, the physician from—who is the Director of COVID response from the University of California in San Francisco said that with universal masking, school transmissions will remain close to zero. In retrospect, do you think you were too slow to open up? I know you have announced an April date for reopening, but to open up the schools, given not only the loss of learning, but the emotional and behavioral toll that closed schools have imposed on our children and their families?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator Collins, for highlighting a story of a family that got to tell you what their experiences have been and highlighting how challenging this has been for everybody. And you asked—I want to think about San Diego Unified and the decisions that we have made at the very beginning, at the very beginning of the pandemic. We were fortunate enough to work with a team of about ten doctors and specialists from UC San Diego, knowing that is not my background. But we worked with the people who are experts in this to give us our path and our safe path to reopening.

Every decision that we made was rooted in safety being our strategy as the science was ever evolving. And as it evolved, we evolved in our implementation and our path forward. And I am happy to say where we are now is being able to open on April 12th with all of the mitigations that we put in place, knowing that things had changed along the way. This is the right time for us to open and the case rates in our community in San Diego, the large urban core being what they were.

Senator COLLINS. Do you support the new CDC guidelines that say that you don't have to have six feet between children, that three feet is adequate protection among the children—six feet with the teachers and the children?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for bringing up the CDC guidance. It has been very helpful all along the way to have the CDC guidance, as well as the California Department of Health, as well as the local experts. We use that as guidance to help us make our decisions at the local level. And I know every Superintendent struggles with the local decision making framework, and we have made our decisions

going forward for the safety of our students and appreciate the guidance of the CDC.

Senator COLLINS. Following up on Senator Burr's question, what specifically will you do to ensure that schools are open next fall, or perhaps summer school even?

Ms. MARTEN. I think summer school is incredibly important. And the investment that we have just seen, this historic investment, gives us an opportunity to do some very powerful recovery as we reengage students being with each other after they have been apart for so long. So I do believe that we have learned, following the science, following the CDC guidance. We have a clear path forward. And I think that we can learn from one another, the best practices across the country, to put these summer school programs in place. We are calling it a summer experience because it is summer school like no other before. We need to give our kids some robust learning opportunities.

In San Diego, we have the science museums and the beach and a surf camp and ballet and all kinds of things to bring children together and reignite that passion for being together as learners. And that will allow us for that fall reopening and giving us a chance to not just wait till the fall. Right now, we have already had 5,000 students currently learning, and I see a clear path.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. Let me just say that I recognize this is a local and state decision, but the signals you send, the guidance you provide will be very influential. Thank you.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Cassidy. I think you need to unmute your—

Senator CASSIDY. Can you hear me?

The CHAIR. You are—we can hear you now.

Senator CASSIDY. Oh, great, thank you. So I enjoyed the conversation. Thank you very much. A couple of things. And if somebody else has touched on this, I apologize just because I am traveling back and forth between two different committees right now, as regards to student loan debt, what are you—can DOE decide to forgive student loan without congressional approval? Let me ask you that first.

Ms. MARTEN. I didn't hear the first part of his question. I am sorry, sir.

Senator CASSIDY. Can the Department of Education forgive student loans without congressional authorization or appropriation, almost?

Ms. MARTEN. I believe your question is about student loans. Thanks for asking an important question about student loans. I know this is a topic that is under great consideration and it is a complex issue. And if confirmed, it is something I would want to know more about and engage in the appropriate dialogs with the appropriate staff as it moves forward.

Senator CASSIDY. That sounds a little bit like a rehearsed answer. In fact, it sounds entirely like your prep for that. I guess what I want is the un-correct answer, because you must be bringing something to the table as regards to what is the extent to which the executive can forgive a massive amount of debt to the Federal Government without the authorization of the Congress,

which theoretically holds the purse strings. So do you not bring any thoughts to the table on that?

Ms. MARTEN. I know that the student loan debt issue is a very complex issue, and it is important that I get briefed on all of the complexities of the issue. And it is too soon for me to make a decision about what would happen with that going forward.

Senator CASSIDY. I guess I am not asking for your decision. I guess what I am asking for is your thoughts. And it may be that your thoughts are that, and I don't at all mean to be silly here, but it does seem as if one could bring thoughts independently of the briefing that you will receive on the Administration's position on this going into the future. And I think that would be of interest to us all. So if you are—and I know you have been prepped. It is clear you have been prepped. But is this a question that you don't feel as if you are going to answer further than you have already answered?

Ms. MARTEN. No, sir, I do—I would like to learn more about it, and not just from what I have been prepped, but I understand the importance of student loans and student loans are a path to success for many, many people. And it is something that's being discussed now. And it is a complex issue. And whether my personal thoughts on this matter come to bear at this time is less important as I understand the issues and the complexities of the issues. And I had a conversation with Senator Burr this morning where he began to lay out some of the issues. And I would look forward to working with you, Senator, to understand some of the complexities and points of view, multiple perspectives as we move forward on this.

Senator CASSIDY. Are you familiar with the multiple mechanisms already put in place to allow people who are of lower income to, or otherwise without a job, to either forego or decrease the amount that they would be paying toward student loans? For example, only having to put a certain percent of their discretionary income toward repayment. And if they lose a job, even that can be put in advance—after 20 years, that can be forgiven. The loan can be forgiven entirely. Are you familiar with those programs?

Ms. MARTEN. I am familiar with multiple programs like the one that you just described, yes.

Senator CASSIDY. Given that, when people speak of forgiving all student loans, knowing that we already have programs in place—well, let me ask you differently, if there was a neurosurgeon who borrowed \$250,000 to go through medical school, but now is doing pretty well financially, or an attorney borrowed \$250,000 to go to law school but is now making \$1 million a year, it doesn't seem right that they would get full forgiveness or even partial forgiveness of their student loans, knowing their income would allow them to repay that loan over a certain period of time.

Ms. MARTEN. Again, Senator, you are bringing out the complexities that need to be weighed out as these decisions are being considered. And what you have just described there is something that you have highlighted what some of the challenges might be as decisions are being made going forward on this complex and important topic for our students.

Senator CASSIDY. Well, let me ask something different. I know, you know, I have an interest in the issue of dyslexia. Right now, our country does a miserable job in terms of dyslexia. In fact, we funded institutions that do miserable jobs in terms of dyslexia. Can you give me any sense what your attitude is toward universal screening in kindergarten or first grade for dyslexia?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator, for that question. You and I had a good discussion about that, and you know that I am a reading specialist and I understand the importance of universal screenings, and I have seen great success, when you can identify what is needed. That is why assessment matters. Diagnostic assessments matter. When you know what a need is, you are better able to meet that need as an educator. And so, I see the relevance and importance, and the work that you have done, and your wife has done in this area is something that I also want to learn more about. And if confirmed, it is something that I believe we can make progress on.

Senator CASSIDY. Many people are advocating using RTI. Any thoughts as regards the adequacy of RTI in terms of addressing the needs of a dyslexic child?

Ms. MARTEN. RTI or Response to Intervention is something that is customarily put in place to see how students are responding. And as you and I had discussed it, sometimes that does not work. Sometimes the response to intervention—you are not seeing a response.

If there had not been appropriate diagnostic measures or understanding what the true need is, how long does it take to see a response to intervention? And I think it is always important that we work together and see the best practices in implementing the ways that we are providing interventions to students, and if in fact they are responding to those interventions, is important.

Senator CASSIDY. Yes, I agree. I will just close with this just to make the point, which I am sure you know, on the DOE, what works, what doesn't work. RTI is listed as one of the things that does not work yet it continues to be used pretty pervasively with advocates for, advocates that somehow explain away its failure, but we just need to spend a little bit more money. At some point, empirical results have to matter. With that, I yield back, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Welcome. Good to see you again. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me before the hearing. This is not a comment for you, but just in general, this is more a comment for the folks that are preparing, folks to come before our Committee. Often we get into the situation where we are asking for an individual's personal views. And I frankly think it is Okay for candidates for pretty important positions to share their personal views and submit for the record that they ultimately are going to be carrying out the directives of the Administration.

We are confirming people, not computers here and so I think it is Okay for folks that are appearing to tell us a little bit about what they think, even if that ultimately may not be what they are

implementing. So I just state that for the record. It is often a frustration we run into when having these conversations. But Ms. Marten, I wanted to talk to you about the issue of summer learning because we had a really good conversation about this.

States, as we speak are—and school districts—are getting funding deposited into their accounts. That money is eligible for summer programing. And there is a piece of the state grant that is mandated to be used for a broad array of summer programing. And you have thought a lot about this. In fact, you have pioneered work in San Diego to make sure that low income kids especially have access to really positive summer experiences, and summer experiences that aren't just about learning loss, but about social and emotional development.

Just give us a minute on your focus on this issue in San Diego and what you think other school districts can do with this funding, if they are really bold about expanding out the number of kids who can kind of use this summer as an opportunity to reset emotionally and psychologically for the next school year.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator, for the opportunity to talk about that specifically. I like when you say bold and reset. That is—you are speaking our language. So that is actually what is necessary right now for our students. And in San Diego, our Board recently approved our path forward to do with summer experience for all students. Typically, we think of summer school as the students who are behind need to be caught up. Everybody has been touched by this pandemic. There is nobody unscathed.

What we are planning for our students is learning loss, recovery from an academic perspective, but also social, emotional perspective. And we pulled together a group across the city, working with our Mayor's Office and multiple nonprofits across the city and region to be able to give kids a tremendous summer experience that we know they are ready for.

We know they are ready to be able to be back together, and kind of affinity type groups, affinity programs for them to get together into the summer experiences that are going to allow them to re-engage socially, emotionally, and academically, and is just going to put them on better footing for the school year when it begins in the fall. It has been a great investment and we appreciate it.

Senator MURPHY. I had a really good conversation with the Secretary earlier this week on this topic. I really believe that the Department of Education has to lead. You know, school districts, as you said, are involved traditionally in summer school, but are not traditionally involved with other community partners in broader summer programing. This year, the way in which the funding is structured, puts school districts and State Departments of Education in that leadership position to really quarterback broader access to summer programing.

My hope is that the Department will be bold itself in challenging states and school districts to step up. With the time I have remaining, I wanted to talk about an issue that I have worked on and others on the Republican side have worked on, and that is the issue of discipline in our school systems. And specifically, I wanted to talk about the use of what we call seclusion and restraint.

We have seen some really disturbing data with respect to how kids of color and children with disabilities are either physically restrained when, frankly, another intervention would be more necessary or in the worst instances, secluded, locked up in rooms, sometimes called scream rooms until they can be brought back safely to the classroom.

What have you—what did you do in San Diego when it came to practices regarding restraint of students or seclusion of students? And will you work with us and the Committee to try to level set the requirements that school districts do this the right way?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes. Thank you for lifting up this issue around seclusion and restraint, and whether it is physical restraint or chemical restraint, I have personal experience on what has happened to my brother in the past, and it is something that we need to make sure all of our students have access to the learning environments, that when it comes to discipline, where they are treated with respect and dignity and they have the opportunity to learn. And it is something that I will look forward to, lifting up the best practices to eliminate or reduce that to the greatest degree possible.

Senator MURPHY. Great. We have legislation I hope that we will consider this year in the Senate. We will look forward to working with you on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator. Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you, Superintendent, and appreciate your service. You have—in the San Diego area, you have a lot of schools that are not open, and some schools are open. For instance, I presume private schools like the La Hoya Country Day School is open, has been having classes. Are you seeing a difference in the infection rate of COVID in communities where the schools are open, such as La Hoya Country Day, versus the schools that are not open?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator Romney, for that question. I don't know specifically the infection rate at a particular school, but I do—we do track the region and what is happening overall in San Diego County and where our schools are, knowing that there is an impact, we need to make our decision that is the safest path forward, and each system, each school and district has made its own decision.

Senator ROMNEY. Are you seeing a difference in infection rate in the places where schools are open versus those where schools are not open?

Ms. MARTEN. In the surrounding community?

Senator ROMNEY. Correct.

Ms. MARTEN. I don't believe so, no.

Senator ROMNEY. Help me understand then why it is that we continue to have so many schools closed? Why we have not opened our schools? Because that is the experience that, as we have looked around the world, the countries that have kept schools open versus those that have not, there doesn't appear to be a significant difference in infection in the community or among the students or teachers, and yet the cost to children in learning of not having schools open is so overwhelming that I can't understand why it

would be that we would not be insisting that schools be open and have—should have been open a long time ago.

How is it that even to this day, that even in the San Diego region, that there are schools not open yet? That—I have also seen research that says we are better to have schools open entirely as opposed to a hybrid system, on a couple of days, off a couple of days, because the back and forth means more exposure to more people, being full time school would be less exposure.

I am wondering why it is we still have schools closed in your district and around the country, given the fact that scientific data doesn't suggest that there is an additional risk for teachers or students or the community by having them open.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator. This, as you know, is a complex topic. And each school, each leader, each system leader has had to make their best decisions given the evidence and the circumstances and the resources that they have locally to make a safe path forward.

Senator ROMNEY. But the evidence—but the scientific evidence is available to us. I wonder—this has been a year. We have had evidence, we have seen what has happened around the world and in school districts in our own country, and yet we have people making local decisions not based upon Federal guidance, local decisions to keep schools closed. And one has to wonder whether this is because of a special interest group of some kind that has insisted on not going back to work.

I mean, you are the Superintendent of your own region. You have got a lot of schools closed. I don't understand how they can continue to do that given the lack of evidence that would suggest that they are actually keeping their kids healthier by doing so.

Ms. MARTEN. Making the decision for specifically to San Diego, I think is what you are referring to.

Senator ROMNEY. Yes.

Ms. MARTEN. In our schools—

Senator ROMNEY. Yes.

Ms. MARTEN. This has been a tremendous challenge. And I know across the country, people are grappling with the same issues that we grapple with in San Diego to make our path forward for reopening. That is why we did turn to the local experts. We did put the mitigations in place. We started to reengage our most vulnerable youth. Senator Murray brought up our homeless youth, foster youth, students with disabilities, students with the greatest challenge being able to start to come for in-person learning.

For appointment based learning, we began with that and began to slowly or gradually reopen. And that was the path forward that we chose for San Diego and putting all these mitigations that were so important in place, including the surveillance testing that we knew was necessary. And now the vaccinations have been completed and we have got a clear path forward that is working for our community, and making sure that students are able to have—

Senator ROMNEY. I sure hope—I certainly hope that the Department of Education, that you will be able to provide guidance that helps the entire Nation as opposed to saying that every school district, hey, why don't you get your own experts to figure this out?

Because we do have experts at the National level who said to us it is Okay to open schools and yet the schools remain closed.

The Administration has just passed, the Democratic Party rather, has just passed a very substantial support program for schools. \$168 billion more on top of the roughly \$70 billion that was already passed. How are you going to use that money? What is that money going to be used for? How is it going to keep your kids healthier and safer? Why is it necessary for the opening of your schools?

Ms. MARTEN. This is a great, historic investment as we all grapple with addressing not just the physical mitigations that are necessary for reopening schools, but the social, emotional learning losses that have happened. Our students are going to need more time, more attention from their teachers, from paraeducators to address—we need smaller class sizes because of some of the distancing guidelines we will need to follow.

Senator ROMNEY. The distancing is now three feet so that is probably not going to require new classrooms, but additional time, are you planning on having longer school days and insisting that teachers go—that the school year goes through the summer or—given all this money, what are you going to do in San Diego and Nationally what are we going to do with these funds?

Ms. MARTEN. First, investment is in the summer experience program that I just highlighted with the previous conversation. That is out the gate. We need to—that is extra time for our students, and it is for all students to have that experience with educators and community partners to be able to get back together again and get to learning. It is super important, and we are really glad for the investment. We appreciate it, sir.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you. My time is up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Chair Murray, Ranking Member Burr, colleagues. Superintendent Marten, I want to pick right up on that last point that my colleague was making about summer learning. I think the ARP investments in K–12 systems can be used to, do building adjustments if that is needed, or better air filtration systems. But I really hope a lot of these dollars go into enhanced summer experiences for the students to deal with learning loss issues.

I think educators are generally pretty aware of learning loss issues just in the normal summer. Kids come back in September and they have slipped a little bit from early June. But I really worry that the experience of the last year is going to lead to some significant learning loss. And I would hope that both summer of 2021 and summer of 2022 might be powerful opportunities for us to help kids catch up, but we might also learn some things about what the optimal length of the school year should be. I mean, we could use it as an experiment and we might come out of the experiment and decide that, the September to May, there is nothing magic about it.

Possibly the best way to help our kids is to have a longer school year or to readjust the school calendar to minimize learning loss.

So I know these funds go to Governors and school systems and then they have discretion with how to use them. But I would hope with your own experience, should you be confirmed, that you will really be promoting the use of these dollars to use the summers of 2021 and 2022 to deal with the learning loss phenomenon. Would you like to comment on that anymore?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes. Thank you, Senator Kaine. I think that you have cast a vision not just for this summer, but the following summer. And that is the kind of forward thinking that I think would be important, if I should be confirmed, that we are able to not just have an immediate reaction to what needs to be addressed, but long term planning. This investment that is being made in education is historic. And the lessons that have been learned have been lessons that should take us well into the future.

What we build this summer, I can say from very real experience as a principal in an inner city school, we were a year round school and we had summer programs as well, and I always saw the difference that it made when students had uninterrupted learning. And what you can do when you create these kinds of robust summer experiences makes a huge difference. I spent a lot of time with putting up summer reading programs for kids because we would call it summer reading loss. You know, kids would leave us at the end of kindergarten reading at a grade level and then come back and they will have lost that time if you don't give them exposure on time during the summer. So there is great practices.

I think San Diego's model, what we have come up with for the summer experience, while everybody has to make their own local decision, I think you have cast a vision. And if I should be confirmed, I would like to lift up the best practices across the country that would allow us to use this investment wisely and giving our students the time and attention and experiences that they need after all of this time being apart and being isolated from one another.

There is so much good that can come of this because of this tremendous investment. If administered well, we can do something sustainable, scalable, and replicable across the Nation, minding the local environment.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Superintendent Marten. One other question I will ask, and I almost always ask this question of any education nominee, deals with the career and technical education. So I grew up in a house where my dad ran a welding shop and my brothers and I worked with these really highly trained, union trained iron workers. But I went to a high school that didn't offer career and technical opportunities at all because there were sort of a well, that is not, that is not good enough.

I mean, we got to focus on college and career and technical opportunities aren't things we want our students to avail themselves of. And that was in the 1970's. And I hope we are thinking in a better way. That probably came out of some notion that maybe career or vocational ed had been used to track kids, may be in some inequitable ways, but now I think we know that youngsters have different skill sets and different talents and the job of educators is to find those skill sets in and ignite them.

I think high quality career and technical education has got to be part of our entire educational palette from pre-K to 12, but also at the higher level and beyond. If you would just share briefly some of the things in the career and technical headspace that you have been proud to work on as Superintendent in San Diego. And I only have 35 seconds, so just share one thing you are proud of, so I won't get in the other Senator's way.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator. This is a very important program in San Diego. And career technical education, as you said, sometimes can be tracking kids, and that is not the way we have looked at it. It is college and career ready, that students that leave our robust CCTE pathways that we have in San Diego Unified are prepared to go to college if they so choose or to go down the career path during these priority sectors that we have identified as being the skilled labor that we need in our state. And we are working with workforce development to put those programs in place.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chair. And Superintendent Marten, welcome. Thank you for your commitment to schools and to our kids for so many years. We appreciate that. I hear a lot from our educators in Alaska, our Superintendents talking about the different regulations that come out of the U.S. Department of Ed. More often than not, they are complaints about the different regulations that they face. We all want to get to—we all want to get to that place where we are providing the best education possible for our kids at all stages, and sometimes it feels that the regulations are for purposes that don't necessarily enhance or better those educational opportunities. Open ended question to you, what regulations within the U.S. Department of Ed would you most like to rewrite or get rid of?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator, for that question, and I think you have probably heard from the educators, as you said in Alaska about this, that some of them are not helpful to them. Off the top of my head, I am not thinking of a regulation that I would most like to rewrite. I think that those would be things that I would want to discuss with staff. I would actually want to learn from the educators that have brought them to your attention, that have been the most difficult, so that I can seek to understand what has been most challenging.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I am sure they would be happy to provide you with a list of those areas where they would want to start. But I do think it is something that needs to be considered and evaluated. Let me ask a more specific question then. According to the Lincoln Cluster report released January 29 of this year, 62 percent of Black students can neither read or write on grade level and 72 percent do not perform at grade level in mathematics. Report also states that for the 2018, 2019 school year, 38 percent of Black students were proficient in English language arts, while 76 percent of white students were proficient. In math, 28 percent of Black students were proficient, 70 percent of white students were.

You have got pretty considerable achievement gap, according to this report, of 38 and 42 points, respectively. Can you tell us for the Committee what you have done during your tenure as Superintendent to address these gaps? What would you do, if confirmed, to assist school districts to address and to reduce their achievement gaps?

I cite these statistics with regards to Black students, but I also recognize in my home State of Alaska, we have significant disparity when it comes to our Alaska native students. So if you can speak to how we can address these educational disparities.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for raising the issue of the achievement gap. And I think quite possibly it is the greatest challenge we have across our Nation is addressing the achievement gap and how we address that and what we do to do that. So I want to speak specifically, Chicago Tribune said that in 2019, addressing the achievement gap, the San Diego Unified is one of the positive outliers when it comes to combating the racial achievement gap. That was from an article in 2019.

The reason why they said that, I believe, is because of our results. When I started in 2013, our eighth graders were achieving at average across the country looking at the NAPE scores among the big city districts. And then in 2019, we were first in the Nation in reading and second in the Nation in math.

These achievement gaps have been reduced between Black and white students by seven points in math and between Latino students and white students by seven points in reading. So we see that we can address the achievement gap—

Senator MURKOWSKI. How did you do that?

If confirmed, those improved outcomes come with the relentless focus on what it means to interrupt some of the practices that have produced those gaps. For us, it was around building capacity, a relentless focus around professional development in our classrooms with our educators on an ongoing basis to improve outcomes for students.

Professional development has been key to the work that we have done in that area. We have also made investments in the investment around equity where there is greater need. We have doubled down on our investment in the schools that needed additional supports.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Well, I appreciate what you have shared. I would hope that if you are confirmed that you would make the effort to come to states like Alaska that have very rural areas, very high populations of Alaskan native students, out in the villages where we have some challenges just keeping good folks in our schools. Where you talk about professional recruitment and retaining is a challenge for us. But I would certainly welcome you to come and understand our issues that we face in many parts of my state. So thank you. I appreciate your time this morning. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Smith.

Senator SMITH. Thank you very much, Chair Murray, and it is great to be with you. Thank you so much, Superintendent Marten, for your willingness to serve, and I look forward to supporting your

nomination. I just was thinking about what Senator Murkowski was asking about this terrible challenge we have with systemic opportunity gaps between students of color and indigenous students, Alaska native students, and white students, and how this is, as you say, is really one of the greatest challenges that we face in our education system.

That actually really leads well into what I wanted to ask you about, which is the question of teacher shortages and especially shortages of teachers of color and a diverse teaching workforce. So let me ask you a little bit about this. So prior to the pandemic, I had heard a lot from Superintendents in Minnesota about teacher shortages and how difficult it was to find and hire qualified teachers. And then, of course, like so many things, the pandemic has made this issue so much worse. I mean, in many ways, the teacher workforce has been stretched thin, like it has never been before, trying to do so many different things in so many different ways.

I have actually introduced legislation to address this. It is a bill that would go after teacher shortages in three areas, one in rural districts, something that matters a lot in Minnesota, also in Alaska and many other states, how to address shortages in hard to staff subject areas, for example, and special education, and then, of course, increasingly diversify the teacher workforce. And we know, I think it is quite clear, that a more diverse teacher workforce helps to address some of these systemic inequities and opportunities and achievement gaps for students of color.

Could you, Superintendent, just talk a little bit about this issue. What in your experience have you seen works when it comes to addressing teacher shortages and particularly as Deputy Secretary of Education, what you would do to help to support efforts to attract and hire more diverse teachers and educators broadly?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for lifting up this important topic around the teacher workforce. And that is something I am very passionate about. And specifically in San Diego, some of our efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, to attract and retain highly qualified teachers as part of the success that was highlighted in the Learning Policy Institute report around the types of teachers in the workforce that we have in San Diego being highly qualified. And what does it take to attract and retain teachers, especially in these high needs jobs. So I think that you are exactly right around how it is stretched thin.

Our programs around grow your own, we invest in our students and putting them in a pipeline to become educators or paraprofessionals, end up becoming a great place where we have teachers—paraprofessionals seeking to become teachers. That helps with the diversification of our teacher workforce. And we work with the local universities to put these programs in place so that we have clear grow your own pipeline strategies at several of the universities, including the University of California, San Diego and several others.

I think the investment that you are talking about would be well spent and is much needed right now to invest in the teacher workforce and build a really powerful approach for local grow your own strategies to deal with the issues that you have addressed. And if confirmed, I would love to work with you and the appropriate stakeholders on how to do that.

Senator SMITH. Well, thank you. We also have seen grow your own strategies to be really, really effective. And one of the reasons it seems that it is working is that not only are you able to, as you say, kind of create a pipeline of people that are connected to community, and that means it is more likely that once they are hired and they are in place and they are trained, that they are going to stay in place.

Let me just ask if you could elaborate a bit more on the issue of retention. Many school districts will tell you that they work hard to recruit diverse educators, but then they fail in some way to kind of keep them in their roles and growing in place. Could you just address that issue?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes. That is so important that we address how to not just attract the high quality teachers, but to retain them and to keep them in a long career in education. And what we found locally in San Diego is investment. What teachers want more than ever is collaboration time. They want to work together. They want professional development. They want to be learning in ways that increase the outcomes for students, because teachers, when they feel a sense of efficacy and they feel supported by their administrator and by the district to grow their practice, they want to stay committed and stay in the profession. And that is how we are able to do those investments. And we have seen success in San Diego with that. People want to stay, and they want to be part of making a difference and delivering for students.

Senator SMITH. Well, thank you so much, Superintendent. I think that those experiences would be very valuable at the Department of Education as we think about this really important issue of recruiting and retaining diverse educators. Thank you, Chair Murray.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Braun.

Senator BRAUN. Thank you, Madam Chair. When we had our discussion, I think we had a lively one around school choice. The state I am from, Indiana, I think leads the Nation in it. And I also—and I told you I was on a School Board for ten years prior to becoming a state legislator, and that if you ever wondered whether you had an appetite to be a U.S. Senator someday, try the School Board. So you will get an earful of something sooner or later, but I am a believer that is an important part of the package. And like I said, I come from a really great public school system. My kids went there as well.

What is the role of alternatives to a paradigm that generally works in most places but in a state like Indiana, we have had two places where the states had to take over the school district because it just was not doing the job? And even in a place down in the more rural part of the state where I live, we had a school district that was struggling with enrollment and the Board's decision was to eliminate one of three grade schools that was the highest performing of the three and also the most distant from where they would have had to have gone to school. A charter school. They worked really hard, put resources together, scraped and scrapped and got it done to me.

I think it is important that it is there as an alternative and then how you pay for it. In Indiana, we didn't fund it in the same way. We did it probably to the tune of roughly 85 to 90 percent and then have backed it up with vouchers, to make sure that kids at the lowest end of the economic scale have that opportunity. Tell me what you think about school choice and vouchers to support it.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator. We did have a lively discussion about that. And I talked about in San Diego, what we have in terms of our charter enrollment is 20,000 students, 20 percent of our students are enrolled in the charter schools and in San Diego Unified. And we have a long history of authorizing 46 charter schools and that is going back to 1993. And I think that was a surprise to you, the level of investment that we have made and including some bond campaigns where we have invested in the facilities and the infrastructure to build those high quality classrooms.

At the end of the day, my belief is that every student deserves to be in a classroom experience that is great for them and parents would have choices. As I said, my son attended a local public charter school in San Diego, and I understand that parents need the right to be able to choose the learning environment that is best for their student.

Senator BRAUN. Would you take your unique position to actually promote it across the country and weigh in, in a positive way from the Federal Government's point of view, wherever it could, especially when it works so well in an area that you, spent your time in education?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes, I see our role of absolutely being able to lift up the best practices and our students getting a good experience. At the end of the day, the classroom experiences in the schools, as you said, the decision was made locally to close a school, that was not—I don't know what the particular circumstance was that you mentioned, but specifically, are we giving students access to the learning conditions and opportunities that are best for them and for their community? And do parents have choices?

At the end of the day, I truly hope and believe that they should be able to go to their neighborhood public school as their best first choice. And I know that there are other choices around and that those choices are viable as long as kids are getting the access to the type of learning that is best for them and that they are achieving their goals and their best potential.

Senator BRAUN. Good. I would hope that you would be a proponent of what we just talked about. Indiana, also, we are the lowest unemployment state in the Midwest. Workforce development, sadly, when I got to the state Government level, was sad to see that our own Department of Education and so forth, there was actually stigmatizing to some extent that guidance and approach to getting kids maybe into a high demand, high wage job. And I think that is another important place that we need to do better with.

We are going to reach kids actually when they are in eighth grade prior to getting even in the middle school. And I know that the main stakeholder in education, in my opinion, would be the parent and that they maybe are tired of being misguided with a di-

rection that ends up with a pile of debt and not a good job. So briefly comment on that, because we are close to being out of time.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator. I mentioned before the career technical pathways that we have in San Diego have proven to be very helpful for students, that they have choices for career pathways, but that choice doesn't limit them from going to college if they choose. And rather than tracking them into one or the other, that we have those programs that are aligned to the skilled jobs that we know are so necessary for our local region or across the country. And I think smart decisions are being made in this space and there is great practices that can be replicated.

Senator BRAUN. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator HASSAN.

Senator HASSAN. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Burr, for having this hearing. And thank you, Superintendent Marten, for your service and your willingness to serve and to your family as well. I want to start by just talking about the importance of engaging adult learners.

I recently introduced the Gateway to Careers Act with Senators Young, Kaine, and Collins. This bipartisan bill would support career pathways programs where students can make an income while they also earn educational credentials. The bill also includes important wraparound supports for learners who face barriers to completion, like help to access affordable housing or to cover transportation costs. Do you agree that it is important to support these kinds of programs? And can you share some of your thoughts on how we can better serve adult learners who have struggled to engage with traditional educational opportunities?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for talking about the adult learners and what their pathways might be. My brother is one that is looking for what his career opportunities are as a developmentally disabled adult and the pathways that we have put in place for him that he has been able to follow. And I think that there is some very great best practices and programs at work, and further investment in that I think would be beneficial to the people that would be best served by this. And I would want to learn more about that with you.

Senator HASSAN. Thank you very much. Now, let's turn to another topic. Recent data shows a more than 9 percent decline Nationally in students completing their free application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, this year. This concerning decline is even greater for low income students and students of color. As the Superintendent of one of the largest school districts in California, have you taken steps to increase completion of the FAFSA this year? And can you speak to how the U.S. Department of Education could help address this issue?

Ms. MARTEN. Thanks for highlighting that decline, because the FAFSA can be such an important path for our students and make sure that we have access, and that was something that we put effort into in our district. Off the top of my head, I cannot remember what the numbers were, but we did make—we did invest in that.

We did make a difference because we saw the same thing that you mentioned highlight, the decline there, and I believe that the

Department can play a role in local districts that have made a dent in this and put it back in the right direction because it is critically important for our students to have that kind of access.

Senator HASSAN. Yes, I think they have to really be able to see themselves moving forward and realize that there are opportunities there, and some straightforward gestures and outreach can really make a big difference.

Ms. MARTEN. Counselors have been critical in that role. Thank you.

Senator HASSAN. Last question. I share the concern raised by my colleagues regarding how COVID-19 has impacted students who experience disabilities. One particular concerning trend is the reduced number of infants and toddlers being identified by their pediatricians and child care providers to receive early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. These services can provide important supports to families and be integral to a child's longer term success. So what can the Department of Education do to identify children in need of these services who have fallen through the cracks during this pandemic?

Ms. MARTEN. This is so important, especially because it has been highlighted in the pandemic, infant and toddlers being able to get the access they need. My mother sitting behind me can speak to what happened when my brother needed to be identified as an infant with severe developmental intellectual disability. So I understand how important it is. And what does that look like at the Department level?

Once again, there are some good practices in this area. I think that things have had to change because of the pandemic. And so whatever was working before in this area, where do we see examples of infant and toddler assessment and understanding sooner what their needs might be and are those needs exacerbated. And I think that we should lift up those best practices where we have seen them across the country so they can become scalable and replicable.

Senator HASSAN. Well, thank you. I would look forward to working with you on that. Your mother and I have something in common in raising a young man with developmental disabilities. So it is nice to meet you, ma'am, and I look forward to working with you on this.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIR. Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Madam Chair. Cindy, thanks for being here today. Mom and Andrew, good to see you. You know, I spent 40 years teaching and coaching. We talked about that. It has been a passion of mine. And to be a teacher, you have to have passion. If I had my druthers, we wouldn't have a Department of Education. And I will tell you why. We started it under Jimmy Carter years ago and our country is built on education. And I have seen a lot of bad things happen. And I have been in almost every state, high schools all over the country recruiting, talking to counselors, read thousands of transcripts, and we are losing our education. We are losing—I have heard all kind of talk today about different things and different problems.

We got problems, all right. We got problems educating our kids. And education, to me is a key to freedom. And if we don't get education back in our schools and teaching our kids what this country is about and teaching them how to handle themselves and be able to control their livelihood in the future, we are not going to make it as a country. I spent two years running for this job just because of education, because I have seen how drastically it has fallen.

You will do a good job because you are passionate about it and you have to be. We got more problems than most people in here understand about education. We have got attention deficit. We have got drugs that we are giving kids to go to school. We don't have a lot of discipline in a lot of schools in our country and you know that. We have turned the schools over to the kids and not to the teachers. And I would love to give the schools back to the teachers where they can teach, where they don't have to worry about anything that is going on in the classroom.

As you heard earlier, we are losing—we have lost 100,000 teachers. We don't have anybody that wants to teach anymore. You know, K through 12 to me is the most important thing about education. The heck with higher to be honest with you. I mean, it is not for everybody anyway, but if we don't teach our kids to read and write and math, we are going to have huge problems. So we are here—we are worrying about a lot of problems in here. And, we have had this pandemic which has set us back. We have got to get back to school. You know that. So, you look at the rankings, United States of America, out of 79 countries, we are 36th in math. We can't do that. I mean, we cannot accept that. We can't do it.

Our kids can't read. And you are talking to somebody now that has brought kids that have made straight A's in high school, and I give them a test on reading and writing, and they don't have a sixth grade reading level. So we are fooling ourselves—it is not about money, it is really not. So what I want to ask you is, how do we regain that in our classroom?

How are you going to go about that as, maybe one most difficult jobs in the country, your job, because your boss is going to be out there taking pictures and signing autographs and you are going to be running our country's education. How do we do that?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator, for your passion for education. You spent two years running because of education and you saw students that didn't quite get what they needed, and they showed up on your football field and didn't have the preparation that they needed. And I have great experience in that and know what it takes to interrupt those types of long standing inequities that cause students to graduate without knowing what they need to be able to be successful in school and in life.

In San Diego, we increased our graduation requirements. We wanted a diploma to mean something when they graduate from our system, that they are able to be successful not just in school, but in life, on the football field, but also be college prepared. And I know that the best practices that exist, giving teachers the support that they need.

I have seen tremendous return on the investment. When you give teachers the support they need to do what they want to do most, they want to teach students, they want to have the professional de-

velopment, they want to know how do you take that most difficult student who isn't learning and get into a student centered coaching cycle with that teacher to figure out how to turn that around. When you see that magic happen, when the teacher learns how to teach a challenging student, that has great returns, because when you learn how to teach one, you learn how to teach many more.

From that, I see teachers being supported in powerful ways. Being able to get to that type of outcome you are looking at is, let's invest and teach the strong academics that you think are so important.

Senator TUBERVILLE. You know as well as I do, you are a lifelong educator, schools have become the homes for a lot of kids. They have no home. They come there. They are eating meals. They get their discipline. They learn life at the schools. I want to know what you think about standardized curriculum, K through 12. You know, if you don't learn to read before the fourth grade, you are done. You can't—I mean, that is a given. And so we do all the standardized curriculum now and we don't look at the fine points of learning and what to teach. What do you think about that?

Ms. MARTEN. I want to lift up the craft of teaching and recognize any educators or teachers that happen to be watching. Curriculum is everything to a teacher and what teachers are teaching. We teach the student more than we teach the curriculum, and understanding what a student needs, but understanding that there is certain expectations of what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in school and in life, as I have always said, teachers hold sacred the ability to teach the students what they need to be successful. And that is why assessment matters, so you understand how students are learning and what they need to learn next to grow in their abilities.

Senator TUBERVILLE. From one teacher to another, good luck. And if I can help in any way, I look forward to helping you because our children's lives are in your hands. Thank you very much.

Ms. MARTEN. Yes, they are, sir. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Rosen.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Chair Murray.

Superintendent, I want to welcome you today. I know your family is behind you there. I want to thank you for your willingness to serve, for engaging in the difficult issues that educators are facing today, pandemic aside, and I really enjoyed our conversation yesterday and I look forward to working with you after you are confirmed. I want to build upon—people are talking about STEM or we talked about STEAM and we discussed some of these things in our meeting.

One of my top priorities in Congress is really supporting STEM education and the STEM workforce. Our U.S. workforce is recovering from the pandemic and the economic impact, and we have so many jobs across the STEM spectrum, whether it is in medicine, whether it is programming, technology, all the science, technology, engineering, and math, and we have to break down the barriers that stand in the way of all of our students, regardless of their background, their age, or their gender. And so we also have to—we have to give opportunities to them. And as was mentioned be-

fore by Senator Smith, we have to have a certified STEM and career, and technical teachers that can deliver this.

Building upon much of what has been discussed today, if confirmed, how would you go about increasing access to high quality STEM classes so that all students are prepared to enter the workforce with the kind of skills that they may even need to set a baseline to do whatever it is they are interested in doing?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for that question and for recognizing my mom and my family that is here. I appreciate that and appreciated our opportunity to speak yesterday and get to know each other a little bit more. And what you highlight around STEM is a key promising practice. And what is important with STEM and those programs we actually talked about, including the A and the arts, and we talked about the R for making sure the academics are in there too, so you can add a lot more letters to that.

But to your point, these career pathways are critically important, and we have some success in San Diego in our STEAM initiatives. And the arts education has been critically important, and I don't want to take us off track there, but that has been critical. And what is helpful with these career pathways is it gives students a chance to aspire to something. How do you aspire to a career that you don't know exists? How do you get some hands on, minds on learning where you are able to engage with professionals in the field, whether it is at our local industries?

We have many business partners across San Diego that are with us on our mission for a robust STEAM education program and our career pathways. So those are San Diego's great models, and if confirmed, I think that there can be National work done at this level. And I would look forward to working with you and other stakeholders either at the Department and partners to see what it looks like for students. Everything that I say today goes back to outcomes for our children.

When children are given meaningful, robust experiences that ignite their passion and their interest, they learn and they become, what I always say is, our outcome is contributing, actively literate, contributing, participating members of society. And these STEM pathways are a clear pathway to do so. And I look forward to, if confirmed, seeing how we grow those more because they are so meaningful and relevant to students.

They, at the end of the day, create the outcomes that we also desire not just for our children, but the communities which they eventually serve.

Senator ROSEN. Well, I think you are exactly right. I think that the businesses in each and every one of our communities should come down to the elementary school levels. We have assemblies with the parents there too. Let the kids know what kind of jobs are really out there. Let the parents know. Let them know what it takes. I think that is a great idea. I just have about a minute left.

I want to talk about supporting our students of color. You know, in Clark County, Nevada, we were only the fifth largest school district in the Nation, and Latino students make up nearly half of our total enrolled population for K through 12 students. And statewide half of our colleges are HSIs or Hispanic serving institutions. We

also have one of the fastest growing AAPI communities in the country as well.

Decades of research have taught us, and we have talked about this again today, about some of the achievement gaps and that they can have long lasting impacts. So Senator Murkowski talked about this and others. If confirmed, how will you work to just broaden this education policy to really address a broader set of factors that are repeating success for our children in each of our communities, working at a public private partnership, working maybe with nonprofits and communities, whatever those collaborations are that may point us toward success?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you for that question, Senator, and highlighting what is so important here. Bringing down—bringing partners together, and you use the key word collaboration, how would we do that to address some of these longstanding inequities, whether it is an achievement or discipline, that these gaps need to be eliminated. You don't have to close the achievement gap if it never opens. If you have access to early learning and early literacy skills, we know what an impact that can make.

When you have great community partners all across the cities, across the country, we see great outcomes with that. And so I have had the wonderful experience of seeing what it looks like to collaborate with partners to interrupt some of the things that are holding our students back. And I think that is the way forward, when what we have learned during this pandemic, I say, will serve us well in the future because so many silos have come down and interagency approaches when it came to serving meals to our students and technology and access to broadband.

What we have done to deliver on the hope and promise of education during a pandemic has forced us to not only look at the inequities, but to solve problems that previously seemed unsolvable, intractable, and we have solved them. We have done things that we didn't think were possible, and we want to be able to do these things going forward. And it took collaboration. It took multiple agencies and stakeholders.

If confirmed, I would like to work on that as a collaborator and somebody who takes pride in bringing people together to solve very challenging, complex problems.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I appreciate that. I know that our future success as a Nation for America is in our elementary school students today and what we have prepared them for. So I look forward to working with you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Marshall.

Senator MARSHALL. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Marten, again, welcome to you and also your family. I am sure they are proud, and they are brave to come with you today for your toughest job interview ever, probably. I am a first generation college student who got to go to medical school. I have lived the American dream and education was the reason I got to live my American dream. And a loving family, coaches and teachers, my public education gave me the chance to compete academically against anybody in the world.

To those people, I owe a debt of gratitude. And I think that is why I am here in the Senate now is fighting to make sure that future generations had that same opportunity to live that American dream. And no matter who you are or where you are from, education is going to be a big part of living that American dream. When I came to Washington just a few short years ago, many politicians look at issues in silos. And I am going to talk about three or four issues with a common denominator and give you some rope to kind of just have a conversation with me. The overriding theme is the cost of college and college debt and what you can do about that in K through 12.

I just want you to talk about the importance of preparing students for the jobs we have, the importance of community colleges and technical colleges. My wife and myself, both community college graduates. Maybe talk a little bit about Perkins grants. And I think the theme here, and I am kind of teeing this up for you, when people come to me and say, my gosh, our college debt is so much, and I will say, well, did you look in a mirror?

What could you have accomplished in high school to get college credit to take this concept—why does college—why is it five years now? It should be able to be easily accomplished in four years because of the opportunity to get college credits. And of course, going to a community college or technical college, if you are having to borrow money for a university just doesn't make much sense to me. Calc one is calc one. Comp one is comp one. And regardless of where you go.

I am giving you the opportunity, of how important is this concept of preparing students for the jobs we have, preparing them for the—what can you do to make an impact on that college debt?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator. You have obviously thought a lot about this. And you talked about what opportunities have meant to you. And so how do we replicate that, so it is for everybody? I can say specifically, community college and college access while students are still in high school is something we have invested in San Diego Unified with dual enrollment pathways, so students are leaving with some college under their belt when they leave our system and they are able to go on to either at the community college, and then the community college through what is called the CCAP program in San Diego, moving on to a four-year university after two years of community college.

We have seen great success. I believe every student needs to have a path to meet and achieve their goals and their dreams and their abilities to be able to be contributing members of society. And that path is not the same for everybody. And how do we level the playing field, as you said, so that people too find their path forward, and have students, I think you talked about college debt, are there programs like the Perkins grant and some of the programs that could be put in place that kids could find a path forward and be successful, and not be leaving the system with so much debt that it makes it difficult for them to move forward in their lives and have their livelihood and support their families.

Senator MARSHALL. Yes. One of our jobs in elected office to figure out what is working and what is not working. Accentuate the positive. And I look forward to working with you too, the TRIO pro-

gram comes to mind and some other programs besides the Perkins grants, getting first generation college students the opportunity as well. And just that general counseling for students, that there are alternatives than borrowing \$40,000 to go to your freshman year in college, right.

I think that how do we—all these moneys that we are appropriating, I hope that we try to figure out how can we best use those in guiding people down the right track. And also, as I think about the money we have appropriated, I would just ask you your priorities. Give me a good school teacher and a chalkboard over plexiglass and I don't know what else that is, but I hope that it is going to come down to—this mental health crisis we have right now in the youth, there is no computer, there is no program that is going to fix it. The only thing that is going to fix it is a loving teacher and a loving coach.

Ms. MARTEN. I couldn't agree with you more what is necessary here and the best, you mentioned best practices, I think that is a key role of the Department. And if confirmed, I would want to be able to lift up—we can inspire and lift up the best practices across the country.

When we think about the counseling services that are going to be needed for the social and emotional toll that this pandemic has taken, what will that need to look like school by school, community by community? And we already have some examples of where it is going well, what is working, but how do we use these investments, as you are saying, to give kids the access to what they are going to individually need?

At the end of the day, big scale programs come down to an individual child. Did this child get what he or she needed, when they needed it, in the way that they needed it? That is how we define equity. And we can do big scale programs that if you can't go back to the individual child and say this is changing, outcomes for you, then we didn't deliver on the mission.

Senator MARSHALL. Yes. Madam Chair, just give me one more second, if you don't mind.

The CHAIR. We have a vote on, so we are going to have to wrap up really quick here.

Senator MARSHALL. Okay, thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much.

Senator Hickenlooper.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. [Technical problems.]—and delighted to meet you, even virtually. Have many friends in San Diego. Have heard nothing but glowing reviews, so very excited about what you can do for our country. One of the issues I am most committed to working on is improving access within the educational system to apprenticeships, not just the traditional apprenticeships, but those in a wide variety of industries. Our Committee is going to have an important role here in the recovery from the pandemic with the nexus of educational needs and the labor workforce.

Now, Colorado's—we have got a program that we started about six years ago called Career Wise, which is matching young people with paid apprenticeships in local businesses. And in three years, these students graduate with a high school degree. They have got some college credit. They have got substantial work experience,

sometimes over \$10,000 in savings. And it also is helping to close employment gaps in key industries.

As Deputy of Education, are you—could you be a strong partner to help programs like Career Wise, that are now in about 20 different states, to make sure that we can scale academic partnerships like that?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes. As I think you have heard, a little bit of a theme for me this morning that my approach is to always take something really great, when you see the seed of an idea that is delivering on outcomes for students and you can replicate that and scale it, and you just outlined some of the key aspects of the Career Wise program with the paid apprenticeships and closing those employment gaps, there is a very good promising practice.

At the end of the day, when a program has meaning for a student and its community, the surrounding community, it is a program that is worth looking at. What were the building blocks that put that together? And if confirmed, I would love to learn more about the Career Wise and work with you to find the best practices that we can replicate, because these are the things that make a difference for our students. And we know apprenticeships are meaningful way for kids to enter the workforce.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. I look forward to working with you on that. And one other quick question. I spent a lot of time, while I was Governor of Colorado, working on all education, but really focusing on elementary schools and certainly it has become clearer, and I saw you have your training was, original training was in elementary school, getting kids to study STEM at an early age appears to be such a crucial part of engaging them in science and mathematics and technology for the rest of their lives.

Increasingly, we see that it is not only their jobs and their careers, which is very important, but it is also going to be a function of our country's ability to respond to international competition and security needs. I could go on and on. What is your sense on how to get STEM more widely taught into elementary schools across the country, recognizing that, states have primary responsibility for their education systems?

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you so much for asking that question. I know San Diego teachers are watching right now and they are cheering because they are so proud of our elementary STEM program, and their kindergarten tinker spaces that we have put in place, and getting hands on, minds on learning with our youngest learners, putting them on these pathways for STEM learning. We call it STEAM in San Diego, because, as I said, I know our arts teachers are watching as well in San Diego because we know an engaged student with, like I said, hands on, minds on learning is a student who learns and learns well and has great results. And so I think it couldn't be more critical.

If confirmed, I would love to work with all the stakeholders that have brought light to why early education, and thanks for noticing that my background is in elementary education, from the University of Wisconsin and lacrosse, you actually can major in Elementary Education, which I did, and that is what my original training was.

I know how important it is for the earliest learners to have access to not just hands-on learning. That is more than that. And it is truly that engagement in meaningful, relevant curriculum that makes a difference. And I look forward to working with you on that if confirmed.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Well, thank you so much. I look forward to voting for your confirmation and I look forward to working with you to really rebuild this education system after the pandemic. Thank you so much for your public service.

Ms. MARTEN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Burr.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Madam Chair. A little bit of house-keeping real quick. Oversight is an important function of Congress and hopefully we can, that can be done in a bipartisan way. But if it is not, I intend to exercise my oversight authority as Ranking Member of this Committee, just as Senator Murray did when she was Ranking Member. A couple of yes or no questions. You commit to providing me and my staff with the information that I or other minority Members of the Committee requests from the Department of Education within the requested timeframe?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes, Senator.

Senator BURR. Do you commit to providing me and my staff with documents that I or other minority Members of the Committee request from the Department of Education within the requested timeframe?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes, Senator.

Senator BURR. Do you commit to providing me and my staff with documents—excuse me, do you commit to providing me and my staff or minority Members of the Committee with briefing requests from you or your staff within the requested timeframe?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes.

Senator BURR. Do you commit to providing the Department of Education's Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office with any information, briefings, and documents they may request?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes.

Senator BURR. Do you commit to testifying when called before a congressional committee?

Ms. MARTEN. Yes.

Senator BURR. I appreciate all those answers. Madam Chair, I would end on this. I have got a five-year old granddaughter. Her idol in the world is Elsa. Now, that is not for anybody who has a five-year old. But I watched the video last week of a teacher that comes in twice a week to her preschool who teaches Chinese. And I saw my five year old granddaughter be asked questions in Chinese, she answered. And then as she got through with three questions, she politely sat down.

You know, expectations are everything. And we have got kids that are sponges today and we don't expose them to everything they can absorb. I think what you have heard today on both sides of the aisle is, let's change the paradigm. Let's start really inspiring these kids to start learning on day one when they get into the

system. Let's not waste any time. Let's not miss the opportunity. I thank you for being here today.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator Burr. I just wanted to say that as students and families across the country have had to navigate distance learning and surviving the pandemic, it has really become hard for them to make complicated decisions about their future and navigate the road to college or career. And we have seen a decline in the completion of the FAFSA, the form that students need to complete access to financial aid for higher education. Nationwide, FAFSA completion among high school seniors is down more than 9 percent on average compared to this time last year.

Every single state has seen a drop and the decline is almost five times worse at schools with high populations of students of color compared to high schools that are predominantly white. If we do not act fast, we are going to see an historic drop in the number of students of color who go on to higher education and even greater inequities in higher education for years to come.

If you are confirmed, I hope you will work with your colleagues at the Department of Education, bring attention to this issue, and work to make sure the Department implements the bipartisan FAFSA Simplification Act that we passed last December to unlock more financial aid. Thank you.

With that, I will end our hearing. I want to thank my fellow Committee Members for their participation, and Superintendent Marten for taking the time to share your experience with us and discuss the issues that students and families and schools across the country are facing. I look forward to working with you to get our schools safely reopened for in-person learning and address the long term inequities in our schools too many of our students face. And as we work on these challenges, I want to take a moment to recognize President Biden's Executive Order from earlier this month that requires review of agency actions around sexual harassment and violence.

We have got to work together to hold schools and school districts accountable for providing a safe environment for our students. And that includes holding schools and school districts accountable for preventing and addressing campus sexual assault. I have heard from survivors, institutions of higher education, families, school districts across the country. We have got to do better. It has to be a priority for the Department to change the DeVos Title IX rule.

With that, for any Senators who wish to ask additional questions of the nominee, questions for the record will be due by Thursday, March 25th at 5 p.m. The hearing record will remain open for 10 days for Members who wish to submit additional materials for the record.

It is my intention to schedule a vote in Committee on Superintendent Marten's nomination as quickly as possible so she can begin the important task of helping to lead the Department of Education. The Committee will next meet tomorrow, Thursday, March 25th in Dirksen 430 at 10 a.m. for a hearing on improving health equity in the wake of this pandemic. With that, this Committee is adjourned.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL



*Pedro Noguera, Ph.D.*  
*Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dear*

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I am pleased to serve as a reference for Cindy Marten who is under consideration for a senior appointment in the US Department of Education. I have known Ms. Marten for several years since she was appointed to serve as the leader of the second largest school district in the State of California, and the 7<sup>th</sup> largest district in the nation. Under her leadership, the San Diego Unified School District has dramatically improved the educational outcomes for all students, including those who are among the state's most disadvantaged. For example, San Diego public schools have outpaced every other participating urban district in the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The Learning Policy Institute found African American and Latino students within San Diego Unified outperform their peers statewide. Similarly, the Council of Great City Schools has identified San Diego as the fastest improving urban school district in the nation. Two years ago, the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools that I formerly led, found that the district had enacted changes to increase the access of all students to college preparatory courses. As a result of the changes that she led, college access for students throughout the school district increased significantly.

The improvements that have occurred in San Diego Unified are the direct result of Superintendent Marten's focus on equity-based planning and budgeting. San Diego Unified is a majority-minority district (53 percent African American and Latino) and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of all students qualify for free and reduced lunch status based on family income. Located near the Mexican border, San Diego Unified also has a large population of immigrant students, some of whom cross the border (legally) every day to attend school. Marten has established close ties with leaders from the Mexican-American, Somali-American and other immigrant communities. Under her leadership, San Diego Unified has provided extensive wrap-around services for families in need, and recently launched a multi-million-dollar community schools initiative. Marten has also established a close relationship with parent leaders and is a respected member of the broader San Diego community. Inheriting a system known for instability and rapid turnover in the Superintendent's Office, Marten established a reputation for reliability and an impressive ability to lead a complex school system. In a remarkable sign of stability and confidence in her extraordinary skills and collaborative style, this year will mark her eighth year of leadership in the district. Marten currently oversees an \$8.4 billion bond program, which consistently receives the highest possible marks from Wall Street ratings agencies.



Harvard Graduate School of Education  
6 Appian Way, Room 467  
Cambridge, MA 02138

February 13, 2021

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write a letter of recommendation for Superintendent Cynthia "Cindy" Marten as she is being considered for a senior leadership role in the Department of Education. As the superintendent of the second largest district in California, Cindy has served her students and community with three leadership attributes and moral qualities that I prize above all others: wisdom, compassion, and courage (Confucius). I believe this framing allows me to indicate why she is an exceptional educational leader and is ready to contribute to the new student and family centered focus of the DOE under President Biden.

#### WISDOM

I first met Cindy when she was being considered for the superintendent's position in 2013. An EdWeek reporter wanted to know what I thought about someone moving from a principalship to the top leadership position in the district. Although initially skeptical, I committed to doing an in-depth analysis of the candidate. It immediately became clear to me that Cindy had the knowledge to develop exciting and diverse classrooms with those directly involved and affected and that this joint work would inspire students and staff to reach unprecedented heights of achievement. Where others saw barriers to learning, Cindy saw limitless possibilities for success; and where other others viewed students' and teachers' abilities as fixed, Cindy saw both groups as capable of learning in real time and in meaningful ways through appropriate professional development and coaching. Her work in the City Heights area conveyed her belief that such communities had inherent strengths and that engaging partners in the work of enhancing learning everyday would accelerate positive outcomes for all students. After researching



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what Cindy already had accomplished, my response to the reporter was not what she expected. I told EdWeek that while the principal to superintendent leap would be challenging, if I had to make a bet, my bet would be on Cindy Marten. Happily, the work she has done in leading the district in the ensuing years definitely has verified my initial perspective.

#### COMPASSION

From the onset of her professional career to the present, Cindy has led from a core set of beliefs that everyone in the educational enterprise – students, parents, teachers, and staff – could learn, improve, and grow in their ability to perform. Acknowledging that SDUSD is a majority-minority district with almost two-thirds of its students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, Cindy has consistently reached out to and partnered with diverse leaders, including from immigrant and communities of color. The district's setting up of its own office to help DACA students achieve documented status is illustrative of her commitment to her most marginalized students. Believing that the varied communities in SDUSD are asset-laden, Cindy consistently has found exemplars of best practice within each core group and has used these proof points to demonstrate that even within challenging environments, excellence could and should be the expected outcome.

Believing that excellence is the target and equity is the way, Cindy has put in systems to support students' social and emotional development in concert with her focus on academic achievement. Rather than attempting to "fix" students, she has promoted a holistic social-emotional approach through policies and practices that create equitable learning environments for all students. Additionally, she has worked with fellow educators throughout the district to ameliorate those policies and practices that were harmful in their impact, especially to students of color and English language learners. Two examples of Cindy's commitment in these areas include her efforts to address students' food insecurities and the hosting of a Freedom Summer series of Board workshops, which led to work on reimagining school policing and the creation of a racial equity oversight committee for all hiring.

#### COURAGE

Cindy understands the importance of partnership as evidenced by her work with organizations like the Council of the Great City Schools and universities throughout the country. One of her first steps as superintendent was to welcome the Harvard Graduate School of Education to the district to address five immediate problems of practice that included the needs of ELL and students with disabilities. The openness that she conveyed spoke volumes to her team about the benefits of collaboration with other entities to achieve her bold and audacious goals. Her focus on student success is evidenced by raised high school standards AND improved student graduation percentages; her work with teachers and their union



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representatives has led to increased teacher satisfaction and retention; and her efforts to keep the public apprised of SDUSD outcomes has resulted in approval of multiple facilities bonds. The district's "National Response to Persevere and to Prioritize School Recovery with Equity and Undoing Learning Loss" demonstrates her awareness of federal education issues and her alignment with a bolder, more student-focused agenda certainly in keeping with that promoted by the Biden-Harris team.

#### SUMMARY

From my first exposure of her leadership to the present, Cindy Marten has impressed me and other educators, including colleagues in the PreK-12 through the higher education parts of the sector and the non-profit and research spectrum, with her abilities to envision, motivate, collaborate, and problem solve using best practices from varied sources within and outside of education. Indicators of her educational and leadership acumen include the district's results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing, in which African American and Latino students outpaced their peers throughout the state. Such successes caused Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools, to note that San Diego Unified was the nation's fastest improving school system. And serving in a role that too frequently has a two-to-three-year span, Cindy's tenure has led to the achievement of short- and long-term goals, has promoted professional development and a caring culture, and has provided stability in the district from classrooms to the board. Having served in pivotal roles educational leaders and teachers recognize and value, she will bring a level of understanding, commitment, and energy to the Department of Education as it seeks to address policies promoted by the previous administration and replace them with an agenda that speaks to the needs of all students, especially those most marginalized.

In closing, I cannot stress enough what an exceptional educator, leader and human being Cindy Marten has been in the education space. She has exceeded even the lofty goals her staunchest supporters have held for her. She is undaunted by challenge, unafraid of making hard decisions, compelled by a moral compass focused on social justice, and persuaded by both her mind and her heart. Unprecedented times call for leaders who are intelligent, caring, and willing to act. Cindy embodies all three elements for she is simply extraordinary; thus, I can think of no one better to be called to serve at this critical time in our history. There is no question that she will serve this nation's children in profound and life altering ways through her work as a senior leader in the DOE. And I, and like-minded educators, will be cheering her on and standing ready to assist her with the work in every way possible.

Sincerely,

Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Ed.D.  
The Gregory R. Anrig Professor of Practice  
Harvard Graduate School of Education

**Board of Education**

EUGENE BRUCKER EDUCATION CENTER  
4100 Normal Street, Room 2231, San Diego,  
CA 92103-2682

Richard Barrera  
President

February 12, 2021

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

Although it pains me to do so, I write in strong support of Cindy Marten's nomination to the position of Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Education. As President of the San Diego Unified School District Board of Education, I am fully aware of the challenges our District - California's second largest currently educating over 125,000 preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students - will face in replacing Cindy as Superintendent. But I am also aware of Cindy's potential contribution to the transformation of public education for students not only in our District, but for all of America's children.

I first met Cindy during my initial campaign for School Board in 2008. I had worked for nearly two decades at that point as a community and union organizer, listening to and supporting families in low income, largely immigrant neighborhoods who were willing to take on extraordinary risks and sacrifices to create a better future for their children. I recognized the stories of the families I was privileged to work with, because my own parents and grandparents had come to this country believing that through their sacrifice, they could open up opportunities for me and my brothers to contribute beyond the limits of their own imaginations. And even though my parents were educators who celebrated and cherished the public schools I attended, and even though I knew that nothing was more important to the families I worked with than their own children's public schools, I was not an educator. If I wanted to make a positive impact on the District I was running to help lead, I would need a teacher to guide me.

Cindy at the time was the Principal at Central Elementary School in San Diego's City Heights neighborhood. 100% of Central's students qualified for the Free and Reduced Lunch program, and over 80% were English Learners who's families had recently come to the United States from Mexico and Central America, Somalia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Cambodia and other nations from around the world. What struck me immediately about Central when I visited the school was its' strong sense of community. Students, parents, teachers and staff all felt like they belonged, and were confident in their own work and their contributions to the school. Students actively participated in class and engaged in multiple leadership programs. Parents - including fathers - volunteered in large numbers in the classroom and attended Friday morning learning workshops. Teachers led their own professional learning communities and were active in school governance teams. Although teaching at Central involved hours of commitment to students and families after the school day ended, no teacher on Cindy's staff had voluntarily bid on positions in schools in wealthier neighborhoods in years, despite their advanced seniority.

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I asked Cindy about her positions on the most controversial education policy debates raging locally and nationally. How should teachers be evaluated? Were seniority protections a barrier to improving instruction? Do lower class sizes improve test scores? Does “back to basics” curriculum improve test scores? Should parents be able to choose whether to send their kids to other neighborhood schools or to charter schools? She clearly and coherently helped me understand that I was asking the wrong questions. What mattered to her and to her school community on the ground in City Heights was very different to what mattered to politicians and editorial boards.

Cindy began with a core belief. Everyone – students, parents, and staff – was capable of learning and growing. The work of a school was to light the fire inside every individual so that they wanted to learn and grow. And as people gained confidence in themselves as learners, you could build a culture in a school community that celebrated learning, and welcomed everyone’s unique gifts and contributions. Kids and adults should look forward to coming to school every day. English learners and students with special needs shouldn’t be seen as problems to be solved by separating them from their peers, but as contributors to a diverse and exciting classroom community. Teachers could learn to teach even the most challenging students in their class, with relevant professional development that didn’t take them away from time with their students, but with student centered coaching from experienced resource teachers by their side. And the Principal should be a co-teacher, not an evaluator sitting in her office reading test score data.

Where some saw the City Heights community as a source of barriers predetermining poor outcomes for students, Cindy saw the neighborhood as rich in resources that, with strategically built partnerships, could remove barriers from her students and staff. She invested in parent education that built the capacity of parents to support their children’s learning. She built a day care center on campus so that teachers could come back to school soon after having babies. She reached out to neighborhood health clinics and brought them onto the Central campus to serve students, staff and parents. Central became the center of the community, a hub of learning, growth and contribution that people wanted to be a part of.

As a School Board, we were able to lift up the Central story as our vision of what we hoped to create throughout the District. And Cindy’s ability to clearly communicate the core beliefs and strategies that built the culture at Central allowed us to focus on policy and budget decisions that were relevant to all of our school communities, rather than getting bogged down in endless political debates. Although Cindy was frequently recruited to leave Central and come to a position in District Administration, she knew that by continuing to build and tell the Central story she could have greater impact across the District.

By 2013, after working our way through the financial crisis created by the Great Recession, we were ready to hire a Superintendent who could bring our vision alive and transform the instructional future of the District. The Board deliberated for about 30 minutes before we unanimously agreed that Cindy was the leader we were looking for. She did not apply for the job, and we thought that she might again decline to leave Central. But she recognized that with a united Board clear about what made Central special, she had the opportunity to impact the lives of generations of children, and agreed to make the leap from Elementary School Principal to leader of a large, complex, preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade school system.

Now in her eighth year as Superintendent, Cindy is among the longest tenured Superintendents in our District’s history as well as among current leaders of the nation’s largest Districts. Student outcomes under Cindy’s leadership are well documented by research from the Stanford University Learning Policy Institute, the UCLA Center for Educational Transformation and other local, statewide and national studies. What I am most proud of is that San Diego Unified under Cindy has achieved consistent and growing excellence while staying clear about our core values. Notably, we have:

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- Raised the standards for high school graduation, reflecting our core belief that all students can rise to the occasion when given real opportunity and support, while achieving record graduation and college eligibility rates, particularly among Latinx and African American students;
- Fully integrated English Learners and Students with Disabilities into mainstream classrooms, while cutting in half the number of long term English Learners and successfully implementing a model for co-teaching between General Education and Special Education teachers;
- Developed a fully integrated, universally accessible early learning strategy that brings four year olds, including Students with Disabilities, into Transitional Kindergarten classrooms co-taught by Early Childhood, General Education and Special Education teachers;
- Tripled the number of dual language immersion programs in our Elementary Schools;
- Made music and arts education available to all Elementary School students;
- Increased tenfold the number of high school students taking college courses;
- Focused our Career Pathway programs for high school students around high demand occupations, while eliminating the achievement gap among students enrolled in Career Pathways programs;
- Launched an Ethnic Studies for All strategy that integrates Ethnic Studies principles into our entire Preschool through High School curriculum, while establishing an Ethnic Studies graduation requirement beginning with current ninth graders;
- Negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreements with our educators that create highly competitive salaries, fully paid family health care, low student to educator ratios, and investments in meaningful professional development, resulting in over 90% of District teachers staying with us beyond the first five years of their careers, and protecting our District from teacher shortages;
- Negotiated a new teacher evaluation system based on growth, where every teacher has the opportunity to both demonstrate their full range of work while receiving meaningful feedback and support from Principals and peers; and
- Successfully campaigned for voter approval of multiple facilities bonds totaling over \$8 billion, allowing us to transform our school buildings and infrastructure into state of the art learning centers for our students, create tens of thousands of construction jobs for residents of our poorest communities, while receiving perfect performance and financial audits from Independent Citizens Oversight Committees.

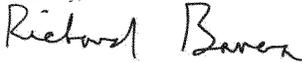
When the COVID pandemic hit last Spring, Cindy was challenged to keep our students, staff and communities safe while not turning our back on the progress of the last several years. She brought our key stakeholders together to transition our entire District to distance learning within three weeks of our initial shutdown, while providing every student with access to a computer and internet at home, three meals a day on weekdays and

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February 12, 2021

weekends for our students and families, and intensive professional development for our teachers. When the new school year began in the fall, Cindy negotiated an agreement with our teachers to provide significantly more live instructional minutes than most other large districts in California, while physically revamping our campuses to provide the ventilation, cleaning and PPE necessary for eventual safe reopening. She partnered with our teachers union and UC San Diego scientists to set clear standards for safe reopening, and to develop a comprehensive system for COVID testing of all staff and students on campus at an average bimonthly frequency, based on expert scientific modeling that has now been included in Governor Newsom's reopening plan. Despite early indications that students in our District have suffered less learning loss than in comparable large urban districts in California, Cindy has now developed a clear and comprehensive recovery plan for our students that addresses both academic and social and emotional supports and interventions.

I do not welcome the challenge of moving our District forward through the pandemic and into the future without Cindy at the helm. But I realize the potential for San Diego's students, as well as for students across the nation, to thrive under a historic federal commitment to public education. Cindy can and will help lead an America that builds our democracy on the foundation of great public schools, and that inspires brilliant and passionate young people to change the world as teachers. I've seen her do it at an elementary school in a high poverty, immigrant neighborhood. I've seen her do it in a large, diverse and extremely complex urban school system. I know the difference she will make for all of our local communities as Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Barrera". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Barrera  
President, San Diego Unified School Board



association of california  
school administrators

**officers**

president Ron Wilkins, Ed.D. president-elect Charlie Holtzman vice president Elm Simon, Ed.D.  
vice president for legislative action Barbara Metzler past president Linda Kamide, Ed.D. executive director Wesley Smith, Ed.D.

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

The Association of California School Administrators has the unique opportunity to interact with California's 1037 school districts and the educational leaders who serve them. It has come to our attention that upon the nomination of Miguel Cardona as secretary of education, the transition team is working on filling the remainder of positions within the U.S. Department of Education. We would enthusiastically endorse the candidacy of Cindy Marten for Deputy Secretary of Education.

Cindy Marten is an experienced teacher, principal, and superintendent. She leads the second largest district in California and does so with a laser focus on the rights and needs of students. Moreover, Cindy is an equity warrior. She prioritizes the disenfranchised and underrepresented and marshals necessary resources for their achievement and success.

Cindy also represents the potential of true labor/management cooperation. She embodies leadership from the middle and empowers her labor allies to be co-creators who share in leadership processes and decision making.

Cindy Marten would bring a student-centered focus, large district leadership experience, and labor empowerment and collaboration success to the U.S. Department of Education. She will support the secretary of education in ensuring America's students are prioritized and equity is realized across our great nation.

Sincerely,

Wesley Smith, Ed.D.

Executive Director

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Member Services Fax 650.437.5185

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[www.acsa.org](http://www.acsa.org)

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

9500 Gilman Drive # 0005  
La Jolla, California 92093-0005

February 12, 2021

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Recommendation to consider Superintendent Cindy Marten

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

As the Administration is building the leadership team for the Department of Education, I believe Superintendent Cindy Marten would be an excellent choice for a senior leadership role within the department. I have full confidence in her commitment to help our nation's schools recover from the pandemic and emerge stronger than when the COVID-19 crisis first began. I am able to strongly support her candidacy because I have worked with her on many projects during the past eight years and have seen her commitment and her capabilities first hand.

Superintendent Marten and I share a belief that public institutions have a responsibility to serve the public good. From the moment the COVID-19 virus forced schools to close in March, we began working together to create the conditions that would allow for a safe and responsible reopening. Superintendent Marten requested access to our university's leading epidemiologists, public health experts and scientific modelers. In the absence of federal leadership, she put together her own scientific panel to advise school leaders on everything from air filtration to mask requirements on public school busses.

Armed with the best possible research, Superintendent Marten and her team set about implementing every proposal from our scientists. They upgraded the air filtration system at hundreds of schools, installed desk shields and other safety requirements. They shared the progress of their work online, along with the science behind the work, knowing transparency was essential to maintain public confidence.

Then, when case counts surged over the summer, and it became clear that a traditional return to school would not be safe, Marten negotiated a surveillance testing program with UC San Diego School of Health. Superintendent Marten understood the advice from our scientists that 90 percent of all transmissions on campus can be prevented through rigorous testing. The program launched before winter break, and is expanding rapidly.

In short, Superintendent Marten's commitment to reopening schools in the safest, most responsible manner is unmatched. I also know she will make sure our schools reopen with a renewed commitment to equity. A former classroom teacher, inner-city principal and statewide leader on equity, Superintendent Marten's life work is improving educational outcomes for the students who most need our support.

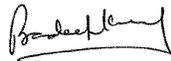
My first collaboration with Superintendent Marten was on the Chancellor's Associates Scholarship Program, which allows students from the highest need high schools in the San Diego Unified School District to attend UC San Diego with full financial support (i.e. no loans at graduation). Next, Superintendent Marten created a citywide foundation to expand visual and performing arts opportunities for students in her schools. Our university was proud to be a founding and sustaining member of the foundation. Again, this made clear her vision for integrating visual and performing arts within the K-12 curriculum.

By expanding college options for her students and insisting on an education that teaches to the "whole child" through arts and music, Superintendent Marten has proven her commitment to help our students surpass expectations at every step. Most importantly, embedded in her thinking, and therefore her initiatives, is an awareness of the inequities that exist and how as educators we must be dealing with removing the inequities consciously.

Superintendent Marten has an amazing ability to be egoless and obtain the best possible advice from leading experts. She is impressive in her ability to listen carefully and comprehend complex ideas (in areas she may not have much familiarity with) and create a plan of action that is implementable and communicated transparently. These attributes combined with her pleasant personality and her ability to be very articulate in explaining her vision and strategy make her an excellent leader, and therefore, an excellent choice to lead our K-12 system at the national level.

In summary, my experience in working with her allows me to say with great confidence that she is the right person to work within the Biden Administration to restore the greatness of America's public-school system.

With kind regards,



Pradeep K. Khosla  
Chancellor



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 |

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

February 18, 2021

Chairwoman Patty Murray  
Ranking Member Richard Burr  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

On behalf of the more than 3 million members of the National Education Association, which includes our nation's teachers, aspiring educators, retired educators, education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, librarians, and higher education faculty and staff, we are proud to support the nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education

Marten, superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, is a former classroom teacher and inner-city principal who now leads the second largest district in the State of California, and as such, she is uniquely equipped to help our nation provide the opportunities that all students deserve to learn and thrive. As an educator, Superintendent Marten possesses the vast classroom, administrative, and personal experience to effectively support the department in managing its K-12 policies, intergovernmental and stakeholder activities, and English language learners programming.

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, Marten has worked closely with families and educators to follow science and keep the community safe. She established her own panel of scientific experts from the University of California in San Diego and launched her own testing program based on the panel's guidance and input from the California Teachers Association (CTA). The testing plan and gradual reopening of schools were widely supported by families, educators, and the community, including local school board members. In addition, as schools transitioned to remote learning, Marten continued her longstanding commitment to professional development by ensuring that all educators were provided an extra week of training at the beginning of the school year to help them take their craft online with confidence.

Under Marten's leadership, the Learning Policy Institute credited the district's dedication and prioritization of hiring and retaining qualified, experienced teachers as a driver of improving student outcomes, particularly for students of color. San Diego Unified also is committed to racial justice and community empowerment, ensuring the continuation of related programs even during the pandemic. It is notable that Marten spearheaded and hosted a Freedom Summer series of board workshops, which resulted in plans to reimagine school police and the creation of a racial equity oversight committee for all hiring. Other community-centered work included a

dramatic plan to address food insecurity, which has provided close to 10 million free meals to needy families since the start of the pandemic.

In addition to her work supporting students and educators throughout the pandemic and furthering the district's commitment to racial and social justice, Marten's career features several highlights that demonstrate her experience with coordinating federal policy, responding to student needs, and providing instructional leadership. Please consider the following achievements:

- As the principal of an inner-city school for a decade, Marten learned the importance of social and emotional learning and trauma-informed approaches to education. She has taken her experience opening a community health clinic at her school to expand student support services districtwide. During her tenure, San Diego Unified has launched a community schools initiative to deepen the bonds between school leaders and the families they serve.
- Her emphasis on social and emotional learning, and an approach that values recognizing, understanding, and attempting to meet the full spectrum of a child's needs, has led Marten to de-emphasize high-stakes standardized testing, instead focusing on classroom-based learning and assessments. Nevertheless, standardized test scores for the district climbed steadily under Superintendent Marten's leadership, prompting the head of the Council of Great City Schools to call San Diego Unified the nation's fastest improving school system.
- Outpacing every other participating urban district in the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing, the Learning Policy Institute also found African American and Latino students within San Diego Unified outperformed their peers statewide. The UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools found these improvements were the direct result of Superintendent Marten's focus on equity-based budgeting.
- Marten has demonstrated her familiarity with federal education policies and issues, drafting a plan to help rebuild public education in the aftermath of the tenure of Secretary Betsy DeVos. She believes deeply in ensuring every student in the country has access to a bright future and has organized a series of policy recommendations in the "National Response to Persevere and to Prioritize School Recovery with Equity and Undoing Learning Loss." These recommendations are currently available [on the San Diego Unified website](#).

Inheriting a system known for rapid turnover in the Superintendent's Office, Marten has established a reputation for stability and leading a complex system collaboratively. San Diego Unified is a majority-minority district (53 percent African American and Latino) and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of all students qualify for free and reduced lunch status based on family income. Marten currently oversees an \$8.4 billion bond program, which consistently receives the highest possible marks from Wall Street ratings agencies. In a sign of faith in her leadership, voters previously endorsed Marten's plan to issue the largest bond in city educational history.

These resources provided significant funding for school facility renovations, repairs and safety upgrades, the reduction of lead in drinking water and new facilities for athletics, visual or performing arts and career or technical education. In addition, to support the growing population of San Diego Unified immigrant students, Marten established close ties with leaders from the Mexican American, Somali-American and other New Americans communities. To further demonstrate the district's commitment to immigrant students and families, Marten ensured the establishment of the district's own office to facilitate Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) applications.

Cindy Marten has demonstrated a successful and fruitful commitment to educating all students, collaborating with families, educators, and the community, and advancing a comprehensive policy agenda that nurtures and fully supports students. We share her philosophy that "creating educational conditions that enable all children to become actively literate, contributing and participating members of a democratic society" can make a positive difference in the world, and we believe she would be an outstanding Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.

Sincerely,



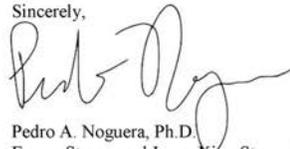
Rebecca S. Pringle  
President



Kim A. Anderson  
Executive Director

For all of these reasons I believe that Cindy Marten is highly qualified to assume a leadership role within the US Department of Education. She is a visionary leader with a strong understanding of the challenges facing public schools in our nation. I wholeheartedly endorse her appointment.

Sincerely,



Pedro A. Noguera, Ph.D.  
Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean





February 23, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
United States Senate  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I urge you to confirm Cindy Marten as deputy U.S. education secretary. Marten is currently the superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, the second-largest school district in California, with more than 100,000 students. She previously worked as a teacher, principal, vice principal and literacy specialist during her distinguished career in public education.

AFT members, like all Americans, are struggling with the confluence of crises affecting our country—including COVID-19, economic insecurity, a reckoning with racism, and threats to our democracy. And our teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, and higher education faculty members and staff are particularly aware of the responsibilities they have, as public schools and higher education are integral to the opportunity afforded our children, the success of our economy and the health of our democracy. But they need support and resources, and a voice at the table; as Marten first and foremost identifies as a teacher, she will help ensure this and reverse the damage of the DeVos years.

Cindy Marten is both collaborative and solution-driven. Her willingness to engage with and listen to classroom teachers, educational aides and all those caring for students in our schools has led to her success in meeting the needs of children, particularly those historically underserved. She has proven herself a dedicated, tenacious and skilled educator throughout her career as a teacher, a literacy specialist, a school leader and now a superintendent. While such an accomplishment is never the work of just one person, San Diego's recent gains in National Assessment of Educational Progress fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math scores are truly worthy of note.

Our public schools have never been in greater need of the skills Marten possesses, as our nation is confronting multiple crises—most significantly the tremendous impact of the pandemic on the academic, social and emotional well-being of our students. Marten's direct experience managing a large, diverse school district through this crisis would be a tremendous asset to the Education Department as it helps reopen America's schools safely and with public confidence.

I urge you to move rapidly on her nomination.

Sincerely,

Randi Weingarten  
President

RW : emc opeiu #2 afl-cio

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Nurses and Health  
Professionals

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Jessica J. Tang  
Adam Urbanski  
Debbie White, RN  
Carl Williams



March 6, 2021

Dear Senator Rush,

It is with unmatched confidence and professional pride that I write this letter of recommendation for Cynthia Marten. I have known Cindy on a personal basis for over twenty-four years. When I first met Cynthia she was my son's third-grade teacher. During the time he attended her class, my African American son struggled with learning challenges and behavior difficulties. Given the troubles, Ms. Marten never wavered in her passion to help. She worked tirelessly, got my son to the development stages he needed, and strived to have him become the best person he could be.

Furthermore, Ms. Marten has shown admirable qualities as a personal friend and as a leader in many areas of service. Including qualities such as a collaborative mindset, open-mindedness, positivity, responsibility, fairness, diligence, and integrity. These attributes are distinguishing and beneficial to the position of United States Deputy Secretary of Education.

As a strong single mother of four, I can say Cynthia is not only qualified for this position but will excel given her skill set and experience. Because of Cynthia's abilities with the community and her ease with diverse groups of people, it is without hesitation that I recommend Cynthia Marten.

If needed, I would be pleased to respond to any specific questions concerning her qualifications and performance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Payne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'P' and 'a'.

Julianna Payne

Mom of Cameron Payne and Respiratory Therapy Student  
1756 E Geronimo St, Chandler, AZ 85225 |



March 8, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I enthusiastically support the nomination of Cindy Marten as the United States Deputy Secretary of Education. I have known Ms. Marten for nearly 20 years, and have watched her tireless efforts to advance equity and raise the academic success of all students as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and superintendent. Ms. Marten is a champion of all children and an equity warrior.

Cindy Marten brings to the Department of Education practical knowledge on how to support the learning and achievement of our most vulnerable students through first-hand experiences. As the assistant principal and principal of San Diego Unified's Central Elementary School, she led her colleagues in raising the student achievement of students new to the United States through research-based practices that support academic development and social/emotional well-being. Her record as a school leader shows steady success of students who are dependent on schools for their growth and development.

As superintendent, Cindy Marten led San Diego Unified in a remarkable turnaround to improve educational opportunities for all students. The San Diego Unified Board adopted the University of California eligibility standards as graduation requirements for all students when only one other California district had done so. The board faced critics who thought more rigorous graduation requirements were unfair to students who had been traditionally underserved, and the expectations were set too high for students to reach in a few years.

Raising expectations alone does not result in success. It fell to Cindy Marten and her team to ensure that students were on-track to graduate on time, particularly English language learners and students of color who had fallen behind. With no excuses, and through systemic efforts to increase access and opportunity to learn rigorous curriculum, 91 percent of San Diego Unified's class of 2016 met the higher graduation requirements, the highest graduation rate among large urban districts in the state, and 13 percent more students met the university entrance requirements. The successes didn't end there. San Diego Unified continued to have the highest high school graduation rate of California's large urban districts. More important, for the class of 2017, there was only a three percent gap between the overall graduation rate and the

Perry and Associates, Inc.

146 Front Street, Suite 211, Scituate, MA 02066



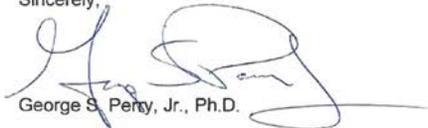
Chairwoman Murray  
Ranking Member Burr

graduation rate of Black students and a five percent gap for the graduation rate of Latinx students.

I was present to watch and support Cindy Marten's efforts during this time. Achieving the equity agenda was not without systemic and political challenges. Her commitment to equity was steadfast, and her focus on doing the right things for students, not what was expedient, provided genuine and consistent academic gains. As one who has gained a national perspective by standing side-by-side with over 30 urban superintendents during the last three decades, and currently works for the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, I know Cindy Marten is one of rare breed of exceptional and effective leaders.

As Deputy Secretary of Education, Cindy Marten will bring an unwavering commitment to equity and access, deep practical knowledge of how our federal government can best serve school districts, and the confidence that public education can better serve all students by having families, educators and governments work together. Please do not hesitate to contact me with thoughts or questions.

Sincerely,



George S. Pety, Jr., Ph.D.



March 8, 2021

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I write this letter to lend my whole-hearted endorsement of Cindy Marten to serve as United States Deputy Secretary of Education.

As President of the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), a non-profit organization based in San Diego, I have had the privilege to work in partnership with Ms. Marten since 2013 on interrupting the *School to Prison Pipeline* that adversely impacts youth of color.

Ms. Marten has been an inspirational, thoughtful, and committed leader in bringing restorative practices to the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). Early on in her tenure as Superintendent of SDUSD, she identified alternatives to suspension and expulsion as a key factor in addressing inequalities facing youth of color. She not only identified the issue but strategically implemented, in partnership with NCRC, a multi-pronged strategy to comprehensively introduce restorative practices to administrators, staff, teachers, students and parents. This effort led to the adoption in 2021 by the SDUSD school board of a Restorative Discipline Plan that ensures that restorative practices will remain a key focus for many years to come.

One of NCRC's most important community events is the annual Peacemaker Awards Dinner. During the event, we honor both national and local leaders for their innovation in Peacemaking. National honorees have included the late Congressman John Lewis, Presidential Advisor David Gergen and this year's award will be received by Dr. Anthony Fauci. On the local front, NCRC awarded Cindy Marten the San Diego Peacemaker Award in 2015 for her leadership in shifting SDUSD from zero tolerance rules and policies to a more restorative approach to discipline as described above. Instilling compassion throughout the disciplinary system by addressing the sources of student misconduct and engaging all stakeholders in a discussion about appropriate consequences is precisely the type of effort that the Peacemaker Awards are designed to recognize.

The nation will be most fortunate to have a visionary leader of Ms. Marten's caliber leading strategic initiatives not only in San Diego but in every state of the union.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Steven P. Dinkin'.

Steven P. Dinkin  
President

## **DEAR CHAIR AND RANKING MEMBER BURR**

My name is Sandra Avalos I am a grateful recovering addict and this is my story.

In 1991 I married At the age of 17 and by 1992 I gave birth To my first born.

I was 18 years old and my weight was 190 pounds after giving birth, By the age of 19 years old I dropped only 10 pounds.

I remember feeling ugly and I didn't like who I saw in the mirror. So I began to diet, until one day a 13yr old girl introduced me to a drug called methamphetamine. Without giving it much thought I chose to try.

Well not only that I lose weight, but I never imagined how more I would lose.

My addiction progressed in a blink of an eye. The first 10 months seem like I had been using for 10yrs, little the I know that I would be addicted for 15yrs.

In those 15yrs I was raped, had a few overdoses the last overdose was due to alcohol which I went into code blue at the ER. Now I understand why it's called:

*Mi Vida Loca/ My Crazy Life*

I lost myself my home and my children

To make a long story short

Let me share about a miracle and a God sent Angel into my life.

In March 14 of 2008

I was court ordered to family court, this hearing was for the removal of my 3 beautiful children.

I remember this day like if was yesterday ☹️

I sat there and listen to the judge tell me what was taking place and when he address to me I nodded my head in agreement to everything he said.

After the court hearing I was to meet up with the social worker so I could say goodbye to my children.

I remember stalling and hoping that by the time I would get there they would be gone, but that didn't happen.

Let me tell you that was the most painful moment of my life. 💔

I remember telling my son Gilbert to take care of his sister Brenda and to be strong. When I saw my boy holding back his tears, I said to my son: Mommy will get you back.

After they left, I walked in to my empty room with a shattered heart, for a split second I thought they were better off without me and since I had lost everything, I could just escape from reality, that's what I knew to do best in all those 15 yrs of addiction.

For the first time in a long time I reach out to God and asked for him to guide me and help me in this journey of recovery.

While I was recovering

God sent me an Angel, her name is Cindy Marten

Cindy Marten was there when I was at my lowest

She was very involved in the lifes of my children. Because of her my son Gilbert attended Preuss Middle and High School.

My daughter Michaela attended HSHMC and graduated from HSHMC

My daughter Brenda was allowed to return to Central Elementary.

Mrs. Cindy Marten moved mountains to make all these possible

In 2009 I successfully completed a drug and alcohol program.

I invited Cindy Marten to my graduation and I asked her to pick a song for the entrance of my ceremony and she chose "The Climb"

This song represents the journey of my recovery.

Cindy Marten has been in our life through good times and bad times.

Mrs Marten has also attended many of my clean time celebrations, yes, I am a member of Narcotics Anonymous .

When she went to my 10<sup>th</sup> yr anniversary 03/14/2017

I learned that this beautiful soul Cindy Marten was very willing to adopt my daughter Brenda and Mrs Stacy Montreal was very willing to adopt my son Gilbert.

I am beyond grateful to have Cindy Marten in my life.

I won't ever forget her words to me

"I believe in you"

"Remember it's the Climb"

Words that lift you up and motivated to keep moving forward/  
climbing.

Working Hard, being kind and with No excuses.

So I am more than honored to have written this letter to support Mrs. Cindy Marten on her nomination for Biden's Cabinet

Mrs. Cindy Marten works for the people and loves our children.

I am living proof of how Cindy Marten will Climb to reach out and help families.

I've known Cindy Marten for yrs, she is a responsible person. I definitely know she would be an asset to any company

I know she's a hard worker because on my time of need she help me out tremendously when I was at my lowest in my life.

With her support I got back on my feet and I will forever be grateful to her

She didn't do it as worker she did it as a friend out of her kindness

I know she will be a responsible person wherever she lands a job.

I believe in Cindy Marten

It is the Climb

I am grateful to have shared my story and to write this letter of support

I will be 13 yrs Clean as of 03/14/2021

It is the Climb 🤝

Dr. Gloria G. Harris  
2404 Loring Street, #82  
San Diego, CA 92109

March 9, 2021  
RE: Cindy Marten

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Barr,

The purpose of this letter of recommendation is to provide support for the appointment of Cindy Marten to serve as United States Deputy Secretary of Education.

In 2010, I was appointed by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to the County Mental Health Board and later served as Chairperson of the Board. As a Board member, I became aware of Cindy Marten's concern for the physical and mental health of disadvantaged children. Prior to becoming superintendent of the San Diego Unified, Cindy was a principal at a school in City Heights, one of San Diego's most disadvantaged communities, where she established a community health and wellness center. The clinic at Central was the first health and wellness center to open on a campus in San Diego County. It was staffed by a nurse practitioner or doctor, a part-time psychiatrist, and a part-time psychologist and provided comprehensive mental health services for students and their family members.

A major gap in adolescent mental health services exists in the United States. Nearly 80% of children and adolescents who are defined as needing mental health services are not receiving care. As superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, Cindy built on her experience in City Heights to develop community wellness centers in high schools and expand counseling services in high needs communities. A research study that investigated the effectiveness of school based mental health services concluded that the SDUSD's Mental Health Resource Center provided a legitimate environment for the integration of mental health services in schools as a feasible strategy to improve student academic and mental health outcomes.

Cindy Marten believes that it is important to create conditions where children become actively literate, contributing, participating members of a democratic society. When appointed to serve as United States Deputy Secretary of Education, she will bring the same dedication to promoting the social and emotional well-being of our nation's children.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Gloria G. Harris

**Larry Leverett, Ed.D.**  
**44 Abbey Road, Tinton Falls,**  
**New Jersey 07753**

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C.20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I enthusiastically support the nomination of Cindy Marten as the United States Deputy Secretary of Education. I have known Ms. Marten for 15 years and have witnessed her capabilities at the school, district and state levels of education. There are many people who articulate the urgency to address educational equity. Ms. Marten's "walk" matches her talk. Ms. Marten's leadership as principal and superintendent demonstrates her firm belief that schools can help all learners achieve academic and social success – All Means All!

As past executive director of the Panasonic Foundation, a national school reform organization, supported by Panasonic, a global consumer technology corporation, I had the opportunity to partner with the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) during Ms. Marten's tenure as a principal, and then superintendent. Our partnership involved building systems level continuous improvement strategies at the school and district level. We had the opportunity to work closely with Ms. Marten in the arduous work of system transformation. This work involved a broad cross section of the San Diego including community members, parent groups, mayor and elected/appointed officials, school board members, labor union leaders, education advocates, and religious leaders. Systemic equity strategies were the core focus of Ms. Marten's commitment to ensuring each SDUSD student had access to high quality learning.

The Panasonic Foundation equity agenda found a place in nearly 20 districts during my ten-year tenure as executive director. San Diego Unified, under the leadership of Ms. Marten, was among an even smaller group of districts that registered sustained gains in student achievement and other measurements commonly associated with district, school, and classroom effectiveness.

Ms. Marten is a grounded leader who excels at building coalitions of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and interests to support high standards of performance of staff and students. Her explicit and unequivocal commitment is to ensure that every student has a teacher who has high expectations for learners. As a leader at the school, district and state level, Ms. Marten is known for supporting shared accountability using quantitative and qualitative measures to assess progress. Under her leadership, SDUSD was an early adopter of the University of California eligibility standards as graduation requirements for all students. She faced critics who thought these standards out of reach for historically underserved learners. Ms. Marten, true to her unswerving equity commitment, worked arduously to build the capacity of central office staff, principals, teachers and other educational staff. The results of her leadership are evident by the steadily increasing number of historically underserved students who took advantage of the access, support, and opportunities made possible through the district's renewed confidence in accelerating all learners – ALL MEANS ALL!

Cindy Marten will be an invaluable asset to the U.S. Department of Education and will serve the interests of the nation's children, families, and communities. Her experiences as a teacher, principal, superintendent and state/national advocate for public education combine to produce a leader uniquely qualified for leadership at the national level. Cindy Marten, as Deputy Secretary of Education, will be a tireless advocate for the U.S. Department of Education's efforts to build a comprehensive portfolio that ensures all students and families are best served by the nation's public schools.

Sincerely,



Dr. Larry Leverett,  
Retired Executive Director  
Panasonic Foundation

**Joanne Darlene Martin  
6523 Eldridge Street  
San Diego, CA 92120**

March 11, 2021

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I write this letter in support of Mrs. Cindy Marten's nomination as Deputy Secretary of Education.

My name is Dr. Joanne Martin, President of Sterlington Consulting. Serving as a grantee of The California Endowment funded to work with San Diego Unified School District to promote wellness through our model of school, family, and community engagement, I started working with Mrs. Marten in 2011 at the time she was serving as principal at Central Elementary School in City Heights, CA. Since her promotion to Superintendent, I have continued to work with her in furthering of our common vision for students, engaging stakeholders, addressing challenges, and improving outcomes for all children.

The United States Department of Education will benefit from her unique leadership experience as teacher, principal, and superintendent of a major urban school district. She cares about students, their families, and the teachers, staff, and community who serve them. She gives her whole heart. She understands how to educate students. She is a disciplined and strategic thinker. She knows how to set priorities and clear expectations while maintaining high standards.

Confirming Cindy Marten confirms your value of a quality education for each and every child in America.

Thank you,  
Joanne Martin

## DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION



March 8, 2021

Senator Patty Murray, Chair

Senator Richard Burr, Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Murray and Burr:

I strongly endorse the candidacy of Superintendent Cindy Marten for the post of US Deputy Secretary of Education. Superintendent Marten has proven herself to be an ally in the work to build a more just and equitable society.

Prior to becoming Superintendent of San Diego Unified, Ms. Marten was an instructor, teacher and principal at a school in one of San Diego's most disadvantaged communities, [City Heights](#). There, she established a highly successful biliteracy program, a hands-on school garden program, integrated arts education, quality after-school and preschool programs, a daycare center for employees' children, and [a community health and wellness center](#) for students and their families. The results of her [clear passion and commitment](#) to raise the bar on educational excellence soon became measurable: Central Elementary thrived with improved test scores, high staff morale, a constructive learning community, increased parental involvement, and strong student academic success.

As Superintendent, Cindy Marten has set about eliminating the legacy of systemic racism within public education. She has challenged her colleagues to create an [anti-racist school district](#), and she has put in place concrete policies to improve the academic outcomes for students of color.

A recent [study by the Learning Policy Institute](#) found students of color in San Diego Unified schools academically outperform their peers statewide. A companion study by UCLA's Center for the Transformation of Schools found this [success is not accidental](#), rather it is the result of intentional efforts to provide added counselors and other supports to high needs school communities. San Diego Unified has an equity-based funding model that doubles or triples school-site funding above what the district receives in state allocations for disadvantaged students (LCFF S/C).

Significantly, the increase in achievement among students of color has come at the same time as San Diego Unified has raised its academic standards. San Diego Unified was one of the first urban districts in the state to require students to graduate with enough credits to attend California's outstanding public universities. College readiness for Latinx and African American students has increased by 50 percent at San Diego Unified since the start of those improvements.

Marten has set about to dramatically shift the dialogue within San Diego Unified to create a community that values the experience of all students, including the implementation of a robust program of ethnic studies in the district. Even as a fight over ethnic studies [simmered at the state level](#), San Diego Unified has [introduced new ethnic studies courses, required completion](#) of an ethnic studies course for graduation, created an ethnic studies department and set about training its teaching workforce in the field.

Under Superintendent Marten, San Diego Unified has set out to systematically dismantle the structural barriers to student achievement that have disadvantaged generations of young African American and LatinX students. Marten [took a stand for restorative justice](#) in order to stop the school-to-prison pipeline, before it became politically popular. The district has dismantled unequal discipline policies, reducing the number of expellable offenses from [15 to only the 5 required by Ed Code](#), eliminating [suspensions for willful defiance](#) and [reducing student arrests by school police by 79 percent](#) in the last decade. (The district has also embarked on a commitment to reimagine school police.)

Our nation's schools will have a true champion for justice and equity in Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary for Education, and I am proud to support her.

Sincerely,



Dolores Huerta



**BUILDING YOUNG LEADERS**

March 8, 2021

Senator Patty Murray, Chair

Senator Richard Burr, Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Murray and Burr:

As co-founders of the Cesar Chavez Service Clubs in San Diego, CA, we have had the great pleasure of knowing and working with Cindy Marten for more than a decade. When Cindy was the principal at Central Elementary School in City Heights, we introduced ourselves to her and asked if she would be interested in starting a Chavez Club at the school. She immediately saw the value in a program that would build confidence in her students – many of them immigrants from working families - and inspire them to become leaders. She not only set up a Chavez Club at Central, but she then introduced us to other schools in the neighborhood, including Wilson Middle School where Central students would go after promoting from Central. Cindy took so much pride and joy as she saw her students using their voice to advocate for saving teachers from pink slips and contributing to their community through service projects.

When Cindy became Superintendent, she challenged and then transformed the entire District to reflect her belief that all students are capable of becoming leaders who make a difference in the world. The academic success of students in the District under Cindy's leadership is well documented. But what drives that success is that more than anyone we've ever known, Cindy loves, believes in and will take any and all action necessary to support children. We have been lucky in San Diego for the gift of Cindy's leadership for all our kids. Now the entire nation will share in that gift. We can't help but notice that President Biden has a bust of Cesar Chavez sitting behind him in his desk at the Oval Office. We know Cesar would be congratulating the President for nominating Cindy Marten to help lead our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

Linda LeGerrette

Carlos LeGerrette

Co-Founders, Cesar Chavez Service Clubs

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I applaud and support the nomination of Ms. Cindy Martin as United States Deputy Secretary of Education as I did President Biden's own candidacy.

Through the years I have had many opportunities to observe her values, her interests in education of youth and her compassion and in consideration of their circumstances.

During and after my terms as president of Big Brothers of San Diego, as Chairman of the Health Advisory Committee of the San Diego City Schools, as Treasurer of the Jewish Federation and Board member of the Foundation for Jewish Family Service it has been gratifying to follow Cindy's path of progress and know she will be a valuable addition to the administration.

An excellent choice.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Rubenstein, M.D.

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

It is with much enthusiasm that I write you in support of Cindy Marten to be the next Deputy Secretary for the Department of Education. I have known Cindy for many years specifically as a teacher, principal and our San Diego Unified School District Superintendent. As a former San Diego school board member myself, a California State Assemblywoman, and former Member of Congress on the Education and Labor Committee, I can speak to the Superintendent's accessibility and devotion to educating all our children. I had the pleasure of "shadowing" her on many occasions as I visited schools throughout my legislative career on a regular basis. Ms. Marten's work with teachers and the community is a model for others. The track record of the district through her focused leadership is impressive, particularly as compared to other districts in CA and the country.

I know how serious and dedicated the HELP committee is to hear from President Biden's nominees as he seeks out the best candidates. The educational needs of our students could not be more critical today and this appointment needs someone who is a galvanizing leader whose focus on access and equity is outstanding.

Thank you for your consideration of this remarkable education leader who has the experience, skill and heart to perform for our country in this critical position.

Sincerely,

Susan Davis  
Member of Congress 2001-2020

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

There is no more important nominations in my opinion than the nominations of those who will serve our children. That is why it is without hesitation that I recommend Cindy Marten for a senior position at the US Department of Education. I have known Cindy personally for two years, but I have admired her work as an urban superintendent for over a decade. Cindy has a big heart, is caring, smart and puts children at the center of every decision. She is highly respected by her peers and often sought for her wisdom and guidance.

Cindy is known for her focus on respectful relationships. She understands the importance healthy relationships, relationships built on trust, which matter in order to do the worthy and difficult work of equitable schooling, especially for children who have been historically underserved. She is not afraid of big challenges. She meets those challenges head on with bigger solutions and ideas. She doesn't sit by with the status quo. She seizes every opportunity to make a difference and better the lives of young people by acting with integrity, courage, and urgency. She does not back down from controversy, instead she leans into healthy conflict with integrity, grounded in trustworthiness, as she seeks common ground for consensus. This is especially important for a senior level official at this time in history and the difficulty we've had as a country finding the win win for all of us. The department will need trustworthy leaders with credibility and strong character. She has that. She also has a steady hand and calm demeanor. She is not shaken easily and she is successful because of her ability to listen carefully and actively so all at the table feel heard and valued. With so many divergent and partisan issues, having a discerning ear and a respectful disposition will be an essential quality for any senior leader working to influence policy and systems so that our children can thrive.

I could recount her many accomplishments over her career, but you already know those. What I want to share is the why you should confirm her. To me, there are hundreds who are qualified. What sets Cindy apart is who she is, and why she does this work. She is a public servant for children through and through. Her successful career that spans more than three decades prepares her for this position, but it's her demeanor, character, and love for children that makes her the right choice.

As a lifelong educator, one of the longest serving state chief's in the nation and now a superintendent of a large urban school district in Boston, I know first hand the importance of having a strong advocate for children, especially poor and underserved children at the Department. The last year have been an a challenge like no other for public school educators and having Cindy as a thought partner and champion to help us rebuild back stronger would be a wonderful and welcome addition to all of us hoping for a successful return to school.

If you should need anything further, please do not hesitate to call me at 612-814-2340.

With the greatest respect,

Dr. Brenda Cassellius

Superintendent

Boston Public Schools

Former MN Commissioner of Education 2011-2019

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I am writing this email to express my support for the nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of Education. I was privileged to teach with her at the beginning of her career. It was clear that this young teacher had a real knack for curriculum development, leadership, and good judgment rarely found in brand new teachers. Although we were teaching in a private school at that time, she went on to teach and lead in public schools as well, and showed San Diego how to turn around low performing classrooms and schools. Cindy's experience and appreciation for public, private and charter schools make her someone who can listen to and work with anyone. She keeps her head down and does her job, improving the quality of every classroom, school and district she tackles. Cindy is a practical educator with solid background and solid priorities. Educating students is her top priority. Cindy's slogan for her students and our district has been: Work hard. Be Kind. Dream Big! I believe this slogan fits Cindy completely. San Diegans who were lucky enough to watch Cindy in action or benefit from her expertise—parents, co-workers, and students—know that her gifts will serve our country well.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Susan Stein  
MS in Education  
Educational Therapist  
Reading Specialist  
700 Front Street Unit 1608  
San Diego, Ca 92101

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

Since you have probably already learned a great deal about Cindy Marten's many achievements, work experience, and fine leadership qualities, I thought you might

appreciate hearing about her from another point of view. Her big brother Charley attended

Stein Education Center (SEC) which is part of Vista Hill Foundation in San Diego.

Children with intellectual and developmental disabilities attend as long as they are able to succeed. I worked at Vista Hill for many years and knew about SEC even before then.

Ms Marten has a deep understanding of children with disabilities -- mild to severe. She knows their struggles and the struggles of their families. Cindy is smart, highly respected by parents and teachers, well-liked, friendly, kind, welcoming, sensible, open to hearing from the community; and she puts students first.

I hope this bright, accomplished woman receives your strong vote of approval. She will be of great benefit to the children of the USA. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Ann Levenstein Mound

Former junior high school public school teacher

and parent - age 80

Alfredo Chavez \* Deerhorn Valley Rd.

March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021

Senator Murray and Senator Burr

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I am teacher at Central Elementary and I am writing this letter in support of Cindy Marten's nomination for Deputy Secretary of Education.

Let me start by saying the way Cindy Marten has lived her life is the message she gives to us all-our school mantra-Work hard. Dream big. Be kind. No excuses, is a testament to her core values. She not only, shared these beliefs with everyone, but modeled them as well. She would always say, "There are two sides to every story", and tackled every conflict, problem, or disagreement with an open mind-Ready to listen, acknowledge, and compromise, only when and if, it was best for children. Children are always first for Cindy. She is a true educator and a voice for all children!

As an education specialist, I got to work closely with Cindy when she oversaw our special education department at Central Elementary. Her title was Resource Teacher, but she was really taking on an administrative role as admin designee for all our special education IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings.

During those years, I could see how Cindy was able to create strong relationships with our students and their families and, at the same time, provide unwavering support to our team and school. We all had a common goal and we all wanted what was best for students. She understood that providing a strong education to our students was more than just developing literate members of society, but that in an underserved community like ours, where our students were often marginalized, it meant hope and a chance for more!

Cindy did not stop there. She became our Principal and began the hard work of bridging and bringing community resources to our students and their families. Building partnerships with organizations that provided counseling, therapy, food, health services, before and after school programs -all on campus. Her message put into action.

By dreaming big, Cindy took her message to the district office and became the superintendent of the second largest school district in California. I will let the work speak for itself.

For me personally, Cindy has been an inspiration of believing in oneself, no matter who you are or where you come from. Everyone deserves to dream big and when you work hard, and you are kind... anything is possible!

Sincerely,  
Alfredo Chavez

March 8, 2021

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

My name is Michael Stanley. I have been a teacher at Central Elementary School in City Heights, San Diego, California for twenty years. For ten of those years, I worked by, with and for Cindy Marten. She started at Central as a Literacy Support Teacher. Then became Vice-Principal, then Principal. From there she moved on as the Superintendent of San Diego Unified School District. In my time as a teacher, Cindy Marten is the most inspirational person I have ever encountered.

Cindy Marten has overcome extreme loss and hardships while always maintaining a positive attitude and looking for the good in every situation. She lives by her personal motto of "Work Hard, Be Kind, Dream Big, No Excuses!" When she wanted to know what was causing our first grade students to struggle with reading, she took over and taught a class of students during an interim learning cycle. Even in her role as Superintendent, she would make time to go on the overnight camping trip with our third grade students, often sharing a tent with a group of girls, and leading campfire songs. She has always worked for what is in the best interest in each of the district's shareholders: the students, their families, their communities, and their teachers. She solves problems and doesn't create them. She looks for solutions, and makes things happen. As a principal at Central Elementary, when we needed new window blinds, she found a district budget that funded window blinds. For years our students played soccer on a field of decomposed granite. Cindy Marten created a way for our students to have a turf field.

Cindy Marten listens to her shareholders. She is concerned for their livelihood and health. At Central Elementary she partnered with a local health clinic to have them open a clinic on our campus. She was moved to do this when a former student of mine, at age 8, suddenly died of undiagnosed Sickle Cell Anemia. She did not want any other students in our community to suffer this tragedy. A new Central Elementary School Campus is being built, and the clinic will move with us.

Cindy Marten brings people together and she values diversity. As Superintendent she has been a champion for providing safe campuses for our LGBTQIA students, as well as our black, brown, indigenous, Pacific islander and Asian students. She has marched with me in our city's annual Gay Pride Parade with a contingency of supportive teachers, and students.

Cindy Marten wants all of our students, parents, and teachers to be actively participating, contributing members of society. I work every day to help her achieve this. She is the most qualified candidate to become the next Deputy Secretary of Education, for the United States of America.

Best Regards,

Mr. Michael Stanley

Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten Teacher

Central Elementary School

4063 Polk Avenue

San Diego CA 92105

March 9, 2021

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

We are writing to wholeheartedly support Cindy Marten's nomination for Deputy Secretary of Education. As San Diego educators, we have known Cindy since she was a principal at Central Elementary, where she built a culture of inclusion and success that served as a model for the entire city.

Cindy truly believes that every child can succeed when teachers have the right support and each student has access to learning strategies that meet their needs. She has shown this to be true in San Diego, where test scores of various kinds, particularly the National Assessment of Educational Progress, rose steadily during her tenure.

Under Cindy's leadership, graduation rates rose in the district to 90% and more importantly, high schools reorganized their offerings so that all students could succeed in the challenging courses that are a gateway to higher education.

Cindy understands the inequalities that are present in all large urban districts, where students' experiences can differ widely based on their neighborhood, race, or ethnicity. She is unflaggingly committed to equity, even when it entails confronting bias and dismantling unjust structures.

As charter school educators, we want to stress that in an environment where charters and traditional public schools are often pitted against each other, Cindy always focuses on the quality of the learning in a school rather than its governance structure. She believes that collective bargaining can and should coexist with accountability and high quality teaching, and has shown great success in the difficult task of combining these central elements of our public education system.

She will make an outstanding Deputy Secretary of Education. We recommend her most highly and without reservation.

Sincerely,

Larry Rosenstock,  
CEO Emeritus, High Tech High

Jean Kluver,  
Former Dean, High Tech Elementary Explorer

Jean Kluver

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I support Cindy Marten's nomination for Deputy Secretary of Education.

Thank you,

Marisol Rios

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I am writing in support for the nomination of Cindy Marten for Deputy Secretary of Education. In my role as President of the San Diego Unified School District Board of Education I have known Ms. Marten for over ten years. I met her when she was the principal of Central Elementary School, an inner city high poverty school. A majority of the students are English Language Learners. She had achieved impressive academic results and developed a very stable staff.

Based upon her outstanding service as an elementary principal we hired her as Superintendent of Public Education for San Diego, because we wanted her to bring to scale those results across the district. Many questioned the wisdom of naming an elementary principal as Superintendent, but she proved to be a quick study and mastered leading secondary education and the business side of the district.

Our city had developed high ideals in our Vision 2020 for Quality Schools in Every Neighborhood, but it was Cindy Marten who was able to operationalize those goals and begin the implementation. As a result we have increased the graduation rate and college preparation rate for all students, but especially African American and Hispanic students. An increase in test scores at various grade levels was nationally recognized.

Cindy Marten is a teacher at heart. She chose to take on the challenge of teaching at an inner city school. She only became principal when her principal left. She did not aspire to be Superintendent, but we went to her and asked her to serve. This is similar to her selection as nominee for this post. She has had a vision of the national problems of education while working in the trenches of urban education. She has been a leading voice in the Council of Great City Schools.

Her background as a teacher and as an urban Superintendent has given her the necessary experience for leading the nation as our schools begin to recover from the Covid crisis. Her work ethic, her high level of integrity and her collaborative style will serve her well in the Department of Education. I am sad that she will be leaving San Diego, but she has developed a strong leadership team to carry on the work. She will be a strong voice for all of the nation's schoolchildren.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lee Evans, Ph.D.  
Past President, San Diego Board of Education (term 2008-2020)

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr;

The decision to choose Cindy Marten is such an outstanding one for these 3 reasons.

1. Educators want to be led by individuals who know what the classroom experience entails and have been successful there and Cindy has achieved that.
2. Parents want to be led by individuals who care about each and every child as though they are their own and Cindy does just that.
3. Community members want to know that their public dollars are being spent wisely to provide well -rounded and educated youth for today's increasingly complex market place and Cindy has shown that she does just that.

Every step of her professional journey shows a clear commitment to equity, equality and professionalism. Her integrity and transparency in all of her work has consistently produced exceptional results for the children in her care. Cindy stands tall as a model for all of us in the profession because of her volunteer efforts, her ability to work with everyone, and her tireless desire for every child to be successful.

I am an educator in my 50<sup>th</sup> year of the profession and I have worked with many educators during that time. I have known Cindy when she was a teacher and have watched her grow in her most recent career. That she has been picked is a glorious event for the children, teachers, parents and communities of the US. She will uphold the best practices for all children and challenge all of us to follow suit. I cannot think of anyone more qualified to fill this position particularly at such a challenging time. I support this nomination wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,

Dr. J Cynthia McDermott, Antioch University Dean and proud Fulbright Scholar

J. Cynthia McDermott.EdD.  
Professor and Regional Director  
Chair Antioch University Los Angeles and Santa Barbara

Fulbright Scholar Bosnia Herzegovina 2011  
Fulbright Senior 2018 Wroclaw, Poland

Those in power write the history; those who suffer write the songs  
Frank Harte, Irish songwriter

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I submit this letter in enthusiastic support of the confirmation of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary for the Department of Education. Superintendent Marten is uniquely qualified by her experience, capacity, character and temperament to fulfill the duties of the position and to do so with distinction.

I first met Ms. Marten when I was Superintendent of Public Education in San Diego City Schools from 1998 to 2005. Our team hired her to become a principal in one of the District's most challenging inner city schools. We recruited Cindy because of her proven capability as a teacher and our belief, based on her substantial skill and knowledge of literacy and numeracy, that she come become a key instructional and school leader in our community. She did so in exemplary fashion rising steadily through the ranks both during my tenure and afterwards, subsequently chosen by the School Board as the Superintendent in San Diego in 2013.

Superintendent Marten's success in that leadership role since then has been nothing short of brilliant and remarkable in terms of accomplishment; and has been acknowledged as such at the local, California State, and national levels. She has led a steady rise in student achievement in San Diego that has been documented in detail both by standardized test results and observational assessment. Superintendent Marten has been a force for constructive engagement and unified effort among all stakeholders including parents, teachers, employee unions and community groups. She has achieved this through a persistently moderate and productive stance on the challenges facing public education. Throughout her service, Ms. Marten has demonstrated keen political acumen, coupled with complete integrity, and an unyielding commitment to continuous improvement in teaching, learning and student achievement in public education.

Based on the foregoing, I am pleased to recommend Cindy Marten to you for confirmation as Deputy Secretary without reservation; and would be pleased to respond to any further inquiries you may have regarding her outstanding qualifications for the position to which she has been nominated by the President.

Very respectfully — Alan Bersin

February 14, 2021

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

I am writing to you because Cindy Marten has been nominated to fill a key leadership position in the United States Department of Education. Please consider my recommendation as you review her candidacy.

I believe that Cindy Marten, Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), would be an excellent choice for a senior leadership role within the department. I have known Superintendent Martin for almost a decade during which I have worked with her in forging significant partnerships and initiatives benefiting students, both at the K-12 level and in community colleges.

First and foremost, as the CEO of California's second largest school district and one of the largest in the nation, Cindy Marten has demonstrated her ability to lead a complex organization in a progressive manner, leading to many benefits for students. She has emphasized equity in her work and has dramatically improved the educational outcomes for some of the state's most disadvantaged students. Outpacing every other participating urban district in the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing, the Learning Policy Institute found African American and Latino students within San Diego Unified outperform their peers statewide. Council of Great City Schools leader Mike Casserly has called San Diego the fastest improving district in the nation, and the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools found these improvements to be the direct result of Superintendent Marten's focus on equity-based budgeting.

Superintendent Marten has emphasized partnerships during her work in the SDUSD and has sponsored annual, joint Board meetings of the SDUSD and the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD). The results of this collaboration have been impressive, from establishing middle colleges on the campuses of the SDCCD colleges to closing the achievement gap in basic skills to promoting high levels of student completion and success. She has had an enormous impact on the San Diego region and in the state, providing models for accomplishment and standards for emulation.

Inheriting a system known for rapid turnover in the Superintendent's Office, Marten established a reputation for stability and the ability to lead a complex system collaboratively. Every board member running for re-election during her tenure has been returned to office, and voters supported Marten's plan to issue the largest bond in city educational history. Superintendent Marten also currently oversees an \$8.4 billion bond program, which consistently receives the highest possible marks from Wall Street ratings agencies.

I am most impressed by the fact that Superintendent Marten has demonstrated a strong commitment to equity. The San Diego Unified School District is a majority-minority district (53 percent African American and Latino) and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of all students qualify for free and reduced lunch status based on family income. Being located near the Mexican border, San Diego Unified also has a large population of immigrant students, and Cindy Marten has established close ties with immigrant leaders from the Mexican-American, Somali-American and other New Americans.

I believe that Cindy Marten would be an excellent choice for Deputy Secretary of Education or another senior leadership position, in which role she would bring her experience and expertise to benefit the nation, both by supporting best practices developed by superintendents, principals, and faculty throughout the country and by scaling some of the San Diego Unified School District's successful practices to a national level. From policy to practice, Superintendent Cindy Marten would be an excellent choice.

Thank you for considering my recommendation.

Constance M. Carroll, Ph.D.  
Chancellor  
San Diego Community College District  
3375 Camino del Rio South  
San Diego, CA 92108

March 10, 2021,

Brenda Mitchell  
Union President Paraeducators Chapter 759  
846 Raven Street  
San Diego, Ca 92102

Dear Senator Murray & Senator Burr,

It is great pleasure to support the recommendation of Superintendent Cindy Marten for the position of Deputy Secretary of Education.

I am a 15-year employee with the San Diego Unified School District and a “voluntold” union President of approximately 2500 members.

During these last 4 years as President, I have had the privilege to meet monthly with Superintendent Marten, to discuss issues and work collaboratively to problem-solve solutions to best support students and staff.

Superintendent Marten’s strong communication skills at monthly meetings and school board meetings, have provided many of us a clear and concise understanding of a topic that was brought forth, but too vague to fully understand the intent. During school board meetings Superintendent Marten has handled herself with grace and poise while speakers have yelled and expressed their frustrations and concerns.

As an African American educator, I feel blessed to work in a school district that has a courteous, passionate, and approachable leader. A leader that is working on making important changes to dismantle racism, so that ALL students are treated equally. A leader that knew that having educators such as Dr. Bettina Love, who has been a pioneer in fighting to restore humanity for all students, was who school staff needed to hear the message from. And not only did we hear from Dr. Love, but many of us were also fortunate to attend a webinar that Zaretta Hammond, an education consultant, presented to our school district about what a culturally responsive school district should look like.

Positive change starts with a leader who is not intimidated but courageous to embrace the change that is necessary to allow inclusive instruction, in educational spaces.

Superintendent Marten will be greatly missed in our school district, but at the national level, she will be able to continue to work on policies and implementation of much-needed educational programs. Programs that will benefit, and include so many me. I would be more than happy to discuss our accomplishments while working together, to serve all students.

Sincerely,

Brenda Mitchell  
Paraeducator  
CSEA Chapter 759 President

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse Cindy Marten to be Deputy Secretary of Education. I am a business person\* in San Diego who has worked closely with Cindy when she was the Principal of a school in one of our communities of need and during her 8 years as Superintendent of the second largest school district in California.

Cindy Marten has devoted her 32 year education career to eliminating the legacy of systemic racism within public education. She has challenged her colleagues to create an anti-racist school district, and she has put in place concrete policies to improve the academic outcomes for students of color.

Her success is why Derrick Johnson, the President & CEO, of the national NAACP said; "Cindy Marten is a great pick by the President of the United States. The NAACP is looking forward to working with her on behalf of all students."

Cindy prides herself in being a classroom teacher. 17 years of her career was in the classroom. She was and is committed to academic excellence and more equitable schools and school districts. She worked in the most ethnically diverse and economically struggling communities with extra needs. And, she made a difference!

As you know, the fundamental role of any school system is to educate children, and on that core level, Cindy Marten has succeeded where many others have failed. *The National Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP), which is considered the "Gold Standard" of large scale assessments found that San Diego was the only district in 2019 whose tests scores significantly exceeded the average scores of 27 large districts in both math and English language arts on the fourth- and eighth-grade tests. Since 2003, San Diego student scores in fourth-grade math have risen every year except one.

In addition to outperforming the average for urban school districts, NAEP found that Black and Hispanic student achievement is increasing faster in San Diego Unified than in just about any other urban district in the country.

A recent study by the *Learning Policy Institute* found students of color in San Diego Unified schools academically outperform their peers statewide. A companion study by UCLA's *Center for the Transformation of Schools* found this success is not accidental, rather it is the result of intentional efforts to provide added counselors and other supports to high need school communities. San Diego Unified has an equity-based funding model that doubles and triples school-site funding above what the district receives in state allocations for disadvantaged students.

I am very grateful for all that our students have achieved under Superintendent Marten. As Americans, we can be optimistic about what she will be able to accomplish at the national level but for all children.

I ask that you please support Cindy Marten to be our next Deputy Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

Mel Katz

\*I have worked to improve public education during the last three decades. I started the Business Roundtable for Education for the *San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce* in 1989 and co-chaired the successful \$1.5 billion building/repair bond measure in 1998. In 2012 I founded the charter High School in the new San Diego Central Library.

Greetings, Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr.

**I am writing to you to urge you to please support the nomination of Cindy Marten for Deputy Secretary of Education.**

Cindy Marten has served as Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District since 2013. She directed implementation of the district's Vision 2020 commitment to a meaningful graduation for all students, with the district achieving the highest graduation rate among big-city districts in California and the fastest reading growth of large urban districts nationwide, in 2019.

I do not know an educator who has been so intentional in bringing about equity within public education. Ms. Marten has invested on school facilities improvements in low-income neighborhoods. She has worked hard to eliminate the legacy of systemic racism within public education and, by putting in place concrete policies, she has drastically improved the academic outcomes for students of color. Personally, I applaud Ms. Marten's stand for restorative justice in order to stop the school-to-prison pipeline. Under her leadership, the district has dismantled unequal discipline policies with impressive results.

Ms. Marten is respected and trusted in our community because she has been able to build on her experience as an instructor, teacher and school principal to guide her in making decisions that impact all our children, faculty and staff. Her passion and commitment to educational excellence is unmatched. Ms. Marten is a teacher at heart! Her impact is evidenced in the countless awards and recognitions she has received.

I wholeheartedly believe that Ms. Marten's credentials will ensure educational excellence for all students across our nation. I thank you for your consideration and for supporting this important nomination.

Best,

~Lidia S. Martinez

*Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,*

*My name is Latricia Moore a mother of seven children and as of recent a grandmother of two grandchildren. During this Pandemic I had plenty of time to reflect on life & family. Where I've been and where I am now. I didn't have much help while I struggled as a young mother. My expectations of myself was higher than my abilities at the time. I had seven children, two jobs a husband who worked twice a week and played video games in his spare time. My middle child went to a school near my home while my other children attended Central Elementary where Cindy Marten was the principal. My middle child had a severe case of ADHD at the time I didn't have a clue to what that was, I thought my son was just being rebellious at the age of five and or had separation anxiety. The school that he was attending called child protective services on me thinking he was my only child and his behavior was a sign of abuse in another black home with the father missing. They made many assumptions and insinuations which wasn't the case. When CPS came out to my home and job I felt like a failure and defeated. I thought I was doing something wrong by working two jobs trying to provide for my family. CPS report stated I was a great mother and suggested I have my middle child removed from that particular school it's wasn't a good fit for him. Before that could happen the school kicked my son out. I quickly thought of Cindy Marten a woman who actually cares about the community also cared about my family. She knew my high expectations I desired for my children as well as myself so Mrs Marten WANTED to help. I made the call and asked if I could see her sooner than later it's extremely important, Without hesitation Mrs Marten replied "Yes, is everything OK? I'm free right now" I told her I was on my way to discuss Uziah. I spoke from my heart to Mrs Marten because I trust her, She allowed me to be vulnerable as a mother I had concerns for my son's future which seemed difficult for him considering at the age of five he was kicked out of school. Being discouraged, I explained the situation about my son and Mrs Marten's response was "Bring him to me" I did. Once that happened we found the cause of his behavior. Mrs Marten asked me if I think the pediatrician my be able to find a solution to help Uziah cope with his conditions that were preventing him from learning; because of Uziah behavior in classroom it started disrupting other students so he would have to be removed and this prevented him from recieving the knowledge he needed to grow. I did what was asked of me just to check. Pediatrician wanted to place him on medication but I wanted my son to have a fighting chance so did Mrs Marten, I declined the medication. We found different strategies together to help him be comfortable around his environment. Mrs Marten even took time out of her busy schedule once or twice a week to work with Uziah In a one on one setting which he enjoyed. With anxiety giving him problems a full classroom had his mind racing. Uziah Recieving the resources he needed to help him learn increased our Love for what Mrs Marten does for our community. She doesn't give up!. Mrs Martin and I worked together to better my children's education. Whom she also claims as her children. Mrs Martin has truly found her calling working with all sorts of people and being loved for the amazing work that she provides. I wouldn't trust anyone else for a job such as this.*

*Dealing with children and their parents is a difficult task all by itself for anyone but Mrs Martin handles it with grace and poise. I could tell you an abundance of stories starting all my children about how she impacted my life as well as theirs, Who by the way, still as an adult, loves Mrs Martin so many stories, You'll have to publish that novel. I'm now a business owner recieving residuals from my acting/modeling and motivational speaking experience. My eldest son is working on his acting career*

*Second eldest is one of the top rappers in SanDiego*

*My third eldest daughter college student artist/creator*

*Uziah (middle child) working at a fast food place with ADHD not medicated*

*Youngest son in college*

*Second Youngest daughter in high school*

*Baby girl 5th grade*

*All have been in the presence of a positive and outstanding woman of truth.*

*Thank you Mrs Martin.*

*With sincere Love*

*from all of us.*

*-One big family Latricia*

Greetings Chair Murray,

As a charter leader that has worked with Cindy Marten over the last 5 years, I've found her to be very supportive of our kiddos and programs. We are a 70% free and reduced lunch school and with a similar number of first gen college going kiddos mostly of black and brown demographics.

We are excited about your consideration of Cindy and believe that she will do a phenomenal job on behalf of all kids.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Dr. Cheryl James-Ward

--



Dr. Cheryl James-Ward  
CEO/Chief Engagement & Innovation  
Officer  
Main: (619) 546-0000  
395 11th Avenue, 6th Floor  
San Diego, CA 92101

“Preparing students for a global  
society that we cannot yet  
imagine.”  
- Dr. Cheryl James-Ward

[e3 Civic High was named one of the  
41 most innovative K-12 schools by  
CNN Money](#)

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

We have known Cindy Marten for over 25 years. We first met when she became my (daughter's) second grade teacher. Ms. Marten did a remarkable job in the course of one school year, guiding my daughter from a kindergartner reading level to a 5th grade reading level. And from there she has advanced to principal and then to become the Superintendent of the entire San Diego Unified School District, one of the largest in the country. Cindy Marten puts her heart and considerable talent into every position she has held.

In this world of social media where it is so easy to say negative things about anyone for anything, she nevertheless does an exemplary job at the highest level. San Diego is very diverse, with many minority communities and with many children who are English learners. This is a very difficult group of communities to manage and she does it.

We are sure you are aware of her many accomplishments as teacher, principal and Superintendent.

Please vote to approve the appointment of Cindy Marten to Deputy Secretary of Education.

Arlette

Smith

Dear Senator Murray,

It's an honor for me to write to you about Cindy Marten, my son's former teacher.

In teaching our son, Joshua, we witnessed that Cindy is not only special in her approach to education, but she is also a spectacular role model for parents and children alike. Her methods of endearing herself to children and assisting them in solving problems should be on the curriculum for every teacher in America.

Cindy is invaluable with her knowledge and experience, and possesses the utmost compassion for children in the furtherance of their education. My husband and I sincerely hope that you and the Senate confirm Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of Education. She is an outstanding choice and asset to our country.

Sincerely,

Lynn Bruser

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I am pleased to write in support of Cindy Marten for Deputy Secretary of Education. I have known Cindy for many years when I was president of Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego, and more recently, as Board Chair of Access Youth Academy, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to help minority youth be the first in their families to attend college.

Cindy is a tireless worker, a dedicated advocate for all children and youth, and a visionary leader.

She will be an outstanding member of the Department of Education and of President Biden's team.

Sincerely,

Blair L. Sadler,  
Board Chair, Access Youth Academy

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

Glimmers of hope are appearing as we move out of the darkest days of this pandemic. We are beginning to take stock of all we have learned during the challenges we faced. One of those lessons must certainly be to listen to those on the front lines. We must listen to the scientists when they explain the facts. We must listen to the healthcare workers when they tell us what they need and what we should do to stay safe. And we must listen to the educators explain how to meet the needs of children, the hope of our future.

I fully support the confirmation of **Cindy Marten** to the position of Deputy Secretary of Education. She's a teacher. She puts children at the center of her decisions. She knows how to support teachers so we can help our students dream big and work hard to get there. Knowing the needs of teachers, the needs of the students, and challenges faced by all, especially in some of our most economically challenged communities, gives her the perspective needed to make the biggest difference.

From our earliest days together studying to be teachers and leading a Girl Scout troop in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, I knew Cindy to be a hard worker with the highest integrity. Whether she was planning a camp-out or planning a lesson, Cindy looked at the big picture goals right down to the details that made everything smooth and successful. She considered the needs of the whole group and the individual members of the troop or class. Cindy has a way of seeing the best in everyone. Her faith in others inspires them to work even harder to achieve their goals.

Spend just a few minutes with Cindy and you will leave uplifted, proud of the work you are doing and inspired to reach your next goal. I encourage you to confirm this nomination. Our children, our teachers, and our country will all benefit tremendously.

Sincerely,  
Sally Zeinemann  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher  
Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District  
Middleton, Wisconsin

Dear Chairwoman Murray,

I am writing to you to strongly endorse Cindy Marten's nomination for Deputy Secretary of Education. I am a 36-year-old attorney in San Diego, and Ms. Marten was my second-grade teacher in the early 1990s.

Ms. Marten was one of my most wonderful teachers while growing up. She was kind, caring, and always looked out for me. I distinctly recall her helping me with my spelling and encouraging me to be creative. Since then, I have followed her career closely, and her success speaks for itself.

I was thrilled to see that President Biden nominated Ms. Marten to be the Deputy Secretary of Education. I worked on President Biden's campaign in 2020, and I worked in his Senate office in the early 2000s. I trust the President's judgment, and I trust Cindy Marten. I can say with confidence that President Biden has made an outstanding choice, and that Ms. Marten will be a wonderful deputy secretary.

I encourage you and your colleagues to support her nomination, both in committee and on the floor of the US Senate.

Sincerely,

Joshua Bruser,  
Attorney at Law

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**Joshua Bruser**  
**Attorney at Law**

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

**I am writing to you to urge you to please support the nomination of Cindy Marten for Deputy Secretary of Education.**

Superintendent, principal, vice principal, literacy specialist and author are all job titles Ms. Marten has held in her 32-year career as an educator, but she remains a teacher at heart! And this is what makes her the perfect educator to serve in this important role.

Ms. Marten has worked hard to eliminate the legacy of systemic racism within public education and, by putting in place concrete policies, she has drastically improved the academic outcomes for students of color. Under her leadership, the district has dismantled unequal discipline policies with impressive results. I am proud to serve on her District's Independent Citizens Oversight Committee for Racial, Justice & Equity. I have witnessed, firsthand, how important these issues are to Ms. Marten and I am proud to support her exceptional work.

Ms. Marten has earned the love and respect of our community because she truly cares. She listens and takes action that best fulfills the education needs of our children, faculty and staff. Her passion and commitment to educational excellence is unmatched.

I am confident that Ms. Marten's credentials will ensure educational excellence for all students across our nation. I thank you for supporting this important nomination.

Best,

Dr. Ted Martinez, Jr.

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

I first met Cindy Marten when she was a third-grade teacher at Los Penasquitos Elementary School in the Poway Unified School District. I was Cindy's principal and she was the teacher who immediately and naturally distinguished herself as a gifted, driven, and single-minded advocate for every child at the school – particularly those who were disadvantaged residents of the large federally-subsidized housing complex that was located across the street.

As a classroom teacher, Cindy took personal responsibility for the social and academic success of each of her students, regardless of their language, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. She often spoke about the potential of these students to be college ready, and about her responsibility to make that happen. Cindy saw no difference in potential between students who faced a myriad of societal challenges, and advantaged children who attended privileged elementary schools on the other side of the tracks. I will forever be grateful to Cindy for how she advocated for every child, and for her refusal to accept excuses based upon factors society often considers disqualifying for academic success.

I closely followed Cindy's career after she left Los Penasquitos Elementary School. As she assumed greater administrative responsibilities, her focused, pure commitment to children expanded to teachers, parents, and the broader community. What also became apparent was her uncanny political skills. Cindy naturally brought disparate community and professional factions together around an uncompromising commitment to every child, their teachers, and public education. These skills, coupled with intelligence, drive, and a capacity for prodigious amounts of work, have been key to Cindy's success as superintendent of San Diego Unified School District.

I am strongly supportive of Cindy's confirmation as Deputy Secretary of Education.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you desire any additional information.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey King

## STATEMENT OF SENATOR TIM SCOTT

Thank you HELP Committee Madam Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr for holding this important hearing today.

I cannot say that I am not surprised by the amount of calls, letters, and coalitions against the nomination of Ms. Marten from parents, advocacy organizations, disability groups, school choice coalitions, and certain charter school divisions regarding her suitability for this job.

I am alarmed by the accusations against you, Ms. Marten, and take the concerns of parents and school leaders seriously. Especially, charter school leader's accounts of retaliation and ideological preferences for certain charter schools to expand over others.

- I ask for unanimous consent to submit the letter of opposition from NAACP San Diego Chapter to the Nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.
- I ask for unanimous consent to submit the letter of opposition from Freedom Coalition For Charter Schools to the Nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.
- I ask for unanimous consent to submit the three letters of opposition from Emily Forgeron and Lilly Higman, parents of San Diego Unified School District Students to the Nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.
- I ask for unanimous consent to submit the tweet in opposition from National Parents Union to the Nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.
- I ask for unanimous consent to submit the tweet in opposition from National Charter Collaborative to the Nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.
- I ask for unanimous consent to submit the tweet in opposition from Center for Education Reform to the Nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.



March 18, 2021

The Honorable Senator Tim Scott  
 United State Senator for South Carolina  
 HELP Committee  
 Washington, DC

**Subject: Cindy Marten, Deputy Secretary of Education Nomination**

Dear Senator Scott,

I am writing to you today on behalf of over 250 civil rights and education organizations that comprise our coalition. The Freedom Coalition for Charter Schools (FCCS) exists to ensure the voices of Black and Brown charter school parents, families, and educators are included in national conversations surrounding education. We strongly believe that families should have the right to choose the public school that best meets the aspirations of their families. Across America, we are witnessing something remarkable: Black and Brown educators, community leaders, and parents coming together to lead and open high-performing public charter schools in their communities. This is leading to remarkable outcomes for many of our most underserved students and their families. It is with this and other serious concerns in mind that I write to you to oppose the confirmation of Cindy Marten as deputy education secretary.

As Superintendent of San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), Marten is on record using the same harmful rhetoric used by anti-charter school groups. This is in stark contrast to Secretary Cardona's views on charter schools. Ms. Marten has provided testimony promoting extreme anti-charter school restrictions at a policy level: calling for school districts to be the sole authorizer of charter schools, advocating for districts to set aside student academic needs and deny charter schools citing fiscal impact, and eliminating appeals processes. Without the opportunity to appeal, a critical process in many states, many successful Black and Brown charter schools would not exist today.

Ms. Marten's [position on public charter school authorizing is very harmful](#) to families in our country who need these options most. In many states, charter schools serving Black and Brown communities are only open today because of alternative authorizing processes which permit authorizing from well-regarded colleges and universities, state level organizations, and non-profit community organizations. For example, here in my home state of Georgia, one of the top performing public schools, traditional or charter, Resurgence Hall Charter School was authorized by the state because local districts refused to approve the petition. If Ms. Marten's views are implemented, local districts could ignore the academic needs of their students when reviewing charter school applications leaving no recourse for the petitioner. Evidence is clear that charter schools are successful in making strong academic gains with minority and low-income students. At a time when the focus is on closing academic and equity gaps, we should not be elevating someone who stands in opposition to tools that work in state after state across our nation.

Ms. Marten has attempted to blur the line between her stance on charter school policy in her home state of California, which was very harmful, and her practices as an authorizer of charter schools in her district. These are two different matters. School districts are compelled to follow the law regarding their practices as an authorizer of charter schools. We



FREEDOMCOALITIONFORCHARTERSCHOOLS.COM

are concerned about Ms. Marten's attempt to change the laws in California to be more harmful to charter schools. Will she carry her anti-charter school disposition to the U.S. Department of Education as deputy secretary? Many parents and families in Black and Brown communities rely on public charter schools to provide their children quality education options. The choice of Cindy Marten, an outspoken opponent of charter schools, as deputy secretary stands in stark contrast to Secretary Miguel Cardona who strives to unify the education community by bringing everyone together to focus on having quality schools no matter the type.

Our country is currently focused on defeating the COVID-19 virus and safely reopening our schools, yet again Ms. Marten's actions are contrary to the views of the Biden administration and Secretary Cardona. Ms. Marten fought her own Governor at every turn when he tried to reopen schools safely. She co-signed a letter with other California superintendents threatening Governor Gavin Newsom that if he did not provide school districts more money, they would refuse to reopen SDUSD in Fall of 2020; a time when science experts were advising schools they could safely reopen for hybrid instruction. She also recently penned an additional letter and op-ed in January 2021 criticizing the Governor's \$2 billion proposal and once again threatened to keep her schools shuttered. Over 4,800 San Diego parents signed a petition demanding SDUSD reopen their schools. Yet, Ms. Marten resisted while neighboring school districts reopened their doors and only recently agreed to reopen the schools sometime in mid-April.

There is also concerning reporting that under Ms. Marten's leadership the SDUSD used federal COVID-19 relief funds intended for students to hire a Washington D.C. lobbyist. The funds were used to lobby the federal government for more stimulus dollars versus being spent on students. In addition, the district argued the lobbying efforts would raise the district's "profile as a leader" at a time when all focus should have been placed on our students' academic, social and emotional needs and actually finding ways to safely reopen schools.

In addition to her concerning stance on public charter schools and school reopening, there are alarming racial disparities in SDUSD under Cindy Marten that have not improved during her tenure as superintendent. FCCS stands with the San Diego NAACP in their "firm and resolute opposition" to superintendent Marten's nomination for deputy education secretary because she has led a system that has for too long failed Black and Brown children.

In SDUSD, 62 percent of African American students can neither read nor write at grade level and 72 percent are not at grade level in mathematics. Furthermore, African American students in San Diego Unified were suspended more than three times as often as white students and they made up 18 percent of students suspended, despite making up only 8 percent of the student body. This means suspension rates for Black male students are over 200% higher than their white counterparts. Today, our nation is more divided than ever and current events call for leaders with positive track records addressing racial disparity. We should not be confirming a candidate who clearly does not demonstrate an equitable record within our most underserved communities.

For the reasons listed above, parents and advocates from all over the country have come together to oppose Cindy Marten's nomination. We stand firm in our commitment to work with anyone willing to put the interest of all children at the forefront of their decision making. However, Ms. Marten has proven to miss the bar as it relates to being a unifier and also making strides educating children who do not look like her. It is not very often that you have advocates and organizations from across the country such as the FCCS, National Charter Collaborative, Center 4 School Change, San Diego NAACP, and National Parents Union coming together to oppose a nomination. We urge you to put the interest of all children first and vote no on the nomination of Cindy Marten to serve as deputy education secretary.

Thank you,



RaShaun Holliman  
Executive Director  
Freedom Coalition for Charter Schools

**NAACP San Diego Branch Opposes Nomination of Superintendent Cindy Marten to the Post of Deputy Secretary**

Jan 19, 2021

The NAACP San Diego would like to express its firm and resolute opposition to the nomination of current San Diego Unified School District Superintendent Cindy Marten, to the post of deputy secretary in the federal Department of Education. Waking up to this news as we celebrate the achievements, values, life and sacrifice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is a clear reminder of the way his message and legacy has been sanitized and co-opted by a myriad of agendas and parties. While the NAACP San Diego applauds the Biden-Harris team's selection of Miguel Cardona to serve as Secretary of Education, we're unclear as to what kind of information gathering process was employed that resulted in Superintendent Marten's name being put forward as a nominee for deputy secretary.

During her administration, African-American students and families have not only been systematically deprioritized, but key programs and resources to support African-American student success have been stripped and "abolished." It is our view that she's been an ineffective leader of California's second largest school district and is ill-equipped for the tremendous responsibility of serving the needs of our entire nation's young learners.

Our San Diego community is greatly disturbed by the prospect of Superintendent Marten being elevated to a position of national significance and import, while leaving some of our county's most vulnerable children in increasingly difficult situations. We remain hopeful that we'll be able to continue to share our feedback and perspective as San Diego's oldest civil rights organization, and as a critical touchpoint for years of community complaints and concerns centered on San Diego Unified School District and its leadership.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your attention and consideration in this matter and hopefully I can meet with you to discuss the position of African-American students in San Diego Unified School District and the incredibly important nomination of a deputy secretary of education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francine Maxwell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Francine Maxwell, President

NAACP San Diego Branch

My name is Emily Forgeron, a San Diego resident and native. I am a parent of three young children; two who are students in the San Diego Unified School District. My oldest daughter, who is seven, has been receiving special education services from the District for the last four years; she is autistic and a first-grader in a general education classroom. I am writing because I have very, very serious concerns about the pending confirmation of SDUSD Superintendent Cindy Marten to the position of Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education. My background is in public relations. I've been in the field for many years, so I understand the need for a balanced and fair review of her record yet how "Marten's people" are working behind-the-scenes to control how her reputation and record are being presented. I wanted to reach out and provide a perspective from a parent, who within the last year (since March 2020; pre-Covid school closure) started to pay very close attention to my school district, San Diego Unified, its senior management team (particularly Marten and a few others), and the Board of Education trustees overseeing the District. To be perfectly upfront, I do not understand why Marten is being deemed worthy of this esteemed honor and what is going on behind-the-scenes as far as why she is being supported by so many elected officials and education leaders. It is a mystery to me, and I am shocked and disappointed that she was not vetted appropriately because she would have never received the nomination if that was truly the case.

For me as a parent, my close involvement with the District began in late February (of last year) when I learned from my youngest daughter's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teacher that his classroom would be closing next academic year. He was coming up on his 30th year in the District and had been teaching preschoolers (3 and 4-year-olds - a combination of special needs - primarily diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder - and typical preschoolers, who serve as peer models to help with social skills/services support) for 20 years in his classroom at my daughter's school. He had little info, other than he was potentially out of a job and his classroom was done. He was distraught. From that point on for four months, I fought hard with the help of other parents like myself to save the ECSE program from a major restructuring by the District's Special Education Department. During this process, I uncovered serious, concerning issues in regards to lack of transparency, accountability and communication, among other significant problems with the District. It was truly Marten's lack of oversight - rather neglect of management of her Special Education Department (namely the executive director, her direct reports, and the Chief of Staff) which almost allowed a major restructuring, affecting numerous classrooms and the positions of ECSE teachers, to be in jeopardy, without any formal parent engagement/input or proper stakeholder involvement, ECSE teachers not included as well. If I had not spoken up with a team of other parents (and kept speaking up for months), the Board would have allowed this travesty to just happen without much afterthought. That is how things seem to go with our Board these days. No one is paying attention to anything the District or Marten is doing; no one is accountable to anything and it is mind-blowing. Another parent and I were able to join a District and union-hosted workgroup to come to a consensus on the ECSE program, saving the classrooms and jobs in June 2020, but it was a long and frustrating process with a District that does not really want true parent engagement and involvement. To that end, I have been keeping a close eye on the District and Board ever since and I have learned about the following within the last year, while attending Board meetings, researching, mobilizing with other parents and community leaders, connecting with local media and on and on and on...

The Misappropriation of Title I Funds - \$400K, Retaliation against a Parent:

<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/emails-back-up-mispending-allegation-at-lincoln-high/>  
<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/the-learning-curve-why-the-feds-might-care-about-lincoln-high-mispending/>

SDUSD has mishandled harassment and abuse complaints on Cindy Marten's watch and has worked to keep cases hidden from public view:

<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/critics-say-abuse-harassment-cases-cast-a-cloud-over-martens-nomination/>

A good list of many red flags about Marten and her District senior team in a snapshot/ blog post: [https://districtdeeds.blog/2021/02/09/district-deeds-special-report-nine-nomartens-dep-sec-nomination-disqualification-factors-links-and-reports/?fbclid=IwAR3PRABs5Y1dsZ6cyF\\_Y12XJx\\_hIBjkI9SgavBLODGPX95r2OUAAWeqcuA](https://districtdeeds.blog/2021/02/09/district-deeds-special-report-nine-nomartens-dep-sec-nomination-disqualification-factors-links-and-reports/?fbclid=IwAR3PRABs5Y1dsZ6cyF_Y12XJx_hIBjkI9SgavBLODGPX95r2OUAAWeqcuA)

A recent wrap-up on her tenure and scandals in a podcast:

[https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/news/vosd-podcast-cindy-marten-gets-a-big-promotion/?fbclid=IwAR2UmCWEb\\_OXoNirJkY7VC-DraSUhrd-wVUEkul02hFQbZ9Umlv7IOoQuSY](https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/news/vosd-podcast-cindy-marten-gets-a-big-promotion/?fbclid=IwAR2UmCWEb_OXoNirJkY7VC-DraSUhrd-wVUEkul02hFQbZ9Umlv7IOoQuSY)

Questions on misuse of CARES Act funding:

[https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2021-01-29/sdusd-lobbying?fbclid=IwAR3XHtUCUWcgGLnx-2EvJRU-xSDI-koW\\_r4A\\_r1eSLgvleq4wUVMkUCN7LY](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2021-01-29/sdusd-lobbying?fbclid=IwAR3XHtUCUWcgGLnx-2EvJRU-xSDI-koW_r4A_r1eSLgvleq4wUVMkUCN7LY)

Misleading parents on reopening plans (I'm quoted in this one; I have been a watchdog/source for Kristen Taketa, SDUT's education reporter for the last year):

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2020-11-13/san-diego-unified-board-members-parents-say-district-is-falling-short-in-phase-one-reopening?fbclid=IwAR3Wctr2dDEYBXqHoQOVprtdugoxdLPJ4bKFBKkky-hJDOIbFggX-ij21Mw>

Parents and Disability Non-Profit Fighting for Special Education Services:

Several families of students with disabilities in SDUSD filed complaints because the District repeatedly failed to provide Individual Education Plans for their children. As of February 2021, there were more than [100 lawsuits filed](#) on behalf of students in SDUSD who are eligible to receive special education services. During the COVID pandemic, the District accepted additional funding to support students with disabilities, yet failed to adequately offer instruction and support. The District even attempted to have parents [sign away their rights](#) to their child's appropriate education. They sent out a [waiver form](#) to parents of children with IEPs and tried to pass it off as just some regular paperwork.

[https://www.kpbs.org/news/2021/feb/04/couple-san-diego-unified-denied-special-ed/?fbclid=IwAR3G2GNEg94zsSIHPL0gNn3Otquuvy-SrXeAn6\\_jTjrV48W5fl96xkIowis](https://www.kpbs.org/news/2021/feb/04/couple-san-diego-unified-denied-special-ed/?fbclid=IwAR3G2GNEg94zsSIHPL0gNn3Otquuvy-SrXeAn6_jTjrV48W5fl96xkIowis)

From John Andrew Davenport's Facebook post (about the KPBS 2/4 piece above)

"This is a KPBS article about how San Diego Unified School District knowingly refused to qualify our son as hard of hearing, thus refusing him services guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. We have internal emails of the district personnel stating they knew he qualified based on the federal guidelines, then stating they were going to refuse him anyway. We are filing cases with the Department of Justice and the ACLU. If you know of anyone who has had similar issues with the District we would like to hear about it."

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2020-11-12/parents-say-san-diego-unified-mask-policy-discriminates-against-students-with-disabilities>

<https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/press-release/disability-rights-california-urges-san-diego-unified-school-district-to-take>

[https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/system/files/file-attachments/2020.06.11.SDUSD\\_Ltr\\_.pdf](https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/system/files/file-attachments/2020.06.11.SDUSD_Ltr_.pdf)

Lastly I request you look at the comments - all the comments - on this fluff op-ed piece clearly secured by Marten's PR consultant. The comments - in opposition to her - tell the "true story" of what is really going on with our District and the "results" that are floating around:

<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/opinion/as-superintendent-cindy-marten-succeeded-where-others-failed/>

Thank you for taking the time to consider and review all of this information I have shared with you and my perspective. I will leave you with this quote:

"Retaliatory behavior against those who speak the truth about the realities within the district has been a hallmark of Marten's tenure," Sarah Libby, Voice of San Diego, January 24, 2021.

[https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/news/what-we-learned-this-week-299/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+vosd-all-stories+%28Voice+of+San+Diego%29](https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/news/what-we-learned-this-week-299/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+vosd-all-stories+%28Voice+of+San+Diego%29)

Emily Forgeron

Statement of Lily Higman

I am opposed to the nomination of Cindy Marten as Deputy Secretary of Education.

I am a parent of three students at SDUSD - 7th, 9th, and 11th grades. We moved to the San Diego area in 2011 and was immediately drawn to the Mandarin Immersion program at Barnard Elementary School, which at the time was in the Point Loma Cluster. I was very active in the school from day One, becoming the PTA treasurer. I was subsequently the PTA president twice.

The school was at risk of closing down (though our enrollment had steadily increased) and the Mission Bay Cluster asked us to come and replace one of its cluster schools which was also at risk of closing due to declining enrollment. There was great synergy between Barnard and the IB programs that existed in the MB Cluster. I was very involved in moving the school to the new cluster in 2013 and became the MB Cluster Chair that year. I served another term as chair a few years later.

We were all very excited that Cindy Marten, a teacher, was becoming our new superintendent. She definitely knew what to say and say it very succinctly and quickly - it just all flowed out of her mouth very smoothly. It convinced all of us to give her a chance, even though she had very limited leadership abilities. She had only taught elementary school and was the principal at only the elementary level.

From 2013 to now, transparency and parent involvement became diminished. These are my personal experiences.

I served on the Calendar Committee in 2016, I believe. This is when we were trying to decide on a pre- or post- Labor Day school start. We attended many meetings held in places and times very inconvenient to parents but convenient for district employees. All bargaining units were part of the advisory committee. The parents in the group spent many hours conducting surveys and we were told that Ms. Marten would take the group's recommendations. The results were in - the majority of the advisory committee voted to start school after Labor Day. Of course, the day of the announcement of when school would start, Ms. Marten went against our recommendation simply because, according to

her, some principals objected to this decision. What about all the work we did? What about the voice of the majority?

I have served on the District Advisory Committee for Compulsory Education for about five years. Again, here, the committee, representing all schools, recommended a change to the way the Title One funds were distributed, and Ms. Marten went against this recommendation, even though a majority of the members, again representing all our schools, wanted it.

I also served on the LCAPP committee for about five years, wasting many Saturdays in a library trying to make the parents' voices heard. In the end, when the reports came out, our voices were diminished to almost nothing. This was simply an exercise of checking a box, saying parents were involved by simply being in the room. They just wanted us in the room...they didn't want our input.

Principals, teachers, and parents are "frozen out" if they speak out against the District or her. This behavior comes from the top. I've had teachers tell me that they were no longer invited to meetings because they've spoken out against district policy in order to help students. Decisions are made without parent input - they say there was input by simply putting on a meeting where parents are present. The report doesn't really represent what parents prefer. Or, surveys are done where all results would favor what the District's wants - no options for what the parents want.

The above is all in addition to the reported sexual abuse, misappropriation of funds, misuse of CARES Act funds, etc. I'm sure you know about all of these items.

Ms. Marten is recognized for increasing the graduation rates in the San Diego Unified School District. But, she misuses the data to fit the narrative. I'm sure you've seen that many students were sent to Charter or other schools (or forced to leave the District schools) so that the graduation rates would increase based on a smaller co-hort group. And, an increase in test scores, which is also a farce. I know in our schools, the PTA and PTOs have been raising additional funds to increase the number of teachers or other support programs to help our students. The parents are really making things happen, not Ms. Marten. Site

funds for each school has diminished to almost nothing because so much money is spent at the central office.

Ms. Marten has been bad for our District and we certainly do not want her deciding on policies for all of our schools. As much as I want her out of our schools, I think it's also important that she not be placed in such an important national role.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,  
Lily Higman

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Lily Higman

3/24/2021 (1) The Center for Education Reform on Twitter: "Cindy Marten's confirmation hearing is set for next Wednesday 3/24 at 10am. Visit CER



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The Center for Education Reform @edreform

Relevant people



Cindy Marten's confirmation hearing is set for next Wednesday 3/24 at 10am.

The Center for ... @edreform Following Working to expand education opportunities, so all can achieve the American dream. Led by @JeanneAllen.



Visit CER's Take Action Center app.muster.com/take-action/ZD... to tell your Senator to oppose her nomination for deputy sec @USDOE.

david p. hardy @davidphardy Follow Supports the entire school choice menu! Board member CER, Ad Prima CS, Phila Mission Schools, PCPCS. Founder, Boys' Latin of Phila. Member, FCCS



#NoMarten at Ed!

Trends for you



david p. hardy @davidphardy · Mar 18 "faced criticism from charter school advocates, parent activists, and the San Diego chapter of the NAACP." When those who know her best want her least, it's probably a bad selection. #NoMarten

#ReinventWork Tune in at 10 a.m. PT! Let's reinvent work together Promoted by Slack



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Messages





## The Center for Education Reform Action Center

### Now's the time to ACT! #NoMarten at Ed!

The Senate Committee on Education, Health, Labor & Pensions just [announced](#) that they have scheduled the full committee hearing on the nomination of San Diego Schools superintendent Cindy Marten to be the Deputy Secretary of Education. Urge your senators to vote "NO"! If your [senator serves on this committee](#) we especially need your voice!

- Marten has a historical pattern of allowing the [excessive suspension and expulsion of Black students in San Diego, 3 times higher rates than for White students](#);
- Marten blocked the growth and replication of public charter schools in San Diego, [harming low-income Black and Latino families](#);
- In her 7 years at the helm of San Diego Unified, there have been NO gains in equity. [Cindy Marten doesn't pass the test.](#)

3/24/2021 (1) chartercollab on Twitter: "We stand in solidarity with these parents and educators from San Diego and oppose the nomination of Cind..."

**Tweet**

**chartercollab**  
@chartercollab

# We stand in solidarity with these parents and educators from San Diego and oppose the nomination of Cindy Marten @BeKindDreamBig due to her poor track record with Black students. #NoMarten bit.ly/2ZkrxBm

Messages

4:00 PM · Feb 17, 2021 · Buffer

3 Retweets

**Relevant people**

**chartercollab**  
@chartercollab  
We help single-site charter leaders of color create high-performing schools providing quality education opportunities for students.  
#chartercollab

**Cindy Marten**  
@BeKindDreamBig  
Superintendent of Public Education  
San Diego Unified School District.  
Work Hard. Be Kind. Dream Big!

**Trends for you**

**#ReinventWork**  
Tune in at 10 a.m. PT! Let's reinvent work together  
Promoted by Slack

**Joe Budden**

**#worldfigure**

**#equalpayday**

**the washington post**

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3/24/2021 (1) National Parents Union on Twitter: "Cindy Marten (@BeKindDreamBig) presided over a district in which nearly 10% of Black students ...

**Tweet**

**National Parents Union**  
@NationalParents

Cindy Marten (@BeKindDreamBig) presided over a district in which nearly 10% of Black students were suspended at least once. There are more qualified professionals who can fill this vital @usedgov role. We can't ignore her record on these issues. #NoMarten

Messages

Biden's Pick for Deputy Ed Secretary Faces Senate Panel Amid Unusual Scrutiny ...  
Cindy Marten, the Biden administration's pick for deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Education, faces a Senate confirmation hearing Wednesday amid...  
the74million.org

9:00 AM · Mar 24, 2021 · Twitter Web App

**Relevant people**

- National Parents Union** @NationalParents  
NPU is a network of parent organizations and activists putting children and families at the center of education politics and policy. #ParentPower2020 [Follow](#)
- Cindy Marten** @BeKindDreamBig  
Superintendent of Public Education San Diego Unified School District. Work Hard. Be Kind. Dream Big! [Follow](#)
- U.S. Department o...** @usedgov  
The official United States Department of Education Twitter account. Follows, Retweets and shared links ≠ endorsement. [Follow](#)

**Trends for you**

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Tune in at 10 a.m. PT! Let's reinvent work together  
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**Messages**

[Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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