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**STATEMENT OF TEACH FOR AMERICA CEO ELISA VILLANUEVA BEARD ON THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S REPEAL OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GUIDANCE**

NEW YORK, December 18, 2018—We are disappointed by the Administration’s decision to repeal critically important parts of the Department of Education’s “Rethinking Discipline” policy guidance.

We urged the Administration to keep these student protections and guidelines in place. The policy guidance sent an important message that schools are expected to treat all children fairly. [In a letter to the Department earlier this year](#) we shared our perspective on why these guidelines were so important to both student achievement and civil rights.

Student discipline policies can have a significant impact on student academic achievement. Research shows that out-of-school suspensions have a negative impact on student achievement. And new data shows the disparate impact of school discipline policies: Black students, boys, and students with disabilities are disproportionately disciplined in K-12 public schools.

It is not fair and it is not acceptable that whether a child is disciplined—and how severely—often depends on the child’s race or disability. We need to do more to ensure that all students have an opportunity to obtain an excellent education, not adopt policies that may hold them back.

The Department of Education’s guidance was part of an effort to ensure that every student has the chance to receive an excellent and equitable education. Rolling back the commitment to these protections is a mistake.

We can do better. We can adopt discipline policies and practices that help students and teachers be safe in their classrooms and at the same time advance equity rather than contribute to inequitable outcomes.

Teachers and school leaders will continue to work to lead their classrooms, schools, and systems in a way that promotes safety, protects the civil rights of students and ensures educational excellence and equity. Unfortunately, the Administration’s decision today makes their work harder.

About Teach For America

Teach For America works in partnership with urban and rural communities in more than 50 regions across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today Teach For America is a force of nearly 60,000 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they’re reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence, and to lead. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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