

Letters to a President

Winner Year 12 – Hannah Beitchman

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you as I passionately believe that the US education system is in a crisis which desperately needs addressing. The US currently ranks twenty-sixth in education worldwide, with schools across the country massively underfunded to the tune of 150 billion dollars. Stories of schools close to collapse, data showing 94 per cent of teachers spend their own money on school supplies for students, 53 percent of schools are in need of renovations or repairs. The evidence is clear. I am writing to you today, to insist that funding towards education be increased and prioritized for maximum impact.

I think we can agree a good education is key to economic opportunity and a higher degree of happiness. Yet in schools where even basic supplies and lunches cannot be provided, teachers are abandoning shrinking salaries, leading to growing class sizes. In sum, schools are no longer able to give the necessary support and nurturing to students which is crucial to their role.

At its core a good education ensures the sustainability of our democracy, encouraging citizens to think broadly about their responsibilities to society. In contrast to content on social media, a broad school-based education can equip citizens with the ability to see right and wrong, and all sides of an argument. The rise in extremist opinions, empowered by social media, seems to be growing, as our investment in education shrinks. We have seen the very real consequences of this lack of education in recent events – appalling and ignorant reactions to mask wearing during the pandemic, suspicion towards the vaccine and the shocking rise in Anti-Asian crime in the US.

Here are the priorities which I believe your government should focus on:

1. Investment in thousands more teachers to allow for smaller class sizes which are proven to deliver better results for students.
2. Investment in education infrastructure - students should have equal access to quality classrooms, sports centers and nutritious meals.
3. Investment in single mothers - 20 percent of children live with single mothers so supporting these caregivers with education will enable participation in the economy and ensure that their children are well taken care of.
4. Investment in education for all. With technological innovation changing rapidly, education needs to be available for all, irrespective of age. Government investment and partnerships with private initiatives should ensure any citizen can have the right to be educated or re-educated.

To summarize, education will deliver the highest possible return investment our country can make, with the maximum number of social and economic benefits for our society for every dollar spent. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take the time to consider these recommendations and

consider the lives of students all over America. As we emerge from the Covid pandemic, now is the time to reform our education system.

Thank you for your consideration,