

Prepared Remarks by Secretary DeVos at the 4th U.S.-China State  
and Provincial Education Leaders Dialogue

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China is an important partner and the U.S.-China cooperation based off of mutual respect and shared interests will help ensure the world's stability and future prosperity for decades to come. Education and workforce development has benefited from U.S.-China Dialogue and we look forward to continuing that dialogue today on career and technical education, apprenticeships and business-education partnerships.

The American academy embodies many essential ideals: free and open discourse, unfettered access to research topics, respect for intellectual property, and high standards of academic honesty. These ideals have been developed over centuries and are integral to the success of U.S. higher education. They are also important values that should be honored when we engage in international collaboration and exchange. We hope we can count on China's support for greater reciprocity in our relationship.

It pleases me to see continued people-to-people exchanges, meaningful collaboration, and new friendships blossoming between our nation's youth, academics, business leaders and in government. We look forward to continuing these exchanges in an open manner.

Education and the economy are indivisible, especially given the interconnectedness of the world today. In the United States, we are focused on expanding pathways to success. We recognize that a dynamic and changing economy requires dynamic and changing approaches to education.

How we approach education must reflect the realities of today's economy, with an eye toward tomorrow's opportunities. We simply don't know what the economy will look like 10 years from now, or even five years from now.

**Education and workforce development has benefited from a successful history of U.S.-China Dialogue and we look forward to cooperating on career and technical education and apprenticeships for preparing a 21st Century workforce.**

Students must be prepared to anticipate and adapt. They need to acquire and master broadly transferrable and versatile educational competencies like **critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity and cultural intelligence**. These are essential — but often unaddressed — skills for students regardless of their pursuits.

Students need multiple and flexible pathways to pursue the opportunities that our global economy offers. This includes partnerships with business leaders and entrepreneurs across industries, many of which are multinational, and so require globally adaptable skillsets and recognition of mutual interests between our countries to tackle international challenges, one of which is workforce development for all ages, as well as our own national interests.

Students need learning environments that are agile, relevant, exciting. Students need customized, self-paced, and challenging life-long learning journeys. Ultimately, what students need is freedom! Freedom to learn differently. Freedom to explore. Freedom to fail, to learn from falling and to get back up and try again. Students need freedom to find the best way to learn and grow... to find the exciting and engaging combination that unlocks individual potential.

Education—and the freedom to pursue it—is for everyone, everywhere. It's not just an American "thing." Such freedom is a human thing.

Education is indeed the great equalizer. It is the engine of strong economies, and it is the key to free and secure societies.

We are pleased to work with you and to learn from each other and from our friends around the globe about ways to better prepare our students, to find innovative ways to expand education freedom and opportunities for students, and to collaborate on improved career and technical education and apprenticeships.

Much work remains to be done and we look forward to the opportunity to learn from—and with—China. We look forward to continuing to support the meaningful collaboration, and new friendships blossoming from people to people exchanges between Our nations.