

Dear Professor Diane Ravitch,

On behalf of the Executive Board of the *Greek Primary Teachers' Federation (DOE)*, the only trade union which represents all of the approximately 65,000 teachers serving in public kindergartens and primary schools in Greece (ages 4 to 12 years old), I would like **to invite you**, as the sole presenter, to an **online event** that we will organize and I refer to in detail below.

We are a national federation, with 132 active Teachers' Unions as our members operating locally. In total, as I've already mentioned, in this way, we represent over **65,000** teachers who are our active members, that is **75% of all teachers working in primary education**.

2022 is a milestone for the DOE as we celebrate 100 years since our foundation in May 1922.

Education in our country has always been underfunded. Teachers' salaries have been drastically reduced over the last decade (the average annual salary is €14,000), and are among the lowest ones in the European Union in purchasing power units. We are experiencing a chronic lack of meaningful dialogue on the part of the State.

In recent years we have experienced an unprecedented attack through a series of laws leading to the deconstruction of public education and its commercialization.

Specifically, with the latest laws and especially with Law 4823/2021, which has the false title "Upgrading the school, empowerment of teachers and other provisions", the following measures are introduced:

- Public Schools will be graded: (a) based on the performance of their students in a system of national examinations; (b) by external evaluators who will have both educational and administrative authority, subject to a complicated hierarchical system of Counsellors - Supervisors - Regional Supervisors - National Supervisor, which parallels the administrative hierarchical scale; (c) by the "self-evaluation" of the school units themselves, which is imposed on 9 axes and 43 (?) different scoring indicators.
- Schools will be looking for sponsors for their additional funding, at the same time as our country in terms of education funding is ranked very low, both in the EU and in the OECD.
- The so-called "Standard - Experimental" schools are tripling (with the aim to be ten folded by 2025) In these schools pupils are admitted with examinations of increased requirements and teachers are subject to a differentiated legal and employment status. This situation is a direct counterpart to charter schools in the US.
- Measures are foreseen to strengthen private educational structures at all levels of education (private schools, private vocational institutes, private colleges).
- There will be a 20% reduction in enrollment in higher education.

- Increased requirements, through a complicated subject based digital system, for the national upper secondary education examinations are established.
- State funding for technological equipment for students is replaced with low-funding vouchers.
- Curricula are rearranged in order to serve an ever-expanding education industry, which ruthlessly profits.
- The de-democratisation of school governing institutions is promoted, drastically reducing the powers of the Teachers' body of the school unit and strengthening the role of a Headmaster - manager, making in this way a one- person decision-making body for the school.

We believe that the above measures:

Will undermine Public Education as a whole, as well as its uniform, public and gratuitous nature that is mandated by the Constitution of our country.

They will create cultural and class-based gradation of schools.

They will be to the detriment of our students, especially to those from vulnerable social and economic backgrounds, instilling into them low expectations for their future.

They will gradually remove the state from its constitutional obligation to adequately and equitably fund public education for all students.

They will lead to a value shift in the social conception of education, from a public good for all to an individual product acquired through fierce individual competition and corresponding economic power.

We are therefore fighting a struggle for Public Education, for the defense of the Public School, and for the defense of our students.

We know some of your work on education (e.g., Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and Its Danger to America's Public Schools) as well as your struggles against standardized high-stakes testing, against the privatization of public schools, whether through private charter schools or private school vouchers, your support for the movement for a powerful public education in the U.S., and for the importance of a professional teacher in a democratic public school.

That is why we ask for your help and your contribution of your knowledge, wit, experience and global scientific recognition.

In order to be able to make wider known to the society our views and demands, we want to organize an **Online Event - with you as a presenter** - to tell us your views on the impact of the evaluation system of schools, students and teachers over the last 20 years in your country and even internationally.

We would like to organise the Web Event in January 2022 (indicatively we suggest Sunday 23 January 2022), but **our invitation is open to any date** you are able and kind enough to contribute to our effort for the Public Education.