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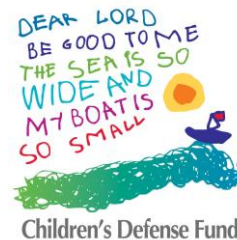
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**Marian Wright Edelman, Children's Defense Fund President
Responds to New Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education**

Public School Systems Responsibilities under the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Washington, D.C. — “With opportunity gaps widening for poor children and children of color, new guidance from the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education offers new hope and protection from discrimination,” said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children’s Defense Fund. “For the first time in 13 years, the department now makes clear that states, school districts and schools must provide education resources that are equally available to all students without regard to race, color or national origin. It stops schools and school districts from discriminating in their allocation of academic programs and extracurricular activities, teachers and leaders, school facilities and technology and instructional materials and offers steps to level the playing field. This is the unfinished business of the Civil Rights movement and a giant step forward for poor children, often children of color, currently taught at higher rates by inexperienced, unqualified or out of field teachers and with far fewer resources than their wealthier peers. Our job now is to ensure that children truly benefit.”

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The [Children's Defense Fund](http://www.childrensdefense.org) Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.