



# National Title I Association

a National Association of State Title I Directors

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February 27, 2012

The Honorable

John Kline

Chairman, House Committee on Education  
and the Workplace

US House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The National Title I Association shares many of your concerns with finding the right balance between equity, federalism and education. We agree that that the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) needs to be changed. While NCLB focused the United States on closing the achievement gap and assuring that no group of students was denied the opportunity to achieve in reading/language arts and mathematics, the Act's consequences labeled too many schools as "failing" and did not provide the flexibility needed for states to target resources and support to the schools that needed them the most.

We applaud your willingness to make your draft bill public. The fact that you have encouraged review, made your staff available for discussion as well as holding a legislative hearing on the bill's perspectives has helped us to understand your bill's emphasis and intent.

As we have reviewed the Student Success Act (HR 3989) we are concerned with several key ideas. Federal education policy must support states and local school districts in providing access to a high quality education for all students. We believe that there must be a continued emphasis on children who live in poverty, whose native language is not English, who have exceptionalities, and who are low achieving at all grade levels, including pre-school. To achieve these goals, the federal government should not reduce the focus on these high-need populations, which we think, unfortunately, this bill does.

We ask that you revise the bill to emphasize helping schools to impact the education of high-needs children, especially those in high-poverty schools and districts. PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), the major international study looking at student performance, found that the United States was one of three nations in the study that did *not* have a significant focus on high-needs students. When resources are concentrated we make a big difference in the lives of children. Colorado, for example, has found that when Title I allows \$1200 for each student that their success is significant and lasting. In addition, we know that funding for direct services is only part of the formula for success. We believe that:

- *Students must meet high academic standards* to maximize their opportunities for success and for the nation to have continued success.
- *Teachers must be supported* throughout their careers to continue to improve instruction for high-need students.
- *Accountability measures* must provide ongoing feedback to help improve schools and instruction.
- *Federal education funding* must continue to support the high-needs students, including those living in poverty, those whose first language is not English, those with special needs, those who are low-achieving, and those who need support in school readiness.
- *States and localities* must also be required to use federal funds in addition to their own funds and not be allowed to reduce their effort.
- *Title I and IDEA* must improve their coordination to reduce the expensive and duplicative data collection, overlapping, and at-odds requirements in both programs.
- *Pre-school programs* must link more effectively to kindergarten and elementary school programs.

While greater flexibility for states and localities needs to be a part of any reauthorization, the balance between state and local flexibility and a national emphasis on high standards and student achievement cannot be lost. The purpose of federal education policy is to help states and localities to improve the education of high-needs students. All policies must be measured against that goal.

Finally, it is important to understand that education does not benefit only the individual. Education is a part of a nation's and community's investments that build not only cohesive societies but also effective economic engines for all. We ask that you continue your effort to change NCLB by focusing our national resources on high-need children so that our entire society may benefit from their individual abilities.

Sincerely yours,

*Richard Long*

Richard Long, Ed.D.  
Executive Director for  
Government Relations

C: The Honorable George Miller