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Senator Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 14, 2015

Dear Senators,

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, I write to relay our position on the myriad of amendments as filed for consideration today as the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee marks up the *Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA) of 2015*. Thank you for your continued leadership on ESEA reauthorization. Our response to the amendments is in follow up and complement to our [letter of endorsement](#).

Please note that adoption of any amendment related to portability or vouchers will revert our support for the overall bill.

| Amndt # | Sponsor | Summary | AASA Position |
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| Title 9.1 | Alexander | All SEAs and LEAs would be required to conduct background checks on all school employees. Funds from the underlying bill can be used to improve background check procedures; expand registries searched when conducting checks; provide training for educators on how to recognize, respond to and prevent child abuse; implement policies to ensure SEA or LEA doesn't transfer an employee that it knows has engaged in sexual misconduct; etc. | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Alexander | States would be allowed to use Title I dollars to give grants LEAs based on the number of eligible children enrolled in public schools to ensure that funding follows low-income children to the public school they attend. | Oppose |

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| Title 4.1 | Alexander | Would add a new section called "Safe Schools" that includes statistics about the negative impact of bullying; a Sense of Congress that SEAs and LEAs should address bullying and harassment in public schools; and allows SEAs and LEAs to use Title IV funding to establish, implement or improve policies and procedures that prevent bullying or harassment. Such policies may include addressing bullying or harassment based on characteristics include a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Baldwin (Cassidy, Casey, Whitehouse, Franken) | Would provide competitive grants to states to work with institutions of higher ed to improve the quality, validity or reliability of state assessments; to develop or improve assessments for students with disabilities; to measure student growth over time; to evaluate student achievement through new assessments, such as competency-based models, computer adaptive test, or portfolios. States can also use funding under this section to audit their state assessments. | Support |
| Title 1.2 | Baldwin | Would require the reporting of the number and percentage of students attaining career and technical proficiencies on state, local, and school report cards. | Neutral |
| Title 1.3 | Baldwin (Whitehouse) | Would provide grants to states to strengthen support for children from birth through graduation by increasing the number of children who receive early interventions for risk factors associated with not graduating; who benefit from better coordination of federal, state, local education programs; who successfully transition for PreK to kindergarten, kindergarten to elementary, etc.; who graduate prepare for work or college; who earn college level credits or professional certificates. | Neutral |
| Title 1.4 | Baldwin (Whitehouse, Franken) | Would provide grants that support comprehensive high school redesign, esp. for underserved students, that increase graduation rates, provide opportunities for | Neutral |

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| | | students to earn college credits, increase readiness to go into STEM degrees, increase postsecondary enrollment and graduation, and others. | |
| Title 1.5 | Baldwin (Warren) | Would require states to assess disparities in Title I funding equity among its districts to ensure equal access to: quality teachers and principals, high-quality PreK, rigorous course work, safe school climates, well-rounded education that includes arts and physical activity, availability of up-to-date technology, good school facilities, instructionally appropriate class size, school library programs, school counselors and social workers and nurses. | Oppose |
| Title 1.6 | Baldwin | Would specify the category size requirements to be used for reporting and accountability. Must not exceed 15 students and must yield statistically reliable information. | Oppose |
| Title 2.1 | Baldwin | The term "workforce critical subject" would mean academic or career/tech subject, including STEM or any subject identified by state as being critical for its emerging workforce. | Neutral |
| Title 4.1 | Baldwin | Would provide grants to LEAs and CBOs to improve physical education programs. | Neutral |
| Title 5.1 | Baldwin (Hatch) | Would provide grants to SEAs, LEAs, and schools to use technology to improve college and career ready, skills of teachers and school leaders, and increase effectiveness of entire education system. | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Bennet | Starting 2017-18, LEA would only be eligible for Title I funds if it demonstrates that the combined state and local per pupil expenditures in each school served under Title I were not less than the average combined state and local expenditures for those schools not served under Title I. | Oppose |
| Title 1.2 | Bennet (Franken) | Would strike several references to states measuring "academic growth" | Neutral |

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| Title 1.3 | Bennet (Casey, Whitehouse) | States would make federal and state assessments required for each school year publicly available and provide parents information about those tests, including information on subject matter, number of tests, length of test, whether it's for federal or state requirement, etc.; Same for LEAs | Neutral |
| Title 1.4 | Bennet | SEAs would assess its data collection system for collecting data from LEAs and change the system in order to decrease the burden on LEAs | Support |
| Title 1.5 | Bennet | Assessments adopted would require students to spend on average less than 3 percent of the average instructional time on such assessments. | Support |
| Title 1.6 | Bennet (Murphy) | SEAs would be required to identify lowest-performing 5 percent of schools. | Oppose |
| Title 2.1 | Bennet (Casey) | Would add language to provide opportunities for a cadre of effective teachers to lead evidence-based professional development for their peers; to provide career opportunities for teachers to grow as leaders, including hybrid roles that allow teachers to voluntarily serve as mentors or academic coaches while remaining in the classroom; and to provide training and support for teacher leaders and school leaders who are recruited as part of instructional leadership teams. | Neutral |
| Title 2.2 | Bennet | Would allow funds to be used to create teacher and principal preparation academies. | Neutral |
| Title 4.1 | Bennet (Franken, Whitehouse) | Would provide funding to help SEAs and LEAs implement and enhance family engagement programs. Would also provide grants for Statewide Family Engagement Centers for parent education or family engagement programs. | Neutral |
| Title 4.2 | Bennet | Would include financial literacy and federal financial aid awareness in LEA activities | Neutral |
| Title 4.3 | Bennet | Would create in ED an advanced research department that pursues breakthrough research in educational technology to improve student achievement. | Support |

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| Title 5.1 | Bennet (Hatch) | Would provide grants to SEAs, LEAs, consortiums of states, or LEAs and SEAs working with a nonprofit, business, CMO, or institution of higher ed to develop, implement, replication, or scaling up of rigorous testing of entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students. | Neutral |
| Title 6.1 | Bennet | Would create a pilot program that gives LEAs the flexibility to consolidate federal, state, and local funding to create a single school funding system based on weighted per pupil allocation for low-income and disadvantaged students. | Oppose |
| Title 8.1 | Bennet | Would establish new threshold payments for LEAs: For enrollments less than 1,000 students, the percent use to calculate threshold payments wouldn't be less than 40 percent; for enrollments more than 999 but less than 1,100, the percent used to calculate threshold payment wouldn't be less than 30 percent; for enrollments more than 1,100 but less than 1,200, the percent used to calculate threshold payments wouldn't be less than 20 percent. | Neutral |
| Title 9.1 | Bennet (Collins) | Would require the secretary of education to engage in outreach to rural school districts regarding opportunity to apply for competitive grants; allows rural LEAs to submit consolidated plans through their ESA | Support |
| Title 9.2 | Bennet | Would allow funds in Title IX to be used for high-quality early learning programs. | Neutral |
| Title 11.1 | Bennet | Would provide funding for health, education, workforce training and other social issues to be co-located in public elementary schools and secondary schools. | Support |
| Title 11.2 | Bennet (Baldwin) | Would establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in ED to provide input to the secretary of education on the impact of proposed education policy changes to rural schools and communities. | Support |
| Title 2.1 | Burr (Bennet) | Adjusts Title I formula to increase weight of poverty | Neutral |

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| | | factor | |
| Title 2.1 | Casey (Baldwin, Franken) | Would provide grants to develop, produce and distribute education and instructional video programming for preschool and elementary school students and their parents. | Neutral |
| Title 2.2 | Casey (Baldwin, Warren) | Would define a "profession-ready" principal as one who has an advanced degree or other appropriate credential; has completed principal or other school leader preparation program; has demonstrated instructional leadership, including the ability to collect, analyze and use student learning data; has demonstrated proficiency in professional recognized leadership standards. Would define "profession-ready" teacher as one who has completed teacher prep program and is certified and licensed by the state; has demonstrated content knowledge in subject they teach; has demonstrated teaching skills, such as through a teacher performance assessment or residency program. | Neutral |
| Title 2.3 | Casey (Baldwin, Murphy, Mikulski) | Would restore hold harmless provision for formula grant under Title II, part A. | Neutral |
| Title 2.4 | Casey | Would restore an adjusted hold harmless provision for formula grants in Title II part A. | Neutral |
| Title 4.1 | Casey (Kirk, Murray, Baldwin) | Would include bullying as part of the definition of "harassment," and would require states that receive funding through Title IV to establish policies to prevent harassment and bullying, and collect and report annual incidences for each school. | Neutral |
| Title 4.2 | Casey (Baldwin) | Would provide grants to SEAs that partner with nonprofits, LEAs, institution of higher ed, museum or other education service to improve student achievement by giving them access to high-quality instruction in various education subjects, including arts, civics, economics, environmental studies, financial literacy, foreign languages, etc. | Neutral |

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| Title 4.3 | Casey (Murphy) | Would create a grant program for LEAs that wish to reduce exclusionary discipline practices in elementary and secondary schools. | Neutral |
| Title 2.1 | Cassidy | Would allow SEA and LEAs to use funding to train teachers and principals on understanding and identifying early indicators of students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities and conduct early intervention. | Oppose |
| Title 2.2 | Cassidy | Would specify that student with dyslexia and other learning disabilities have resources and supports they need to succeed. | Oppose |
| Title 2.3 | Cassidy | Would eliminate literacy for all (Title II, part D) | Neutral |
| Title 5.1 | Cassidy | Would provide an exemption from use of a weighted lottery for schools that specialize in a specific learning disability and use evidence-based curriculum specific to the learning disability. | Oppose |
| Title 5.2 | Cassidy | Would provide an exemption from use of a weighted lottery for schools that specialize in a specific learning disability and use evidence-based curriculum specific to the learning disability | Oppose |
| Title 1.1 | Collins (Sanders) | Innovative Assessment and Accountability Pilot | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Franken | Academic assessments will evaluate if student is on grade level; what grade level they perform at; rule of construction to not prohibit state computer adaptive assessments. | Support |
| Title 1.2 | Franken | to establish a grant program for the educational stability of children in foster care | Oppose |
| Title 1.3 | Franken | Expand disagg to include Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students | Oppose |
| Title 4.1 | Franken | reinstate the existing Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program in Title IV | Support |
| Title 7.1 | Franken | To establish a grant program to support schools that use Native American and Aslask Native languages as the primary language of instruction | Neutral |

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| Titles ALL | Franken (Baldwin and Casey) | Comprehensive federal prohibition against discrimination and bullying in public schools based on sexual orientation or gender identity | Oppose |
| Title 2.1 | Franken (Cassidy) | Grant programs to pay for AP/IB tests and to create/support accelerated learning programs and ensuring access, quality staff | Support |
| Title 2.2 | Franken (Kirk, Murray, Baldwin) | Improving STEM instruction/achievement; STEM Master Teacher Corps | Neutral |
| Title 1.1 | Isakson | Nothing in federal law preempts state/local law re: parent/guardian decision on child's participation in statewide academic assessments | Neutral |
| Title 1.2 | Isakson | To strike the 1% maximum on the number of students assessed using alternate assessments | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Kirk | Looks to expand calculation for allocating resources in an equitable manner to include access to support personnel, well-rounded education, etc; expands reporting to include disaggregation by subgroups on each of the indicators | Oppose |
| Title 2.1 | Mikulski | Amends Title II to include the Javits Gifted/Talented Students Education Act of 2015 | Neutral |
| Title 4.1 | Murkowski (Franken, Sanders, Cassidy, Collins and Baldwin) | Amends Title IV to reinstate 21st Century Learning Communities, allows extended learning time AND after-school | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Murphy | Amends Title I as it relates to interventions and support strategies; mandates that schools not making the state standard for 2 yrs will be identified; | Oppose |
| Title 1.2 | Murphy (Baldwin, Casey Warren) | Improves early education by allowing grant recipients to use funds to grow educator salary level | Neutral |
| Title 1.3 | Murphy | Amends Title I to ensure state policy works to reduce threats of physical/mental abuse related to seclusion/restraint | Oppose |
| Title 1.1 | Murray | Amends Title I to allow for data collection for military-connected students | Neutral |
| Title 4.1 | Murphy (Casey) | Use of evidence-based practices to address juvenile delinquency | Neutral |

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| Title 4.1 | Murray | Provides education-related services to LEAs and institutes of higher ed dealing with a violent or traumatic crisis | Neutral |
| Title 5.1 | Murray (Isakson, Casey, Kirk) | Amends Title V to authorize early learning alignment and improvement grants | Neutral |
| Title 1.1 | Paul | Amends Title I to allow for state option for Title I funds to follow a low income child for public or private school | Oppose |
| Title 1.2 | Paul | Amends Title I to allow for state option for Title I funds to follow a low income child for public school (portability) | Oppose |
| Title 1.3 | Paul | To ensure that no state is required to adopt the Common Core State Standards | Neutral |
| Title 4.4 | Paul | Amends Title IV to support evidence-based practices re: juvenile delinquency | Neutral |
| Title 6.5 | Paul | Amends Title VI to give states authority to combine federal funds | Oppose |
| Titles 1-3.1 | Sanders | Replaces 'such sums' language for Part A of Titles I, II and III with actual approps caps | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Scott | Creates public and private school portability in Title I | Oppose |
| Title 11.1 | Scott | Expands DC Voucher program | Oppose |
| Title 11.2 | Scott | Creates IDEA voucher | Oppose |
| Title 1.2 | Warren | Amends Title I relating to the goals of the State accountability system; requires accelerated academic gain from those farthest from goal, and sets multi-year grad rate goal of 90% | Oppose |
| Title 1.4 | Warren | For schools pursuing waiver to run school-wide program, provides that waiver must be SEA approved | Oppose |
| Title 1.5 | Warren | Requires SEAs to explain why methods are reasonable for effectiveness | Neutral |
| Title 1.6 | Warren | For schools pursuing waiver to run school-wide program, provides that waiver must be SEA approved; eliminates lang re: LEA allowing school to do so | Oppose |
| Title 5.1 | Warren | Supports program designed to explore the effectiveness of services/programs that increase student awareness of and access to post-secondary | Neutral |

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| | | education | |
| Title 1.3 | Warren (and Murray) | Amend state report card requirements to allow for cross-tabulation | Neutral |
| Title 1.1 | Warren (Baldwin) | Amends Tate I to ensure that schools with low graduation rates are identified as in need of intervention and support | Support |
| Title 1.1 | Whitehouse | Clarifying the role of community partners | Support |
| Title 11.1 | Whitehouse | Background checks for school employees | Support |
| Title 2.1 | Whitehouse | Improve literacy and college/career readiness through effective school library programs | Neutral |
| Title 5.1 | Whitehouse | Grant program to support SEAs and LEAs to transition/scale up innovation schools | Oppose |
| Title 5.2 | Whitehouse | Grant program to support SEAs and LEAs to transition/scale up innovation schools; includes 'such sums' language; advisory board (vs governing board); 6% teacher support (vs 75%) | Oppose |
| Title 1.2 | Whitehouse (Baldwin) | Aims to help middle-grade students who are at-risk of dropping out of high school transition to and complete their secondary schooling | Neutral |
| Title 5.3 | Whitehouse (Casey, Collins, Warren) | Amends Title V to establish a program for literacy and arts education | Neutral |

In closing, the nation's public school superintendents are very appreciative of your efforts to reauthorize ESEA and the specifics of the proposal to be debated this week. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Senate HELP committee as ESEA reauthorization remains a top legislative priority for our members, the nation's public school superintendents.

Sincerely,



Noelle Ellerson

Associate Executive Director, Policy & Advocacy

CC: Members, Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee