



**The Center for Research
and Reform in Education**

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Johns Hopkins University



April 7, 2014

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

The Johns Hopkins Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE), which works to improve the quality of education for children in grades pre-K to 12 by promoting the use of evidence-proven programs in schools, and the Success for All Foundation (SFA), a non-profit organization that spun off from Johns Hopkins University in 1997 and has over 25 years of experience in turning around low performing schools, would like to commend the Committee on Education and the Workforce for its bipartisan effort to reauthorize the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA). Since 2002, ESRA has provided the tools necessary for the U.S. Department of Education to research, evaluate and disseminate information that can help improve our nation's schools and the lives of our students, and we support the Committee's work to strengthen this important legislation.

We laud the Committee's commitment to retain the autonomy of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to ensure that Department of Education evaluations are performed with scientific rigor and independence.

We applaud the new language establishing equity in education as a priority for IES to ensure that all children have access to a high-quality education and to close achievement gaps that exist in our education system.

We are pleased with the Committee's efforts to improve relevance, dissemination and utilization of IES' activities in a manner that is understandable, accessible and useful not just for researchers and policymakers, but also practitioners in the field and the general public. In this way, education research will have a broader usefulness for and greater impact on our teacher leaders, teachers, schools and students.

Within IES' National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, we support the mission to conduct evaluations of federal education programs for effectiveness of both impact and implementation. Impact evaluations will provide greater insight into the effectiveness of federal programs and grants as well as the cost-effectiveness of government

investments in various types of education programs and practices. Recognizing that a program's effectiveness may be altered by even minor changes in implementation, it is imperative that implementation factors also be considered in determining a program's impact and its ability to replicate outcomes for children in more than one scenario.

We respect the Committee's decision to change the definitional language in ESRA relating to education research for the sake of consistency across statutes. At the same time, we hope that there will remain an explicitly expressed commitment to the use of strong scientific methodology in determining what works in education, and specifically to the use of random assignment – long considered the gold standard for education and other types of research – whenever feasible. Such a commitment would be consistent with the evidence standards established and recently issued in the National Science Foundation/IES Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development as well as with the criteria for "strong" and "moderate" evidence of effectiveness included in the recent changes to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

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Both CRRE and SFA believe that the foundation of education for our nation's youth should be the widespread use of programs and practices proven to be effective in rigorous evaluations. We appreciate the Committee's commitment to ESRA and particularly IES, which are pivotal to building this foundation and disseminating the tools necessary for our nation to provide a quality education to all our youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Slavin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Robert Slavin, Ph.D.

Director

Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University

Co-Founder & Chairman

Success for All Foundation