



February 24, 2015

The Honorable John Kline, Chairman  
Education and Workforce Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
2257 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Student Success Act, H.R. 5

Dear Chairman Kline:

I write to express our support for several important provisions in the Student Success Act, H.R. 5, because we believe that the demonstrated success of our schools is directly linked to the autonomy of mission and choice that our schools enjoy. We reject the notion that educational decisions are best made at the federal level, and firmly believe instead that parents are best able to guide and direct the educational success of their children and that educational environments that allow parent-driven decision making create the greatest educational success. We applaud the language in the Student Success Act carried over from No Child Left Behind that provides protection for the freedom and autonomy of private schools. Additionally, we believe the inclusion of language that strengthens key principles for local decision-making will work to strengthen educational progress for all students.

Of paramount importance to us is the language contained in Section 6506 (Section 9506 from No Child Left Behind) explicitly stating that nothing in the act shall be construed to apply to private, religious, and home schools that do not receive federal funds. We are very pleased to see this language retained, since it is vital to the autonomy and continued success of our private Christian schools across the nation.

Section 6524 of the Student Success Act (Section 9530 from No Child Left Behind) that prohibits the nationalization of a teacher certification or training program ensures that our schools and parents continue to be the chief decision makers about what qualities and qualifications are necessary for the teachers who have daily influence on their children's lives. We believe this is an essential freedom necessary for our schools to be truly effective.

Also, the Student Success Act includes language that prohibits the establishment of a national student database in Section 6526 (Section 9531 from No Child Left Behind). We strongly agree that all legislation related to education should enshrine the principle of protecting the privacy rights and safety of children and their families by preventing the collection of personally identifiable information.

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Finally, we are pleased to see that the Student Success Act includes Sections 6521, 6522, and 6523 strengthening language from No Child Left Behind and prohibiting the establishment of a national standard, curriculum, and assessment. This language is extremely important for protecting the principle that educational decisions are best made on the local level by the parents and elected officials who are closest to the students and that best understand their educational needs. The language ensures that states cannot be incentivized or coerced to adopt a certain set of standards or assessments, as has happened with the Common Core Standards and assessments.

We believe the best educational system creates an environment where decision-making power resides at the local level and allows educational diversity to thrive without burdensome federal regulations. The protections provided in the Sections referenced above ensure that our Christian schools—and other private and home schools—can continue to provide exceptional parent-directed educational services to thousands of children across the country.

Thank you for your leadership and work to return educational decision making to parents and local officials. We encourage you to continue these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Wiebe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "W".

Dr. Keith Wiebe  
President