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MINNESOTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION



February 17, 2015

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: **Minnesota School Boards Association Support of the Student Success Act (H.R. 5)**

Dear Chairman Kline:

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) - representing more than 2,000 local school board members across the state - is pleased with the U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee's commitment to advance the Student Success Act (H.R. 5) through the legislative process.

Minnesota school board members are deeply committed to a comprehensive modernization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to provide school districts with the flexibility they need to respond to the educational challenges in their local communities.

MSBA applauds the goal of H.R. 5 to modernize ESEA for local school districts, and we are particularly supportive of the bill's thrust to restore governance to school districts. In this regard, MSBA enthusiastically supports Section 6528 of H.R. 5, which limits the Department of Education's budgetary and regulatory authority over school districts. This critically important section of H.R. 5 prevents, among other inappropriate levels of federal intrusion, the issuance of regulations or non-regulatory guidance without first consulting with local stakeholders and fairly addressing their concerns. As you know, local governance affirms community ownership of our public schools by strengthening the role and responsibility of school board members working with parents and guardians to promote the success of our nation's public school students.

MSBA supports other provisions of H.R. 5 that further seek to improve and update the more than 13-year-old law, including the elimination of adequate yearly progress, as well as sanctions and their unintended, yet significant, consequences. We are in favor of the bill's support for growth models and the bill's support for states and school districts to improve low-performing schools.

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- MSBA's Mission:**
Support, promote, and enhance the work of public school boards and public education.

The Honorable John Kline

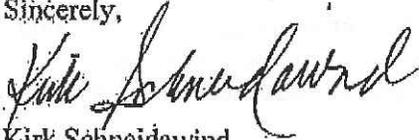
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However, MSBA has a number of concerns with this bill:

- ▶ H.R. 5 authorizes level funding for Title I for each of the fiscal years 2016-2021, which is essentially a retreat from the federal commitment to financially support public education. MSBA maintains that a modernized ESEA must be supported by adequate and sustained federal investments in Title I.
- ▶ In addition, MSBA has concerns with the portability provision that could impact resources between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.
- ▶ MSBA also has concerns with the elimination of the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) due to the fact that this may lower states' incentives to maintain their investment in education at a time when investments are essential for our public school students.

MSBA will continue to work with you and other representatives in the House, as well as the Senate, to ensure a modern ESEA provides our public school students with the highest quality education they deserve. To this end, we applaud your commitment to modernize ESEA in the 114th Congress and thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Kirk Schneidawind
MSBA Executive Director

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