



The Education Trust

Closing the gaps in opportunity and achievement, pre-k through college.

May 6, 2014

Dear Members of Congress:

I write to express The Education Trust's support for H.R. 4366, the Strengthening Education through Research Act, which would reauthorize the Education Sciences Reform Act. High-quality research and sound data is vital to understanding and eliminating the achievement gaps that separate low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities from their peers. We thank the members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee for its unanimous support and urge members of the House of Representatives to pass this important bill with a strong bipartisan vote.

We appreciate that the bill names closing the achievement gap as a key research priority of the Institute of Education Sciences. This includes asking for much-needed research on what works to improve low-performing K-12 schools, as well as to improve access to, opportunities for, and successful completion of higher education. We also appreciate that the bill requires that the National Center for Education Statistics collect and disseminate important new information on student outcomes and opportunities to learn. For K-12, this includes data on teacher distribution, teacher and school leader evaluation, school climate, and exclusionary discipline. For higher education, this includes data on completion.

Improvements to the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program will also prompt the alignment of statewide data systems from early education through postsecondary and require that awardees use some of the funds to build educators' data capacity.

The bill also addresses the rapidly changing racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic demographics of U.S. students by providing updated statistics on the enrollment and performance of students with disabilities. This will give teachers and school leaders access to relevant research that supports the development and implementation of effective programs to assist these students.

In short, the Strengthening Education through Research Act would spur important new research and information, make data more relevant and useful to educators, and help policymakers ensure scarce funds are targeted where they are needed most. H.R. 4366 makes needed improvements to ESRA, and we urge members of the House of Representatives to pass it with bipartisan support.

Sincerely,

Kati Haycock
President

cc: Rep. John Kline, Chair, Education and the Workforce Committee
Rep. George Miller, Ranking Member, Education and the Workforce Committee