



BILL SUMMARY

EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

The Student Success Act

- ✓ **Returns Responsibility for Student Achievement to States, School Districts, and Parents While Maintaining High Expectations.** The Student Success Act dramatically reduces the federal role in education by returning authority for measuring student performance and turning around low-performing schools to states and local officials. The bill repeals the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) metric and federally-prescribed school improvement and turnaround interventions, and empowers states to develop accountability systems that effectively evaluate school quality. At the same time, the legislation maintains a focus on high standards and disaggregated assessment data, ensuring school and student performance is transparent and parents have the information needed to make decisions about their children's education.
- ✓ **Eliminates Federal Programs and Invests Limited Taxpayer Dollars Wisely.** Despite the tripling of overall per pupil funding since 1965, national academic performance has remained flat. Meanwhile, current law includes more than 80 programs, many of which overlap and make little improvement to student achievement. The Student Success Act eliminates more than 70 of those programs and replaces them with the Local Academic Flexible Grant to provide states and school districts the flexibility to support initiatives based on their local needs. Instead of Washington bureaucrats making decisions, the legislation will allow superintendents, school leaders, and local officials to make funding decisions based on what they know will help improve student learning. In addition, the Student Success Act requires the Secretary of Education to identify and eliminate the full-time equivalent employee positions associated with the consolidated and eliminated programs.
- ✓ **Strengthens Programs for Schools and Targeted Populations.** The Student Success Act maintains separate funding streams for the Migrant Education, Neglected and Delinquent, English Language Acquisition, Rural Education, and Indian Education programs, but merges them into Title I of the law. The legislation also strengthens these programs to improve student achievement and provides states and districts flexibility to use funds across programs to better support their students' needs.
- ✓ **Supports Local Efforts to Measure Teacher Effectiveness.** The Student Success Act repeals the onerous Highly Qualified Teacher requirement, which values a teacher's credentials over effectiveness in the classroom. Instead, the bill supports the development and implementation of state- and locally-driven teacher evaluation systems that provide states and school districts the tools necessary to measure an educator's influence on student achievement. The Student Success Act also consolidates most of the teacher quality programs in current law into a Teacher and School Leader Flexible Grant program to support evidence-based initiatives to recruit, hire, train, compensate, and retain effective teachers.

- ✓ **Engages Parents in Their Child's Education.** The Student Success Act reauthorizes the Charter Schools Program, which supports the expansion and replication of high-quality charter schools and provides parents more education choices for their children. The legislation also strengthens the existing Magnet School and Parent Information and Resource Center programs, which provide states, school districts, and other entities with federal support so parents can identify quality options and participate in their children's education.
- ✓ **Supports Impact Aid.** The Student Success Act strengthens the five existing Impact Aid programs, which provide direct funding to school districts impacted by the presence of the federal government. The programs reimburse districts located near, or serving students from, military bases, federal lands, and Indian reservations for the loss of property taxes.
- ✓ **Maintains and Strengthens Long-Standing Protections for State and Local Autonomy.** The Student Success Act strengthens longstanding protections for students, parents, communities, states, and school districts. The legislation includes provisions to ensure the participation of private school students and teachers in the programs funded under the law and improves the military recruiting provisions by ensuring military recruiters have equal access to high schools as institutions of higher education. The Student Success Act also protects state and local autonomy over decisions in the classroom and limits the authority of the Secretary of Education in four key ways: (1) prohibits the secretary from imposing conditions, including conditions involving state standards and assessments, on states and school districts in exchange for a waiver of federal law; (2) prevents the secretary from creating additional burdens on states and districts through the regulatory process, particularly in the areas of standards, assessments, and state accountability plans; (3) prohibits the secretary from demanding changes to state standards, and influencing and coercing states to enter into partnerships with other states; and (4) outlines specific procedures the secretary must follow when issuing federal regulations and conducting peer review processes for grant applications, which will increase the Department of Education's transparency.
- ✓ **Provides Services for Homeless Students.** The Student Success Act reauthorizes the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*, the primary law that provides funding to states and school districts to educate homeless children and youth. The legislation also places a greater emphasis on improved identification of homeless children and youth, provides better collaboration and information sharing among federal and state agencies to provide services for homeless students, and strengthens provisions in current law to enhance school stability and protections for homeless youth and parents.