

Bob Wise
Governor of West Virginia, 2001–2005



March 26, 2010

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Kline
Ranking Member, Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer recommendations for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). I applaud your leadership and commit myself and my organization to supporting your effort to reauthorize ESEA this year.

The mission of the Alliance for Excellent Education is to make every child a graduate, ready for college and careers. While education is primarily a state and local responsibility, there is an important federal role in ensuring that our children receive the education needed to maintain our country's competitive edge in the global economy. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) ensured that schools focused on every child, and brought greater attention to the achievement gap that has plagued our education system for far too long. After eight years of implementation, we know NCLB's limitations and how to address them. The time to do so is now.

The ESEA reauthorization is a critical opportunity to strengthen the nation's high schools and ensure that every child graduates on time, ready for postsecondary education and a career. Current law leaves high schools behind. The blueprint released by the Obama administration moves us in the right direction, placing a necessary emphasis on college and career readiness and focuses federal effort on the lowest-performing schools. The enclosed recommendations respond to the administration's blueprint and offer suggestions for strengthening accountability and support for the nation's secondary schools.

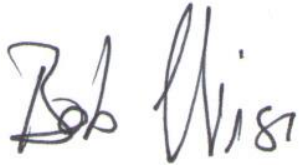
Our recommendations recognize that districts and states need the flexibility to take appropriate remedial action. No two students are the same, nor are the schools they attend—the federal government must recognize this important fact. Federal education policy should assist state and local decision-making, not prescribe it. In order to assist states, districts, and schools in greatly increasing student outcomes, the Alliance offers four broad recommendations for ESEA reauthorization:

- (1) Codify the goal of graduating all students from high school on time, ready for college and careers.
- (2) Hold states, districts, and schools accountable for achieving the goal of college and career readiness.
- (3) Support state- and district-led school improvement systems that are data driven; differentiate reforms and interventions to meet the specific needs of districts, schools, and students; and address the lowest-performing secondary schools.
- (4) Strengthen federal investment in secondary schools, including a formula-based funding stream to turn around low-performing secondary schools as proposed by the Graduation Promise Act.

The challenge of reauthorizing ESEA this year is great, but the need to do so is greater. The Alliance for Excellent Education and I stand strongly by your side at this critical moment to strengthen federal education policy. We look forward to working with you to ensure that every child graduates from high school ready for college, career, and lifelong citizenship.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me or our VP of Federal Advocacy, Phillip Lovell, with questions at 202-828-0828.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Wise". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and "W".

Bob Wise
President