

December 1, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate Committee on
Health, Education, and Labor, and
Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, House Committee on
Education and the Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Education and the Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Murray, and Ranking Member Scott:

We, the undersigned organizations, applaud the House-Senate Conference Committee for approving a compromise agreement on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Every Student Succeeds Act makes significant improvements to the assessment requirements. These improvements will lift the barriers in current law to systems of assessments that can support personalized, competency-based learning and support our ultimate shared goal of college and career readiness for all students.

A growing number of states are developing new, student-centered systems of assessments designed to support competency-based learning. These systems include statewide, standards-aligned banks of performance assessments, entry and exit benchmarking, and annual summative validation. Federal law should provide a clear path to approval for these states, and ensure rigor and quality of these new, innovative systems of assessments. We are pleased that the conference agreement establishes an Innovative Assessment Pilot to allow states to apply for permission to develop rigorous systems of assessments that better align with student-centered, competency-based learning models.

We are also pleased to see provisions in the conference agreement to permit all state systems of assessments to measure individual student growth; use multiple measures of student learning from multiple points in time to determine summative scores; and use adaptive assessments that can measure students where they are in their learning.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Excellent Education

America Forward

Big Picture Learning

CAST, Inc.

Center for Assessment

Center for Innovation in Education

Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation

CompetencyWorks

CoSN – the Consortium for School Networking

Forum for Youth Investment

Foundation for Excellence in Education

Generation Citizen

iNACOL – International Association for K-12 Online Learning

Jobs for the Future

KnowledgeWorks

Large Countywide and Suburban District Consortium

Matchbook Learning

NASBE – National Association of State Boards of Education

New Hampshire Department of Education

Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) at EDUCAUSE

Partnership for 21st Century Learning

Project Tomorrow

SETDA – State Educational Technology Directors Association

The Learning Accelerator

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School