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EDUCATION REFORMS: EXAMINING THE FEDERAL ROLE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

Serial No. 112–38

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

Available via the World Wide Web:
www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/committee.action?chamber=house&committee=education
or
Committee address: *http://edworkforce.house.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

68–265 PDF WASHINGTON : 2011

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

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EDUCATION REFORMS: EXAMINING THE FEDERAL ROLE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

Wednesday, September 14, 2011
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John Kline [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Kline, Petri, Biggert, Platts, Foxx, Goodlatte, Hunter, Roe, Thompson, DesJarlais, Hanna, Bucshon, Noem, Roby, Heck, Miller, Kildee, Andrews, Scott, Woolsey, Hinojosa, McCarthy, Kucinich, Altmire, Holt, Davis, and Hirono.

Staff Present: Jennifer Allen, Press Secretary; Katherine Bathgate, Press Assistant/New Media Coordinator; James Bergeron, Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Casey Buboltz, Coalitions and Member Services Coordinator; Heather Couri, Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Lindsay Fryer, Professional Staff Member; Daniela Garcia, Professional Staff Member; Barrett Karr, Staff Director; Rosemary Lahasky, Professional Staff Member; Krisann Pearce, General Counsel; Mandy Schaumburg, Education and Human Services Oversight Counsel; Dan Shorts, Legislative Assistant; Linda Stevens, Chief Clerk/Assistant to the General Counsel; Alissa Strawcutter, Deputy Clerk; Brad Thomas, Senior Education Policy Advisor; Daniel Brown, Minority Junior Legislative Assistant; Jody Calemine, Minority Staff Director; John D'Elia, Minority Staff Assistant; Jamie Fasteau, Minority Deputy Director of Education Policy; Ruth Friedman, Minority Director of Education Policy; Brian Levin, Minority New Media Press Assistant; Kara Marchione, Minority Senior Education Policy Advisor; Julie Peller, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Melissa Salmanowitz, Minority Communications Director for Education; Laura Schifter, Minority Senior Education and Disability Advisor; Michele Varnhagen, Minority Chief Policy Advisor/Labor Policy Director; and Michael Zola, Minority Senior Counsel.

Chairman KLINE. A quorum being present, the committee will come to order. Before we proceed with this morning's hearing I would like to recognize Mr. Miller for an announcement.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Chairman Kline. I am pleased to announce that Congressman Jason Altmire will be filling the minori-

ty's vacancy on this committee and sitting on the Health and the Higher Education Subcommittees. As many of you know, Congressman Altmire was a member of the committee from 2007 to 2010 during his first two terms in Congress. He is currently serving his third term in Congress representing Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District. And I ask all my colleagues to join me in welcoming Congressman Altmire back to the committee. And Jason, we are glad you wanted to continue to serve on the committee.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Thank you.

Mr. MILLER. Welcome.

Chairman KLINE. And Jason, I add my welcome. It is good to see you back. Well, good morning, all. Welcome to our committee hearing on public school accountability. I would like to thank our witnesses for joining us today. We appreciate the opportunity to get your perspective on the role States, local school districts, and the Federal Government should play in ensuring schools are held accountable for improving student achievement.

According to a recent Gallup poll, Americans' opinion of the U.S. public school system continues to plummet. Only 34 percent of the survey participants indicated "quite a lot" or "a great deal" of confidence in our public schools.

This should come as no surprise. We don't have to look far to find discouraging statistics about fourth graders struggling to read or rising high school dropout rates. Decades of escalating Federal intervention in the Nation's classrooms has not only failed to raise student achievement levels, it has also created a complex web of red tape that ties the hands of State and local education officials.

Despite its best intentions, our education system is seriously flawed. Currently elementary and secondary education law, No Child Left Behind, requires all students to be proficient in reading and math by 2014, which frankly is not going to happen. Under NCLB's accountability system, known as Adequate Yearly Progress, all schools that fail to meet target proficiency levels for 2 or more consecutive years are required to undergo the same series of prescriptive Federal interventions regardless of the unique circumstances or challenges facing each school.

We cannot continue to rely on this one-size-fits-all Federal accountability system to gauge the performance of our schools and students. It is time to develop a more meaningful way to measure whether students are learning, and we must be willing to look beyond laws enacted in Washington, D.C. Across the country reform-minded individuals are challenging the education paradigm in exciting ways and children are benefiting from their efforts.

For example, K-12 reform has been a top priority in Florida for more than a decade. In 1999, then-Governor Jeb Bush enacted a series of far reaching school reforms that gave parents a greater role and significantly narrowed the achievement gap for the State's Hispanic and black students. Moreover, these previously underserved groups began to outscore many statewide averages for all students. Florida's academic successes were made possible by commonsense changes by reformers, students and teachers all working together for a single united purpose: student achievement.

In Indiana, State leaders in local school districts are implementing the Indiana Growth Model, which measures a school's suc-

cess and assigns letter grades. The new system enables a more in-depth measurement of how much students learn over the course of a school year no matter their achievement level, income, race or zip code. Accordingly, parents and education officials gain a more accurate view of which teachers are driving the biggest academic gains in the classroom, moving away from simply assessing test scores to a model that recognizes teachers who are moving students one and a half to two and a half grade levels in a single school year.

Florida and Indiana are not alone. States across the country are working to improve accountability systems, holding schools accountable for student performance, improve classroom instruction and offer parents more quality choices in their children's education. Each of the witnesses here with us today has played a fundamental role in the development and implementation of innovative accountability systems at the State and local levels. These bold reformers are taking matters into their own hands, and I believe we must do everything we can to get out of their way.

As we work to redefine accountability we must examine the progress being made by the men and women who have an integral understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing America's students. I look forward to learning our witnesses' views on the way forward for accountability and a productive debate with my colleagues.

Before we continue with the hearing, now that we have gathered some more of our colleagues, I again want to welcome to the committee Jason Altmire. Jason, again, we are glad to have you back on the committee and look forward to hearing your views on the issues before us.

I now turn to my colleague George Miller, the senior Democratic member of the committee, for his opening remarks.

[The statement of Mr. Kline follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. John Kline, Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Good morning, and welcome to our committee hearing on public school accountability. I'd like to thank our witnesses for joining us today. We appreciate the opportunity to get your perspective on the role states, local school districts, and the federal government should play in ensuring schools are held accountable for improving student achievement.

According to a recent Gallup poll, Americans' opinion of the U.S. public school system continues to plummet. Only 34 percent of the survey participants indicated 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence in our public schools.

This should come as no surprise—we don't have to look far to find discouraging statistics about fourth graders struggling to read or rising high school dropout rates. Decades of escalating federal intervention in the nation's classrooms has not only failed to raise student achievement levels, it has also created a complex web of red tape that ties the hands of state and local education officials.

Despite its best intentions, our education system is seriously flawed. Current elementary and secondary education law, known as No Child Left Behind, requires all students to be proficient in reading and math by 2014, which, frankly, isn't going to happen. Under NCLB's accountability system, known as Adequate Yearly Progress, all schools that fail to meet target proficiency levels for two or more consecutive years are required to undergo the same series of prescriptive federal interventions, regardless of the unique circumstances or challenges facing each school.

We cannot continue to rely on a one-size-fits-all federal accountability system to gauge the performance of our schools and students. It's time to develop a more meaningful way to measure whether students are learning, and we must be willing to look beyond laws enacted in Washington, D.C. Across the country, reform-minded

individuals are challenging the education paradigm in exciting ways, and children are benefitting from their efforts.

For example, K-12 reform has been a top priority in Florida for more than a decade. In 1999, then-Governor Jeb Bush enacted a series of far-reaching school reforms that gave parents a greater role and significantly narrowed the achievement gap for the state's Hispanic and black students. Moreover, these previously underserved groups began to outscore many statewide averages for all students. Florida's academic successes were made possible by commonsense changes by reformers, students, and teachers all working together for a single, united purpose: student achievement.

In Indiana, state leaders and local school districts are implementing the "Indiana Growth Model," which measures schools' successes and assigns letter grades. The new system enables a more in-depth measurement of how much students learn over the course of a school year—no matter their achievement level, income, race, or ZIP code. Accordingly, parents and education officials gain a more accurate view of which teachers are driving the biggest academic gains in the classroom—moving away from simply assessing test scores to a model that recognizes teachers who are moving students 1.5 to 2.5 grade levels in a single school year.

Florida and Indiana are not alone—states across the country are working to improve accountability systems, hold schools accountable for student performance, improve classroom instruction, and offer parents more quality choices in their children's education.

Each of the witnesses here with us today has played a fundamental role in the development and implementation of innovative accountability systems at the state and local levels. These bold reformers are taking matters into their own hands, and I believe we must do everything we can to get out of their way.

As we work to redefine accountability, we must examine the progress being made by the men and women who have an integral understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing America's students. I look forward to learning our witness' views on the way forward for accountability, and a productive debate with my colleagues.

Before we continue with the hearing, I welcome to the committee my colleague from Pennsylvania's 4th district, Congressman Jason Altmire. We're glad to have you back on the committee, and look forward to hearing your views on the important issues before us.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I join you in welcoming Jason back. And good morning to our witnesses, and thank you for coming and sharing your time and your expertise with us.

This morning's hearing focuses on one of the most important issues in public school education, accountability. We have had a number of hearings this year examining the Federal role in education, and I think there is universal agreement that we need to update No Child Left Behind. And the witnesses have told us that there is in fact a need for Federal Government in education and specifically when it comes to accountability.

In our first education hearing this year one of the Republican witnesses said that the Federal Government needs to put guardrails in place to ensure quality and provide support. I believe that these guardrails must include college and career ready standards, goals to ensure that standards are met and aggressive but achievable annual performance targets so the States, districts and schools know what is expected of them in continuing to move all students forward.

Without accountability, parents, teachers and school administrators have no way of knowing what exactly is happening in schools and whether our students are learning and our schools are improving. Parents shouldn't wonder if their child's school is preparing that child to succeed in college after graduation or in a career. And if their child isn't on track to graduate with those skills, parents

should know their school has a responsibility to improve and meet their child's needs.

Without accountability, it is too easy to return to a time, prior to NCLB, when students' actual performance was masked by averages. Accountability is at the heart of No Child Left Behind. The law shined a bright light on how all students were performing, including low-income students, minority students and students with disabilities.

Ten years later there is a need for reform, and the need for transparency and accountability and action remains critical to any reform.

When we wrote the law, our intention was very clear. We wanted a laser like focus on data and accountability to improve the education of students that were falling behind. We took the important step forward calling for communities to be transparent about the achievement of all children, and now we need to take the next step, which is to balance that accountability we worked so hard to implement in No Child Left Behind with greater flexibility at the local level, with less prescription at the Federal level.

We need an accountability system that works and refuses to let any student slip through the cracks. We must set high goals for all students and provide them with a challenging and rigorous learning environment that is tied to college and career ready standards, not the standards that lead to remedial classes in college but actual ability to participate in the college curriculum.

Students need creative, effective teachers who hold them to high goals and standards and can adjust their teaching strategies when needed. These efforts are happening in some schools and some States but not in enough. These high expectations should be there for every child in every school.

The role of the Federal Government in accountability is essential to meet these high expectations and to ensure that all children receive a high quality education. And the Federal Government should require that all States and each school district use database decision making to target interventions to improve the academic achievement of all students.

Attacking the Federal role or eliminating it won't get us closer to being the best in the world in education. It won't help our economic security or our global competitiveness. What it will do is make things harder for schools and students that need the most help. Getting the Federal role right on accountability and in all matters is a smart way to move forward.

Unfortunately, in this committee we have seen legislation that would be detrimental and harmful to the neediest students. The flexibility package we passed in July will create a slush fund for school districts, and that is unacceptable. It will take away money and resources from the neediest students and let school districts forego the civil rights priorities and the education equality promised to students under important court cases like Brown v. Board of Education.

There is very little support for the bill in the education community because people who know the needs of school districts know why NCLB was signed into law, to ensure a quality education for

all students, a goal that must not be forgotten in the next reauthorization.

I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses about the accountability programs that you have structured in your districts, and I yield back my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. George Miller, Senior Democratic Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good morning.

This morning's hearing focuses on one of the most important issues in public school education: accountability.

We have had a number of hearings this year examining the federal role in education. I think there is universal agreement we need to update No Child Let Behind (NCLB). And witnesses have told us that there is in fact a need for the federal government in education and specifically, when it comes to accountability.

In our first education hearing this year, one of the Republican witnesses said that the federal government needs to put "guardrails in place to ensure quality and provide support."

These guardrails must include college and career ready standards, goals to ensure those standards are met, and aggressive, but achievable annual performance targets so that states, districts and schools know what is expected of them and continue to move all students forward.

Without accountability, parents, teachers and school administrators have no way of knowing what exactly is happening in schools and whether our students are learning.

Parents shouldn't wonder if their child's school is preparing that child to succeed in college after graduation.

And if their child isn't on track to graduate with those skills, parents should know their school has a responsibility to improve and meet their child's needs.

Without accountability it is too easy to return to a time, prior to NCLB, when students' actual performance was masked by averages.

Accountability was at the heart of No Child Left Behind. The law shined a bright light on how all students were performing, including low income students, minority students and students with disabilities.

10 years later there is a need for reform. And the need for transparency, accountability, and action remains critical to any reform.

When we wrote the law, our intention was very clear. We wanted a laser like focus on data and accountability to improve the education of students who were falling behind.

We took important steps forward, calling on communities to be transparent about the achievement of all children. And now we need to take the next steps: balance the accountability we worked so hard to implement in NCLB with greater flexibility at the local level and less prescription at the federal level.

We need an accountability system that works and refuses to let any student slip through the cracks. We must set high goals for all students and provide them with a challenging and rigorous learning environment that is tied to college and career ready standards.

Students need creative, effective teachers who hold them to high goals and standards—and can adjust their teaching strategies when needed.

These efforts are happening in some schools, in some states. But that's not good enough. These high expectations should be there for every student in every school.

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Attacking the federal role or eliminating it won't get us closer to being the best in the world in education. It won't help our economic security or our global competitiveness. What it will do is make things harder for the schools and students that need the most help. Getting the federal role right on accountability and in all matters is the smart way to move forward.

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It will take away money and resources from the neediest students and let school districts forgo the civil rights priorities and education equality promised to students under important court cases like Brown vs. the Board of the Education.

There is very little support for the bill in the education community because people who know the needs of school districts know why NCLB was signed into law—to ensure a quality education for all students—a goal that must not be forgotten in the next reauthorization.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about accountability in your districts. I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentleman. Pursuant to committee rule 7(c) all committee members will be permitted to submit written statements to be included in the permanent hearing record. And without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow statements, questions for the record and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our distinguished panel of witnesses, and it is a terrific panel today. First is Ms. Hanna Skandera, the Secretary-Designate of Education for the New Mexico Department of Public Education.

Ms. Blaine Hawley has been in education for 26 years. She started when she was 3, and a principal for 7. In January 2011 she became principal of Red Pump Elementary in Bel Air, Maryland, a newly constructed school serving 620 students in grades K-5.

Mr. Alberto Carvalho has served as superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, a little district in the southern part of the country, since 2008. He has served as a classroom science teacher, a school site administrator and an advocate for secondary school reform.

Dr. Amy Sichel has been a member of the Abington School District in Abington, Pennsylvania, staff for 35 years. She has served as superintendent of schools for the past 11 years.

Welcome to you all. Before I recognize you to provide your testimony let me again explain our lighting system, our timing system. You will have 5 minutes to present your testimony. When you begin the light there in front of you will turn green. When one minute is left the light will turn yellow. And when your time is expired the light will turn red, at which point I would ask you to move as quickly as you can to wrap up your remarks. And after you have testified members will each have 5 minutes to ask questions of the panel. As we mentioned to some of you earlier, I am loathe to drop the gavel on such distinguished witnesses, but please try to wrap up when that red light comes on.

Okay. Ms. Skandera, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF HANNA SCANDERA, SECRETARY–DESIGNATE, NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Ms. SKANDERA. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. Thank you for having me here to testify today. It is my privilege and honor. And I just will harken back to a couple of comments you made, Mr. Chairman, about Indiana and Florida.

I am also vice chair of Chiefs for Change, which is a group of reform minded chiefs across the Nation seeking to implement research driven and data driven reform across their States. And I

also am a member of CCSSO, and I will also mention that they have accountability principles they have mentioned and put forward for reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Both Chiefs for Change and CCSSO have excellent recommendations when it comes to accountability.

Having said that, I also was former Deputy Commissioner in Florida, so I hope to bring to the table a little bit of a larger State's perspective, and then New Mexico, which is a smaller State when it comes to the number of students we serve. However, in the State of New Mexico we are a very diverse State. We are a minority and majority State: 55 percent of our students are Hispanic, 11 percent Native American. We have 22 different tribes, pueblos and Indian nations that are represented in New Mexico alone. In addition, we have obviously many other diverse groups across our State. So we are charged and challenged with the great opportunity to close our achievement gap.

I was struck a few minutes ago by what I think is the conundrum in education. Often there are so many great ideas, but at the end of the day it is our charge at the State level, the district and the school level and certainly in looking at the Federal role at what are those things that we know matter most for our kids and how do we begin to have a laser focus on a few great things to create change and reform for our students versus a whole lot of things that might hit around the edges but don't get to the real issue, which is every student across this Nation can learn. And I do believe that No Child Left Behind in principle made that statement to this Nation and to our States, and it is our job to steward that as we go forward in our States and also to look forward to the reauthorization and the flexibilities that might be brought to the table.

I will mention a few things about New Mexico as well. Just to be straightforward, we are often ranked 49th in the Nation when it comes to student achievements. I look forward to the day when I can tell somebody like Florida, sorry, we changed places with you. But I also believe that there are key reforms that must be implemented to make that happen. We in New Mexico, as I mentioned, are 49th when it comes to fourth grade reading. 80 percent of our schools according to NAEP are not on grade level when it comes to being able to read at the appropriate level; 49th often when it comes to graduation rates in comparisons across the Nation. So we have lots of room for growth and improvement, but we are committed to that.

And I am proud to say that New Mexico has a new Governor and she has championed education reform with the umbrella of we put our kids first in every decision we make and we will see New Mexico win across the board. And the basic belief that there are five strategic key levers for change when it comes to accountability, reform and the possibility that every one of our students is successful, whether it is career or college. And I would like to unpack those key strategic levers for change.

Number one, we expect a smarter return on investments. There is plenty of research that tells us money matters, but it is not the driver when it comes to improved student achievements. In New Mexico we have the ability to review every single district and char-

ter school's budget every year, and we either approve it or disapprove it. And in that process we have the opportunity and in just this last year put into legislation, not only are we approving budgets for fiscal solvency, et cetera, but we are asking the fundamental question what is our return on investment. At this point in time it is not okay just to put money into whatever reform measure it is, it is the question, "Is this a proven strategy for improved student achievement?"

So today we are ranked about 37th in the Nation when it comes to per-pupil expenditures in New Mexico. I already shared we are ranked about 49th when it comes to student achievement. We believe and expect when it comes to return on investment that we can do a better job. And so as we look forward to implementing this policy our fundamental question is not how much are we getting, but what is our return.

When it comes to the Federal role, I would encourage Congress to consider maintaining high expectations in terms of outcomes linked to proven strategies of improved student achievement while providing flexibility when those expectations are met.

Second strategic lever: real accountability for real results. Today in New Mexico 87 percent of our schools are failing, according to No Child Left Behind. I would expect by next year it will be nearly 100 percent because of our annual measurable objectives and the expectations that continue to increase. I will tell you that I do not believe 87 percent of our schools are failing. I believe that we have many that are failing. And we need to begin to create a differentiated accountability system that gives us an opportunity to identify those schools that are truly improving and seen success and those that are struggling to intervene in a meaningful way.

So as we look towards what we are doing in the State of New Mexico, this year we passed a law to provide grades to our schools A, B, C, D or F, not pass or fail. We implemented this because there are other States across this Nation that have implemented this program and seen remarkable results. No longer is it okay to say we are making it or not, we must differentiate so that we can intervene in a meaningful way. In our school grading system we allow the—we capture, I should say, progress and growth, not just a static measure of proficiency.

I mentioned the third strategic lever for change, ensuring our students are ready for success. There are two components for this strategic lever. Number one, the expectation that we have rigorous college and career ready standards, we have adopted the Common Core and we believe that as we transition that will be a key in providing the platform and foundation for improved student achievement, not the guarantee but the foundation. And I would say in that I firmly believe that the decision to adopt the Common Core is solely that of the State. I think it is the important role of the Federal Government to establish high expectations, but it is the State's role to adopt those standards.

In addition to having high standards and expectations, we also have another expectation that our students can read on grade level. And while this sounds novel it is not. 47 percent of our third grade students today are not reading on grade level. So we have begun to raise the bar and are currently pursuing a policy that says if by

the end of the third grade our students who have received interventions from kindergarten, first, second and third grade are not able to read, it is our job as adults to say enough is enough, draw a line in the sand and begin to say we are not sending our students forward and setting them up for failure.

Chairman KLINE. Ms. Skandera, can I ask you to wrap up here, please?

Ms. SKANDERA. Yes.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you very much.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, finally, two other strategic levers that I believe are important are honoring and rewarding our effective teachers and school leaders, which we have many of, and we have failed fundamentally in our currently system to do that.

And finally, implementing effective options for parents to provide options. And we look forward to the support of the Federal Government in both of those endeavors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Ms. Skandera follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hanna Skandera, Secretary-Designate, New Mexico Public Education Department

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for having me here to testify today. My name is Hanna Skandera and I am the Secretary-designate for the New Mexico Public Education Department. I also serve as the vice-chair of Chiefs for Change—a dynamic group of state chiefs driving reform. The achievement of our students, the quality of our teachers, and the measures we use to hold schools accountable are at the forefront of New Mexico's education reform efforts.

New Mexico's demographics are distinctive: 57% of the State's K—12 students are Hispanic, 29% are White, 11% are Native American, 3% are Black, and 1% are Asian or of other backgrounds. New Mexico is ranked 36th in overall population size, has the fifth largest land mass in the U.S. (121,665 square miles), and ranks 45th in the nation in population density. Further, with only 6.3 people per square mile, New Mexico faces unique challenges in educating students in rural areas. New Mexico has been a majority-minority state since its inception with 22 distinct Indian tribes, pueblos, and nations.

Since taking office, Governor Martinez has advanced a bold education reform agenda: Kid's First, New Mexico Wins. The need for reform in New Mexico is now:

- Only 53% of New Mexico third graders read proficiently;
- 33% of our students who score proficient or higher on the 11th grade English Language Arts assessment need remediation in college;
- Under AYP, 87% of our schools are failing; and
- 99.98% of our teachers "meet competency" under an evaluation system that fails to reward excellence and link teacher evaluations to student outcomes.

Our challenge is great, but I know New Mexico students can reach high levels of achievement. Further, our cultural and geographic diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and we must find a way to leverage that great resource.

Under the Kids First, New Mexico Wins reform agenda, New Mexico has identified 5 strategic levers for change. Each lever allows for New Mexico to advance bold reform, while holding a high bar.

Lever 1: A Smarter Return on New Mexico's Investment

We know that money alone cannot fix education. Rather than maintain the status quo, New Mexico is proactively shifting the way we allocate funding to districts and schools. Through our annual budget review process, we are partnering with districts to look in detail at where their funds are being allocated and to ensure that expenditures are aligned with proven instructional strategies.

As states intervene in low performing schools, implement teacher effectiveness systems, and increase effective options for parents, providing additional flexibility on the use of existing federal funds will spur innovation and better meet the needs of students and schools. I encourage Congress to consider maintaining high expectations in terms of outcomes, while providing flexibility when those expectations are met.

Lever 2: Real Accountability, Real Results

Under the current AYP system, 87% of New Mexico schools are failing. I know that this is not the case. We have some schools in New Mexico that are helping students to achieve and grow in a robust way annually and currently we have no way to recognize those accomplishments. On the other hand, I know we have schools that struggle to help children reach a basic level of achievement, and with such a large number of schools "failing", it is hard to accurately and effectively differentiate interventions and resources to those that need them most.

Earlier this year, New Mexico passed a new school accountability system, the A-F School Grading Act. This new, differentiated accountability system will allow us to recognize both proficiency and growth. For the first time, we will know with confidence which schools are our A schools and be able to use them as models for our schools that struggle.

A grade for an elementary and middle school will be based on proficiency, growth, as well as additional proven academic indicators. We will also utilize a value-add model in our calculation to ensure we are holding schools accountable for those areas they are truly responsible for versus the ones they are not, such as a student's race or socio-economic status.

For high schools, school grades will be based on proficiency, growth, graduation rate, and college and career readiness indicators such as AP coursework, PSAT and ACT scores.

While the current system includes critical components for any accountability system—disaggregated data, standards and assessments, interventions for low performing schools—the arbitrary bar and lack of flexibility has made it difficult for states to advance bold accountability agendas that serve their schools and students well. Moving forward, New Mexico encourages Congress to pursue an accountability framework that requires states to have a high bar and expectations for all schools, but coupled with flexibility to allow states and districts to determine achievement targets for schools and differentiate interventions to meet the unique and specific needs of low achieving schools.

Lever 3: Ready for Success

Regardless of background, all students can achieve at high levels. Our Ready for Success initiative is related directly to preparing all students for success in college or career. New Mexico has already taken several important steps towards realizing this goal.

First, we are working to transition to rigorous, college and career ready standards. Adopting the Common Core was an important first step to ensure that our students are competitive in New Mexico and across the nation. As we transition to these new and rigorous standards, we are committed to engaging our teachers, school leaders and parents to ensure successful implementation. I firmly believe that the decision to adopt the Common Core is solely that of a state. While NCLB took an important step in requiring states to implement rigorous standards for all students in a state, the role of the federal government should end there.

Second, we have placed a command focus on reading. A 2011 report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Double Jeopardy, found that students who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. Screening and intervention in the earliest grades will make our students better prepared to compete in the 21st Century economy. Additionally, ending the all too common practice of social promotion will provide our most at-risk students with the opportunity they deserve to achieve at high levels.

As Congress reauthorizes ESEA, I encourage you maintain the expectation that all students can reach college and career expectations and have ample opportunity to do so.

Lever 4: Rewarding Effective Educators and Leaders

While there is no silver bullet in education, research has clearly shown that one of the most important school-related factors influencing a child's academic achievement is the quality of his or her teacher. A recent study by Eric Hanushek found that if we give the most at-risk students the most effective teachers, we could close the achievement gap. Conversely, the data show that if a student is placed in a classroom with a low performing teacher, the student will struggle to make up learning gains lost.

The current teacher evaluation and recognition process in New Mexico places emphasis on years of experience and credentials obtained. In a recent 2010 sample of twenty-five percent of New Mexico's teachers, 99.998 percent of these teachers received a rating of "meets competency" on their evaluations (versus "does not meet competency "). Yet we are not seeing proportional success in terms of New Mexico

student achievement. This suggests a lack of alignment between the system that measures teacher performance and the system that measures student learning outcomes.

We are working to develop and implement a new teacher and school leader evaluation system that includes multiple measures such as student achievement as measured by a value-add model, objective and uniform observations, and additional measures that will be selected by districts. Any new system must better enable districts to address and improve school personnel policies concerning professional development, promotion, compensation, performance pay, and tenure. Further, the evaluation system must identify teachers and school leaders who are most effective at helping students succeed, provide targeted assistance and professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders, inform the match between teacher assignments and student and school needs and inform incentives for effective teachers and school leaders.

I encourage Congress to replace the current expectations under NCLB in regards to credentials with those that prioritize outcomes for students.

Lever 5: Effective Options for Parents

Governor Martinez remains committed to offering parents multiple educational opportunities for their children. However, these options must be effective.

New Mexico is working to amend our existing process for new and renewal charter school applications to ensure that only quality charter schools are approved or renewed. An effective charter school has the potential to meet the educational needs for students in rural and urban areas who have limited choice now. In addition to increasing the number and location of effective charter schools throughout New Mexico, we are also pursuing effective virtual options.

Particularly in our rural districts, providing robust virtual schooling options is a priority. Often, these districts are unable to offer public school choice, advanced math and science classes, or AP coursework. Virtual schools can address these issues. I encourage Congress to consider flexibility for states in the use of federal dollars to pursue robust virtual school offerings for students in under-served areas.

As Congress pursues reauthorization of ESEA, I encourage you to consider several important ideas:

• First, states know best what their districts and schools need in terms of flexibility and interventions. Allowing states to implement accountability systems that reward effective schools and intervene in a significant manner with the lowest achieving schools will increase the number of high performing schools across this nation.

• Second, many states are pursuing teacher effectiveness models that are based significantly on student outcomes versus those that are based on credentials and years of experience. This is hard work, and states need support from Congress to accomplish it effectively. This does not mean we need to be told what to do, but, rather, to be supported as we pursue these changes.

• Third, prioritize the use of existing federal funds on proven programs and strategies. New money will not increase the number of proficient readers in New Mexico, or any state. Instead, provide flexibility to states to direct recourses to support proven programs at the school and classroom level.

• Fourth, rural states face unique challenges. New Mexico has districts with as few as 43 students. The interventions and supports that may be effective in Albuquerque are very different than those that will be effective in Mosquero. As you work to reauthorize ESEA, I challenge you to think critically and strategically about how these schools' needs can be met.

• Fifth, academic standards are the business of states. Simply stated, all states should be required to implement rigorous standards for all students in a state, but the role of the federal government ends there.

As you prepare to reauthorize ESEA, I encourage you to visit the Chiefs for Change website and look closely at the ESEA reauthorization principals outlined. Thank you again for the opportunity to share my ideas on the federal role in school accountability and how Congress can maintain high expectations while expanding flexibility.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you. Ms. Hawley, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF BLAINE HAWLEY, PRINCIPAL, RED PUMP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ms. HAWLEY. Good morning, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify this morning to provide the perspective of school principals on accountability in our Nation's public schools as the committee considers the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, most recently reauthorized as No Child Left Behind Act.

My name is Blaine Hawley. And as you heard, I am the principal of Red Pump Elementary School in Bel Air, Maryland in Harford County school district. Throughout my career the last 7 years has been spent as principal in two different schools. Prior to that I was a teacher, school counselor and assistant principal. I am very fortunate to be at Red Pump Elementary School, the first new school in the district in 10 years.

Red Pump opened earlier this month and welcomed students from the neighboring elementary schools for an inaugural journey into the new school year. As the school principal I devoted significant time working with all of the stakeholders in the learning community to be clear about Red Pump's vision for excellence and laying the foundation for a culture that expects nothing less than excellence in teaching and learning.

In both schools that I have led as principal we have understood the importance of the role that the teacher plays in the classroom with data driven instruction and ongoing assessment of student progress. Our teachers work together as teams utilizing a protocol for examining student work, as well as formative and summative assessments.

Through this process with their grade level team and building specialists, they make collaborative decisions that inform instruction. Teachers know and understand their students and provide a differentiated program for student success. Decisions about individual student remediation, enrichment and intervention are all part of this process. Reflection is also an important aspect of this protocol, bringing teachers back together to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction to ensure all students are moving forward.

School leaders like me take on a myriad of tasks and responsibilities each day that require expertise as an organizational manager and an instructional leader to meet effective leadership standards. The standards of effective school leadership that principals must demonstrate are fully substantiated by the latest research. One area relies on the ability of principals to create professional learning environments where all adults are constantly improving their skills and knowledge and challenging one another to serve the learning and developmental needs of every student. This is also well established by the research which proves what educators inherently have known; second only to a great teacher in the classroom a quality principal will improve student academic achievement. Principals are and always have been highly accountable for what teachers teach and what students learn.

The policies of the No Child Left Behind Act have done much good for helping States set high standards and helping us learn more about our unique populations of students through desegrega-

tion of data to make better instructional decisions. However, our Nation's all or nothing yardstick for measuring school and student performance is simply flawed. As a result, we are now facing the unintended consequence of a misidentification of failing schools and punitive labels acquired from a Federal mandate that inaccurately measures student performance from an across the board single snapshot in time.

Principals live firsthand with this problem, which we hope the committee will address comprehensively in the reauthorization process. Principals support reasonable solutions that will effectively put more balance, fairness and accurate measures of student and school performance into our accountability system.

As the committee considers adjustments and solutions to correct our current blunt instrument accountability measures mandated from Washington, I would like to leave you with the following parting thoughts from the principal's perspective. The appropriate Federal role in education is to promote equity and provide targeted resources to assist States and local districts. Federal policy should ask us to set high expectations, but also must support State and locally developed accountability systems, curriculum and instruction to best meet the needs of the students in the local school context.

Principals support assessments so that we can measure the progress of our students, but Federal policy must encourage and support State and local assessments that include growth models and multiple measures of student performance, both formative and summative, to accurately gauge social and emotional development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and problem solving skills. Assessment data should be used to inform instruction, be fair, flexible, authentic and reflect a student's progress toward academic proficiency.

Standards, curriculum and assessment must be closely aligned to be effective, and any assessment data must be available in a timely manner for practical or instructional use. Standardized assessment scores must never be used as a sole or primary criterion to measure student performance to grade or rank principal, teacher or school effectiveness, to allocate funds or to take punitive measures against schools and/or school personnel.

State and local systems know there are a variety of ways in which children succeed and their achievements must be measured in multiple ways to accurately capture their emotional and social development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and problem solving skills in addition to proficiency in the core academic content areas.

Measuring these factors and the many others that contribute to improved student outcomes must provide a complete picture not by an up or down, pass-fail standardized test score that is designed at the Federal level and that has no regard for the multitude of ways students progress. Assessment using a single metric produces a one-dimensional view of the child, the teacher, the principal and the school.

Simply put, those of us in the field who are working every day in our educational system want the Federal Government to give us

the opportunity to have more input into the development and implementation of the accountability mechanisms.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Hawley follows:]

Prepared Statement of A. Blaine Hawley, Principal, Red Pump Elementary School, Bel Air, MD

Good morning Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify this morning to provide the perspective of school principals on accountability in our nation's public schools as the Committee considers the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), most recently reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act. My name is Blaine Hawley and I am the principal of Red Pump Elementary School in Bel Air, MD, which serves over 600 students in grades kindergarten through five in the Harford County school district. I have been an educator for the past twenty seven years; a principal for the past seven years and prior to that, a teacher, school counselor, and assistant principal.

I am very fortunate to be at Red Pump Elementary School, the first new school in the district in ten years. Red Pump opened earlier this month and welcomed students from the neighboring elementary schools for an inaugural journey into the new school year. Being a part of the planning and development process for Red Pump Elementary School before the walls were built has been an incredible experience. I devoted a great deal of my time over the past eight months designing the physical space to meet the needs of 21st Century students conducive to learning experiences appropriate for each age level.

In addition, it has been important to make connections with families and provide outreach so that students new to the school would be comfortable and able to understand the school's operations and procedures, and most importantly, making sure that parents could assist us getting children ready and eager to learn.

I have spent even more time working with all of the stakeholders in the learning community—teachers (including special area teachers in music, the arts and physical education), curriculum specialists, reading specialists, librarians, and even Central Office to be clear about Red Pump's vision for excellence—and laying the foundation for a culture that expects nothing less than excellence in teaching and learning. Now, we are focusing all of our attention to the teaching and learning inside the new classroom walls.

A school vision and mission are essential in laying the groundwork for an ongoing, long lasting quality educational program. Developing shared beliefs among all in our school community is essential to the success of our students. We are engaged in the process of creating the written vision and mission that will reflect what we believe and live at Red Pump about student achievement and learning with a focus on excellence through purposeful instruction in the classroom.

In both schools that I have led as Principal, we have understood the importance of the role the teacher plays in the classroom with data driven instruction and ongoing assessment of student progress. Our teachers work together as teams utilizing a protocol for examining student work as well as formative and summative assessments.

Through this process with their grade level team and building specialists, they make collaborative decisions that inform instruction. Teachers know and understand their students and provide a differentiated program for student success. Decisions about individual student remediation, enrichment, and intervention are part of this process. Reflection is also an important aspect of this protocol bringing teachers back together to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction to ensure all students are moving forward. As a school, our School Improvement Team develops an annual plan to keep our focus on what is crucial for the students we serve in our school. Additionally, one of the charges of this team is to find the time necessary, often in creative ways utilizing all staff members, to allow critical time for teachers to meet together. We provide this time for teachers to purposefully study student work instead of faculty meetings before or after the school day as well as carving out other times during the day. This process includes a cycle of analysis, knowledge of research based practices, instruction, varied assessments and reflection.

School leaders like me take on a myriad of tasks and responsibilities that require expertise as an organizational manager and an instructional leader to meet effective leadership standards that include:

• The articulation of a clear vision of high expectations and how the learning community can achieve the vision;
• The creation of working conditions that minimize disruptions and expect teachers to work collaboratively to address student learning needs;
• The recruitment of effective teachers and support personnel to realize the staffing goals of the school;
• The design of systems to monitor individual student, grade, and school-level data to make instructional decisions;
• The alignment of resources to support and accelerate the school's vision; and
• Coordination of active engagement with families and community organizations to positively impact student outcomes—both in and out of the school building.

Principals are confronted with a variety of complex tasks that require diverse skills, technical capabilities, high cognitive functioning and emotional intelligence. We must function under demanding circumstances, have strong coping skills, and a thorough understanding of the complex nature of the job. Principals are no longer just the single-faceted building managers of thirty years ago—we must create professional learning environments where all adults are constantly improving their skills and knowledge, and challenging one another to serve the learning and developmental needs of every student.

A well-established body of knowledge spanning the past thirty years proves what educators inherently have known—second only to a great teacher in the classroom, a quality principal will improve student academic achievement.

The most recent decade of research focused on the 21st Century challenges facing our education system and further confirmed the direct correlation between effective school leadership and student performance, as well as the increasingly complex nature of a principal's job to meet the developmental and cognitive needs of our nation's diverse student populations. The same research substantiates a glaring need to do a better job of preparing principals and other school leaders to meet the needs of teachers and students. There must be greater investment in programs that develop and support all principals in the profession in setting and fostering a vision that puts student learning at the center of school's culture.

Principals must be committed professionals with the ability to handle any number of challenges in a short period of time during the day—a recent study revealed what those in the profession already know—that principals typically engage in over forty different tasks in single day, likening the principals' school day to that of a Member of Congress on Capitol Hill running from hearing to hearing, and jumping from issue to issue. But just as you must be accountable to the constituents you represent at the end of the day, principals are accountable for all students—no matter the circumstances of the child and whether or not they come to school prepared, eager, and ready to learn.

My fellow colleagues and I who serve as principals know that being held accountable for student achievement is an important part of our job, but measures of student achievement must be comprehensive and accurately reflect the local context in all dimensions of student learning.

Many see our work as a calling. We are not finger-pointers, disgruntled complainers, or spotlight-seekers. And we don't pass the buck. The fact of the matter is clear-cut: We are, always have been, and will be highly accountable for what teachers teach, what students learn, and how schools perform.

Principals accept the responsibilities for making sure our nation's schools provide a safe, healthy and high quality education for every child—and showing the results to prove it. Principals have and do face continuous school-based challenges to overcome that promise to be equally-significant in the coming decade and beyond.

Add to this, the pressure on principals that has never been more intense:
• We are expected to ensure that schools perform at ever-higher levels with ever-shrinking budgets which all of you know far too well;
• We are committed to preparing students to succeed in a world adults can scarcely imagine, especially now, as all of us try to keep up with the latest technological advances, for better or worse;
• We must juggle and adhere to often conflicting state guidelines, priorities, and federal mandates;
• And, most importantly, we are required to operate—day in and day out—in today's one-size-fits-all federal approach to accountability with little room for state and local input into such systems.

Although, this one-dimensional snapshot of student and school success is seriously flawed, we have been doing our best over the past decade to measure up. However, we are now experiencing the true consequences of misguided federal-level policies with reports that over 85% of our nation's schools are on the verge of failing. Principals know and common sense suggests this is simply not the case.

The debate no longer persists and the question has been answered. From the principals' perspective, our current AYP system is too prescriptive, sanctions incorrectly categorize schools and have put into place what we believe are unintended consequences: an over misidentification of failing schools.

While the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act have done much good for helping states set high standards and helping us learn more about our unique populations of students through disaggregation of data to make better instructional decisions, our nation's all-or-nothing yardstick for measuring school and student performance is simply flawed. As a result, we are now facing the unintended consequence of a misidentification of failing schools, and punitive labels acquired from a federal mandate that inaccurately measures student performance from an across-the-board, single snapshot in time.

Principals live firsthand with this problem, which we hope the Committee will address comprehensively in the reauthorization process. Principals support reasonable solutions that will effectively put more balance, fairness, and accurate measures of student and school performance into our accountability system.

As the Committee considers adjustments to correct our current blunt instrument accountability measures mandated from Washington, principals encourage you to take into account that:

• The appropriate federal role in education is to promote equity and provide targeted resources to assist states and local districts. Federal policies should ask us to set high expectations, but also must support state- and locally-developed accountability systems, curriculum and instruction to best meet the needs of the students in the local school context.

• Principals support assessments so that we can measure the progress of our students. But, federal policy must encourage and support state and local assessments that include growth models and multiple measures of student performance (both formative and summative) to accurately gauge social and emotional development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

• Assessment data should be used to inform instruction, be fair, flexible, authentic, and reflect students' progress toward academic proficiency.

• Standards, curriculum and assessments must be closely aligned to be effective, and any assessment data must be available in a timely manner for practical or instructional use.

• Standardized assessment scores must never be used as the sole or primary criterion to measure student performance; to rate, grade or rank principal, teacher, or school effectiveness; to allocate funds; or to take punitive measures against schools and/or school personnel.

• State and local systems know there are a variety of ways in which children succeed and their achievements must be measured in multiple ways to accurately capture their emotional and social development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, in addition to proficiency in the core academic content areas.

• Measuring these factors and the many others that contribute to improved student outcomes must provide a complete picture, not by an up or down, pass-fail, standardized test score that is designed at the federal level and that has no regard for the multitude of ways students progress. Assessment using a single metric produces a one-dimensional view of the child, the teacher, the principal, and the school.

Simply put, those of us in the field who are working every day in our educational system want the federal government to give us the opportunity to have more input into the development and implementation of the accountability mechanisms.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Ms. Hawley. Mr. Carvalho, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF ALBERTO M. CARVALHO, SUPERINTENDENT, MIAMI–DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. CARVALHO. Thank you, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller and members of the committee. I am honored to have the opportunity to testify before you today.

I would like to begin by actually offering an early contract to Ms. Hawley. Obviously she is an outstanding principal. In Miami you

have beach privileges and sunshine around the year. Not a bad deal.

My name is—she said she will consider it. My name is Alberto Carvalho, and I have the privilege of serving as superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the fourth largest school system in the Nation serving approximately 400,000 students from every conceivable ethnic and economic background. I stand proudly before you today as a superintendent that has led this district into one of the highest performing urban districts in America, total population 250,000 and higher, that is community population not student population, on the basis of two criteria: Number one, that the only national assessment of reading and math and science proficiency is NAEP, and as one of four districts out of 15,000 nationally that is a finalist for the Nobel Prize of Education, the Broad Prize, which will be announced at the Library of Congress next week. Also a district that has been able to negotiate a landmark deal with teachers that provides for a tying of student performance to a teacher evaluation in addition to handsome financial incentives based on performance, as much as $28,000 on top of a teacher's base salary for outstanding performance. Also a superintendent that has negotiated different provisions for principals and leaders in my school systems that has promoted some and, unfortunately on the basis of performance, terminated others and demoted many more.

You see, in Miami-Dade the use of data to analyze student performance, resource allocation, instructional interventions and human capital development has become the hallmark of my administration. Our success has drawn national attention because we have been able to move the bar on student achievement across the board, close the achievement gap for minorities and those in poverty, and continue to innovate even in the face of significant economic constraints. In fact, over the past 3 years, notwithstanding economic pressures attached to our recession, we have not terminated a single teacher for economic reasons. That is not to say that we simultaneously did not rehire about 2,000 teachers on the basis of performance.

That being said, there are schools within my district that have made astounding improvements, have been recognized for remarkable gains in student achievement and yet because of accountability requirements face significant sanctions just months ago. I do not believe that it is this kind of dichotomous system that this learned body envisions for our Nation's schools. I believe that the Federal Government is perfectly positioned to address the inconsistencies which exist in the American system of education, which the Chairman alluded to initially, as far as its education accountability and to refine it in such a way that would be a tool for improvement, one that could be used to identify best practices and to encourage the replication of successful instructional models rather than simply imposing caustic sanctions.

As a Nation I believe we have embarked on the State led Common Core standards movement. Assessments have become the barometer by which we measure progress, as they should be. We have placed a renewed emphasis on the importance of qualified and effective teachers and leaders, and of course we have introduced new

and stricter levels of accountability into the field of education, and investment of Federal resources should rightly come with some degree of requirements for accountability for performance.

But such accountability must not be a one-size-fits-all model. It must carry with it a degree of flexibility, not simply tying progress to lockstep requirements that compare different cohorts of students, as is the case with the current Adequate Yearly Progress, AYP, designation. Instead, progress should be determined by measuring academic and developmental growth of individual students from year to year using growth targets rather than simply arbitrary proficiency targets.

Further, there should be recognition afforded to those States, such as my own State of Florida, that have robust, logical, high quality accountability systems in place, and not require the overlay of a discordant system which often convolutes the overarching goal of accountability and serves often to confuse the public it serves. The manner in which we chose to address the Federal accountability requirements was to develop a highly sophisticated method of using data to drive our reform conversations and ultimately our decision making.

The need to closely scrutinize student performance data and effectively allocate resources in a timely fashion led to the development of our DATA/Com process. As part of DATA/Com, the principal and leaders of struggling schools have the opportunity to meet with me personally, and I do have 450 principals, with me and my cabinet to review the latest student performance data. Much like a physician reviews an x-ray or lab results, we discuss the symptoms and prescribe an antidote in realtime. Through the use of data schools get what they need on the fly as they should, whether it is an additional reading interventionist, whether it is additional instructional materials or to acquire money to run an after school program or simply remove a teacher who is highly ineffective.

Without question, the advent of educational accountability has not been without challenges. Few I believe will argue that there is not room for improvement to the current No Child Left Behind legislation, such as, and I offer but a few recommendations: A need to move from proficiency targets to growth targets that follow the same cohorts of students over time. A litany of annually escalating sanctions that force improving schools to change strategies before anything has time to work is unreasonable and contrary to what the research indicates. A failure to differentiate between historically low performing schools and those that need minor adjustments on tweaks based on stringent AYP proficiency standards confuses stakeholders. An incomplete set of indicators that can gauge the health of a high school more accurately, such as graduation rates, dual enrollment participation success, industry certification, college and career readiness. And finally, this issue where large amounts of funding are being diverted to set aside services that have failed to date to yield more than limited effects on student achievement.

Despite these nuances No Child Left Behind and the Federal Government through increased accountability measures have forced us to address the glaring achievement gaps that have plagued many communities across our country and have forced the

Nation to address historic equity issues. In Miami-Dade we have long embraced accountability as a tool to improve, and we recognize that this law certainly began a conversation around the growth and learning gains made by individual subgroups, schools as a whole and entire districts. It forced the recognition, most importantly, of pockets of under-performing kids often hidden behind the curtain of performing schools and districts.

In closing, I submit to you that the Federal Government should adopt a differentiated model of accountability which provides flexibility and loosened sanctions for high performing districts while increasing oversight in districts and States that fail to make progress. How you proceed in structuring accountability policy is critical. In my opinion those nations who are currently outperforming the U.S. on international assessments, such as the PEZA or TEMS, are not debating educational structures or sanctions. Rather they are engaged in conversations about teacher and leader quality, about conversations regarding the economic viability of their work forces. These are the issues we must engage in if we are to live up to the promise of a quality public education for all and ensure our position as a global leader.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Carvalho follows:]

Prepared Statement of Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Thank you very much Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the committee. I am honored to have the opportunity to testify before you this morning regarding the federal role in public school accountability.

My name is Alberto Carvalho and I have the privilege of serving as Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the nation's fourth largest school district. Miami-Dade is arguably one of the most diverse urban districts in our nation, serving over 400,000 students, from every conceivable ethnic and economic background, and at every level of educational preparedness and capacity.

The use of data to analyze student performance, resource allocation, instructional interventions, and human capital deployment, has become the hallmark of our district operation. Our success has drawn national attention because we have been able to move the bar on student achievement across the board, close the gap for minorities and those in poverty, and continue to innovate even in the face of significant economic constraints. That being said, there are schools within my district that have made astounding improvements, have been recognized for the remarkable gains in student achievement and yet, because of the manner in which we implement accountability, faced significant sanctions just months ago. I do not believe this is the kind of dichotomous system that this learned body envisions for our nation's schools.

I believe that the federal government is perfectly positioned to address the inconsistencies which exist in the American system of education accountability and to refine it in such a way that it would be a tool for improvement; one that could be used to identify best practices and to encourage the replication of successful instructional models, rather than simply imposing sanctions.

As a nation, we have embarked on the state-led common core standards movement. Assessments have become the barometer by which we measure progress. We have placed a renewed emphasis on the importance of qualified and effective teachers. And, of course, we have introduced new and stricter levels of accountability into the field of education.

An investment of federal resources should rightly come with requirements for accountability for performance, but such accountability must not be a one-size fits all model. It must carry with it a degree of flexibility, not simply tying progress to lockstep requirements that compare different cohorts of students, as is the case with the current Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) designation. Instead, progress should be determined by measuring academic and developmental growth of individual students from year to year using growth targets rather than arbitrary proficiency targets. Further, there should be recognition by the federal administration of those states, such as Florida, that have robust, high quality, accountability systems in

place, and not require the overlay of a discordant federal system, which often convolutes the overarching goal of accountability and confuses the public.

In Miami-Dade, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has served as the catalyst for our school system to take a more laser-like approach to school reform efforts and to be more strategic in the allocation of our resources.

The manner in which we chose to address the federal accountability requirements was to develop a highly sophisticated method of using data to drive our reform conversations and ultimately our decision making. We are targeting our efforts to ensure that when students graduate they are career or college ready. We have made decisions that have not always been popular, but we have been able to do so by informing our communities and having heart-to-heart conversations—around data—as to why students in certain communities, predominantly high poverty, high minority neighborhoods, are not achieving at the same rate as their more affluent, less diverse peers.

The need to closely scrutinize student performance data and effectively allocate resources in a timely fashion led to the development of our DATA/Com process. As part of DATA/Com, the principal of a struggling school has the opportunity to meet with me and my entire Cabinet to review the latest student performance data, much like a physician reviews an x-ray or lab results. We discuss the symptoms and prescribe an antidote in real-time. Through the use of data, schools get what they need "on the fly," whether it is an additional reading interventionist, instructional materials, or money to run an afterschool tutoring program. This is one example of how federal accountability has resulted in the implementation of a practice which has spurred success, but is only effective if the flexibility to allocate resources remains at the local level.

Without question, the advent of educational accountability has not been without challenges, and we have learned a great deal. However, few will argue that there is room for improvement to the current NCLB legislation such as:

- A need to move away from proficiency targets to growth targets that follow the same cohort of students;
- A litany of annually escalating sanctions that force improving schools to change strategies before anything has time to work;
- A failure to differentiate between historically low-performing schools and those that need minor adjustments based on stringent AYP proficiency standards;
- Inclusion of other subjects such as writing and science;
- A lack of comprehensive indicators that can gauge the health of a high school more accurately such as graduation rates, dual enrollment, industry certification, college and career readiness; and
- Large amounts of money diverted into supplemental services that have failed, to date, to yield more than limited effects on student achievement.

Despite these nuances, NCLB and the federal government, through increased accountability measures, has forced us to address the glaring achievement gaps that plague many communities across this land and has forced us to address historic equity issues that were prevalent in our schools. In Miami-Dade we have long embraced accountability as a tool to improve, and we recognize that NCLB certainly began the conversation around the growth and learning gains made by individual subgroups of students within traditionally high performing schools, as well as shone a spotlight on chronically low performing schools.

I submit to you that the federal government should adopt a differentiated model of accountability which provides flexibility and loosens sanctions for high performing districts, while increasing oversight in districts and states that fail to make progress. How you proceed in structuring accountability policy is critical. Those nations who are currently outperforming the U.S. on international assessments such as the PISA or TIMMS are not debating educational structures or sanctions; rather they are engaged in conversations about teacher and leader quality. These are the issues we must engage in if we are to live up to the promise of a quality public education for all and ensure our position as a global leader.

In Miami-Dade, we have taken a differentiated approach to school reform and launched the Education Transformation Office (ETO) with School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding. We tier schools by degree of need based on current and historic data and create support and monitoring processes reflective of each school's academic standing. Additionally, SIG requirements have allowed us to replace ineffective administrators and teachers while recruiting those with a proven record of success, to launch an array of wraparound services to target at-risk students, and to upgrade the technological infrastructure to ensure that students are learning in 21st century classrooms. Through our use of the SIG funds and the implementation of our ETO program, we aren't simply focused on turnaround; our goal is to accelerate and sustain improvements into the future. Our ETO processes have been rec-

ognized by the USDOE, the FLDOE and districts throughout the country, and we have seen real improvement in these schools and the students who attend them.

Last year, the ETO in Miami-Dade was assigned 19 "persistently lowest-achieving schools." Of the 19, 13 are now either B or C and none are rated F. This year, the ETO oversees 26 schools through SIG II with our district curriculum and instruction team supporting and monitoring another 35 schools that are dangerously close to being identified as persistently low performing. This method of tiering schools in need of improvement has allowed us to be more strategic in resource deployment and insures us from a revolving door approach to school improvement. Schools are provided the attention they need and, much like our teacher coaching model, they are weaned from district oversight as they begin sustaining their own improvements independently. This is the national accountability approach that I proffer to you today.

In concert with the improvement of our struggling schools, our district has distinguished itself among other large urban districts throughout the country. M-DCPS leads urban schools in reading and mathematics at the fourth and eighth grade levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). As a Broad Finalist, our innovative systems and student performance in narrowing the achievement gap have been recognized nationally.

Surely, these outcomes should be rewarded by the loosening of sanctions and the practices that have led to them being replicated in other districts nationally. Instead, while school grades have increased (despite ever-increasing state standards of proficiency), our graduation rates improved at a faster rate than the rate of growth for the State itself, and our outcomes on the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment rank among the highest in the nation, the number of schools that are considered in need of improvement under the NCLB Federal guidelines has continued to increase. Only 11% of all schools in Florida are deemed to have made AYP this past year while 58 percent of them are rated "A." This paradox is inconceivable to educators and difficult to explain to communities who have witnessed the performance of their neighborhood schools rise to unprecedented levels. At its root is the struggle between competing accountability systems—the one mandated under NCLB and Florida's own A+ Plan—Differentiated Accountability Model. Both models are rigorous, demand performance accountability, and require the public to be informed regarding the quality of the instruction being delivered. They are, however, discordant in the definition of progress, the sanctioning of schools and the general interpretation of the law.

We have rekindled the beacons of hope in communities that have, for too long, suffered from the stigma of being labeled a failing school, yet threatened them with sanctions and the threat of closure right when they have begun to demonstrate significant progress and posted dramatic numbers in terms of student achievement outcomes. Two examples I can offer you are Miami Edison and Miami Central Senior High Schools. Both schools are located in two of the poorest communities in our district. For years, the two schools had been rightly labeled as "in need of improvement" and rated F by the State. Last year, both schools earned a grade of "C" and posted their highest graduation rates since the advent of accountability. In fact, Miami Edison increased its graduation rate—in one school year—a remarkable twenty percentage points. Yet, despite these undeniable improvements, both schools were threatened with closure by the State in both 2010 and 2011 due to prescriptive and escalating sanctions deemed necessary by the state in its interpretation of NCLB. Certainly this is an unintended consequence of federal and state laws that do not work in concert with one another.

In fact, we now know that a school can be in full compliance with NCLB and not be raising student achievement, while it is possible to raise student achievement substantially and not be in compliance with the law's current requirements. These nuances will surely need to be ironed out with the reauthorization of ESEA.

Our district has been forced to reduce its budget by over $1.6 Billion in recent years, yet we have never waivered or lost focus on the true measure of our success: our return on investment, which is reflected in individual student achievement, school performance, graduation rates, and the closing of the achievement gap for minority students and those living in poverty. We have but one strategic goal in our district and that is Student Achievement. Everything we do, every resource we invest, must be aligned to that goal or we don't do it.

Through innovation, careful planning and, yes, a measured degree of sacrifice, we have been able to protect our classrooms, maintain a high quality workforce without laying off a single full time teacher for economic reasons, and establish a healthy reserve, ensuring the District's financial position remains stable and sustainable going forward. We would not have been able to do so without the injection of dollars made available to us by the federal government. Monies from Race to the Top,

School Improvement Grant (SIG) and Title I have allowed us to continue to provide a high quality education for all of our students while investing in human capital and attracting the best and the brightest in their field to teach in our persistently low performing schools. This month, we will distribute the first round of bonuses, based on student achievement outcomes, to thousands of teachers in our district. While our state has made less and less of an investment in education, our nation has recognized that without a learned populace our position in the global marketplace as a world leader in innovation and invention is in peril. Our federal government has recognized that if these challenges are not adequately addressed, inequities in wealth and opportunity will limit our nation's economic potential and threaten our democratic ideals.

My testimony today would be incomplete without a nod to my heritage and my own personal experience. You see, today, I stand before members of Congress in the greatest nation in the world, representing a $3.6B enterprise. An enterprise that creates great Americans, that develops the mind of future scientists, teachers, and entrepreneurs, but I too am a product of the promise that is America. For I came to this country when I was just 17 years old; unable to speak the language, one of 6 siblings living in a two-room apartment in my native Portugal. Were it not for our core belief that all children can learn and that all students deserve a quality public education, I would not have broken out of my own cycle of poverty.

In closing, Congress should, and is, as evidenced by holding this very hearing today, reevaluate its role in public school accountability. Clearly, in order for us as a people to maintain our economic and democratic prosperity, we must reflect on the lessons learned from NCLB and achieve a balance between accountability and flexibility to state and local school districts. The federal government should support the state-led common core standards movement and continue to incentivize states to join the movement as well as develop and participate in assessments that evaluate mastery of said standards. It should reorient legislation away from annually escalating sanctions to a more differentiated, longer intervention period of improvement in order to allow strategies to gain traction at historically low performing schools. It should continue to invest, through programs such as Race to the Top and the SIG which assist states and districts in the development of data systems that can effectively link student achievement and teachers. Finally, as our demographic landscape continues to become more and more diverse, it should extend the window for English language acquisition from one to three years; allowing these learners a more adequate period of time before they are expected to be at-par with their native peers.

Our educational systems have evolved dramatically in the past nine years, no doubt due to the influence of legislation at both the federal and state level. It is now time for us to evolve into the next stage of standards-based, data-driven reform; shifting from the current focus on prescriptive compliance requirements that have proven to be less than effective to a more meaningful and impactful accountability model that focuses on what surely is the most important schooling outcome of all: college and career readiness, as prerequisites of graduation. We must embrace an accountability model which incentivizes innovation; one that focuses on building state and local capacity to improve learning opportunities for all students, one that invests in research, evaluation, and technical assistance, and intervenes in consistently low-performing districts and schools, but allows enough time for reforms to take hold before insisting that further sanctions be applied. We must focus on collaboration and the dissemination of best practices which can inform state and local efforts to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps; in effect, to move the discourse from crisis rhetoric to one about solutions partnerships. To achieve this, it is going to take federal, state, and local cooperation.

Recommended changes proposed by Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind)

Reauthorize and modify the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act 2001) to:

- Recognize student progress in lieu of the current all-or-nothing approach and recognize degrees of progress for schools;
- Eliminate sanctions associated with not meeting adequate year progress;
- Support uniform national assessments aligned with national standards to allow for valuable comparison of student achievement among states;
- Ensure fair accountability by providing flexibility for special education and English Language Learners (ELL's) and other formula adjustments, and by requiring identical tests for Title I and Title III students in non-public schools;
- Include other indicators for accountability such as dual enrollment industry certification, AP, graduation rates, dropout attendance suspensions in determining

AYP and align accountability standards with those in the School Improvement grant;

• Reward and retain quality teachers by supporting measures that raise pay for teachers in fields with shortages and in high-needs communities; that create career ladder paths; and that assist with rising housing costs;

• Establish new qualification requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure that teachers are highly skilled in content areas, as well as pedagogy;

• Allow districts to use Supplemental Education Services (SES) funds to provide tutoring to eligible students as well as pay for monitoring and other implementation costs of the out of the required 20% set-aside and ensure that public schools are not unfairly prevented from providing remedial services to students;

• Require that funding to SES private providers be contingent on outcomes on norm-referenced assessments developed and administered by the states and/or the district; and

• Allocate immigrant funds under Title III based on the number of recently arrived foreign-born students.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, sir. Dr. Sichel.

STATEMENT OF DR. AMY F. SICHEL, SUPERINTENDENT, ABINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. SICHEL. Thank you, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller and members of the committee. It is my pleasure to be here with you this morning. Thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the reauthorization of ESEA and specifically how No Child Left Behind Federal regulations impact public schools. I am Amy Sichel. I am superintendent of the Abington School District. I am the President of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and elected member to the governing board of the American Association of School Administrators. So it is my pleasure to represent my fellow superintendents.

Abington School District is a suburban Philadelphia district with 7,500 children, and we are both racially and economically diverse. I have 35 years of experience in one school district, Abington, with 11 years as a school superintendent. Although we have always believed in the importance of academic standards and common assessments to drive accountability, some aspects of NCLB have been extremely positive and had a very positive impact in the Abington School District. Since the early 1990s Abington has had a goal setting approach with a model of continuous improvement. NCLB required us to dig deeper by looking at the results of the disaggregated groups, as well as the all student group, and it has improved our practice of analyzing test results, strengthening teaching and learning, and produced incredible results for the Abington School District.

However, the present NCLB model as a myriad of weaknesses. To begin with, a goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014 is unrealistic. Public schools educate the best and the brightest, as well as the students with the greatest educational needs and those with the severest of disabilities. For all students the approach should be based on growth, academic and developmental, tied to academic proficiency and standards. Good teaching and learning require a standards-based curriculum with benchmarks in accountability based on multiple measures. A system based on passing or failing a single target leads to failure, failure of students, of schools and districts. It creates a lack of credibility to educators by parents and

guardians and promotes an agenda that is not in the best interest of American children.

The system of continuous improvement that is needed requires multiple assessment measures that are reliable and valid with attainable goals and the capability to document individual student and school growth.

Let me share with you a quick review of what works in the Abington School District. In reviewing our disaggregated data for NCLB, it was revealed that two distinct achievement gaps existed for African American children and for children with IEPs, special education children. In response to this information we developed a novel initiative called Opportunities to Learn, OTL. Under OTL the district tracked the secondary program for grades 7 through 12 and included to the maximum extent possible students with IEPs and all students in mainstream classes, as well as organizing the school day to provide academic supports during the day and not at the expense of the arts. The plan resulted in each core subject offering only two levels of a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, a college preparatory course or an honors or AP course. Formative assessments were used to identify student's needs so that those who were not proficient on the Pennsylvania system of assessment received individualized support.

Since the implementation of OTL the disparity between the performance of the district's all student group and the district's African American and IEP groups has narrowed significantly. Along with this our percent of students going on to postsecondary education has increased from 80 to 90 percent. Our data is in my written testimony.

In addition to all schools attaining adequate earlier progress for the last 3 years, our elementary schools have attained it since 2002. The opportunities to learn initiative with the focus on data driven strategies address the challenges and attain positive results. These successes and documented achievement levels should be a part of the reauthorization of ESEA with the following provisions:

One, invest in and support a standards-based assessment academic model driven by assessment and accountability.

Two, support a growth model for student achievement that focuses on individual student performance with multiple measures.

Three, allow States and districts to support different growth rates based on the individual needs of students.

Four, base ESEA on attainable goals for all students and subgroups congruent with State standards.

Five, encourage the use of research-based approaches based on, quote, what works to make instructional and organizational decisions.

Six, feature school districts that demonstrate that we can produce proficient students and encourage others to replicate those successful models.

Seven, and most importantly, place the locus of control for accountability at the State level with local districts developing assessment models based upon individual student growth. Local school districts, such as Abington, are moving in ways that improve academic outcomes for all children.

Please stop focusing on punitive accountability measures prescribed by NCLB. This disheartens students, parents, teachers and administrators and undermines the success of public education in this country.

Thank you for your time this morning.

[The statement of Ms. Sichel follows:]

Prepared Statement of Dr. Amy F. Sichel, Superintendent of Schools, Abington School District

Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and specifically how the No Child Left Behind federal regulations impact public schools throughout the nation, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and specifically in the Abington School District. My testimony is from the perspective of a public school educator, with a breadth of educational knowledge and experience.

I am Amy Sichel, the Superintendent of Schools for the Abington School District in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania as well as an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. I serve as the President of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and am an elected representative of the Governing Board for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to the American Association of School Administrators. Abington School District is a suburban Philadelphia district with 7500 students and is both racially and socioeconomically diverse. I have over 35 years of experience as an educator, which includes 11 years as a school Superintendent, all within the Abington School District.

I am here to comment about the impact of the NCLB federal regulations and reporting requirements on school districts and will provide examples from our experiences in the Abington School District. Please know that the Abington School District complies with all federal regulations, those of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and that of our local school board.

It is important to begin by stating that some aspects of NCLB have had a positive impact on the schools throughout the nation and specifically the Abington School District. In Abington we have always believed in the importance of having academic standards and common assessments to drive accountability. Since the early 1990s, the Abington Schools have used a goal-setting approach based on a model of continuous improvement for all students. Beginning in 2002, Pennsylvania's compliance with NCLB reinforced our long practice of accountability. In fact, the NCLB requirement to "dig deeper" by looking at the results for disaggregated groups as well as at the results for all students has improved our practice, strengthened teaching and learning, and produced incredible achievement results in Abington.

However, it is important to note that the present NCLB model has a myriad of weaknesses. To begin, the goal of 100% proficiency by 2014 is unrealistic. This is equivalent to a "one size fits all" model. As you know, public education in the United States is offered to everyone regardless of race, creed, economic status, etc. Public schools educate the best and the brightest as well as the students with the greatest educational needs and with the severest disabilities. For all students, the approach should be based on growth and tied to academic proficiency and standards. One test, at one snapshot in time with a goal of all students achieving proficiency, continues to reinforce a Pass/Fail model and does not promote improved growth in student achievement. An accountability matrix based on 45 cells of All Students with disaggregated groups to define Adequate Yearly Progress is unrealistic and archaic. Good teaching and learning require a standards-based curriculum, with benchmarks and accountability based upon multiple measures. A system based upon Passing or Failing a single target just leads to failure—failure of students, of schools, and of districts; creates a lack of credibility of educators by parents/guardians; and promotes an agenda that is not in the best interest of the American children.

A system of continuous improvement for all students is needed. It must include multiple assessment measures that are reliable and valid with attainable goals and the capability to document individual student and school growth. Let me share with you a quick review of what works in the Abington School District where the success for each student is expected, monitored, and being accomplished.

As I already mentioned, since the early 1990's, Abington School District has used a continuous improvement model to establish academic goals for each school. Prior to NCLB, Abington's principals and teachers were given annual goals, which were based upon the expectation that, when compared to the previous school year, at

least 5% more students would be proficient as demonstrated by state-driven and local measures. All schools had improvement teams where administrators, teachers, and parents developed research-based strategies to foster student achievement. Abington School District's overall performance on standardized and state-required achievement tests has been significantly above state and national averages. With the enactment of NCLB, annual goals have been based upon the percents of students demonstrating proficiency as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In cases where a school has met or exceeded the state requirement, we have raised the bar for that school.

In reviewing disaggregated data for NCLB in 2005, it was revealed that two distinct achievement gaps existed: the achievement levels of African-American students and the achievement levels of Special Education students.

In response to this information, I developed a novel initiative called Opportunities to Learn (OTL), presented it to the board of school directors and, with their approval, began our work toward providing a rigorous academic curriculum for all students. OTL began with a district-wide committee consisting of more than 100 teachers, administrators, students, parents, school board members, and community representatives. The committee focused on issues related to identifying, collecting, and using student data to improve instruction and achievement; student placement in academic courses; support systems to help students achieve; and parental involvement. Under this initiative, the district developed and implemented a plan to "detrack" the secondary school program (grades 7 through 12); to include, to the maximum extent possible, students with IEPs in mainstreamed classes; and to organize the school day schedule to provide academic support opportunities, where needed, during the school day and not at the expense of the Arts.

The plan resulted in each core subject area offering only two levels of rigorous college preparatory instruction: a college preparatory course and an Honors/Advanced Placement course. This approach was based on the research approach of Dr. Jeannie Oakes of the Ford Foundation and formerly a professor at UCLA and the model endorsed by Mr. Jay Mathews, education columnist for The Washington Post. Students were given increased opportunities to apply to take Honors/Advanced Placement courses. Courses in mathematics and science were strengthened, and expectations were raised so that all students would complete both Algebra I and biology in one academic year rather than over two years. Formative assessments for benchmarking were used to identify students' needs so that all students who were not proficient on the previous administration of the Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) received individualized support. These interventions included remedial courses during the school day in English/social studies and in mathematics/science, which complemented the college preparatory program and were included in students' schedules. Local assessments were used to monitor progress. Planned courses of study were revised to emphasize Pennsylvania's Academic Standards. Essentially, the goal of academic proficiency became the priority by providing rigorous college and career preparatory instruction to all.

Since the implementation of Opportunities to Learn, the disparity between the performance of the district's All Student group and the district's African-American and IEP disaggregated groups has been narrowed significantly. In particular, at the secondary level the disparity between the percentages of the All Student group and those of the disaggregated groups achieving advanced/proficient scores on the PA assessment in reading and mathematics has been reduced by anywhere from 7 to 36 percentage points. In mathematics the African-American group has increased from 54% to 60% proficient and the IEP group from 28% to 61% proficient in five years. The African-American group has risen from 63% to 68% proficient in reading, and the IEP group from 34% to 66% proficient in reading. This has all been accomplished with the percent of the All Student group achieving proficiency being far greater than the average percents of students who are proficient at both the state and national level.

In addition, cohort data for students with IEPs provide evidence that, as students moved from grade 8 to grade 11, the percentage of those who are advanced/proficient on the state assessment and on other measures increased as did the percentage of students passing courses. Most importantly, all Abington School District schools attained Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last three years and the elementary schools since 2002. The Opportunities to Learn initiative, with the focus on data-driven strategies, addressed the challenges and achieved these positive results. Also, we realized some unexpected positive results, for over the five-year period of the initiative, the percent of students graduating and continuing on to higher education increased from 80% to 90% with over $4 million in scholarships awarded to the graduating class in June of 2011. The College Board recognized the Abington School District with an AP Honor Roll designation. This recognition reflects the dis-

trict's increased enrollment in AP courses and continuing to maintain high results on the AP tests. There is no doubt that the disaggregated groups, as well as the All Student group, benefited greatly.

All involved have taken time to reflect about this initiative and its results, because it has not only benefited the students but has also increased our knowledge with respect to focused, carefully crafted, goal-oriented results based upon academic standards and multiple assessments as well as with respect to the role of leadership as in affecting system change. The staff, community, and the entire district administration rolled up their sleeves and demonstrated a commitment to the common goal of "Excellence is our Standard and Achievement is the Result!"

These successes and documented increases in student achievement lead me to ask you to reauthorize ESEA with the following provisions:

1. Invest in and support a standards-based academic model driven by assessment and leading to accountability.
2. In ESEA, support a growth model which focuses on individual student performance with multiple measures and approaches to promote and document student achievement. Use of standardized measures, formative assessments, etc., which are reliable and valid with multiple pathways to document student growth are required.
3. Allow states and districts to recognize and support different growth rates based upon the individual abilities and needs of students.
4. Base ESEA on believable and attainable goals and expectations for all students and subgroups congruent with state academic standards.
5. Encourage the use of research-based approaches based on "what works" to make instructional and organizational decisions.
6. Investigate and research school districts throughout the country that demonstrate that we can produce proficient students. Feature these districts and schools nationally and help others to replicate these successful models, demonstrating "what works."
7. Most importantly, place the locus of control for accountability at the state level with local districts developing assessment models based upon individual student needs for growth.

Local school districts, such as Abington, are moving in ways that improve academic outcomes for all children for we are accountable to our students, our parents, our community, our local school board, and our state. All too often successful models rarely receive attention and recognition. Please give us the benefit of the doubt and stop focusing on the punitive accountability measures prescribed by NCLB. This disheartens students, parents, teachers, and administrators and undermines the success of public education in this country.

Thank you for your time this morning.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Dr. Sichel. Thank you to all the witnesses for terrific testimony and for participating with us today as we grapple with a pretty, pretty tough objective here. I think Mr. Miller and I talked many times, and there are times when we are in total agreement. And usually that total agreement centers around much of what you talked about; that is, you have to have data, you have to have information, you have to have it disaggregated. I think all of you mentioned that at one point or another. And it is clear that that is an outgrowth of the No Child Left Behind law. And I find a widespread acceptance of that notion that you need this data, and it needs to be broken out and disaggregated.

And then we start disagreeing on about what ought to be next and we continue to grapple. So it is very important to us to have you here today and listen to what you are doing to make sure that you have got a good accountability and assessment system.

Ms. Skandera, you talked about the A to F system, which sort of grew out of Florida. Can you talk about how you implement that and how that works and how that helps you in assessing and ensuring that there is accountability?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, with the A through F system it allows us, as I mentioned earlier, to dif-

ferentiate between our schools in a more effective manner. Today, according to No Child Left Behind, 87 percent of our schools are failing. This will allow us to go beyond that pass-fail measurement.

In the school grade calculation for elementary and middle schools we have an expectation to measure 50 percent based on our students on grade level, so capturing some of those things that we already captured through No Child Left Behind and AYP. But in addition, we are measuring 50 percent based on growth and progress of our students. And we are looking at that through a valued-added model. And in addition, we are looking at other academic indicators for a small percentage of the school grade that are proven and linked to improved student achievement.

So at the elementary and middle school level those are the things that we are focusing on with a double emphasis on our lowest 25 percent of performing students.

At the high school level we are looking at cohort growth, graduation rates and graduation rate growth, as well as other college and career readiness indicators, such as ACT, PSAT, vocational education programs certified nationally and linked to graduation.

Chairman KLINE. Who assigns the grade?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the State assigns the grade based on student achievement data provided by districts and schools. We do the calculation and then provide that back to our schools so that they do provide the data, our schools and districts.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you. Ms. Hawley, where did the name Red Pump School come from? That was the subject of some discussion up here and I drew the straw. I have to ask.

Ms. HAWLEY. It is the chosen footwear. No.

Chairman KLINE. I asked for that, okay.

Ms. HAWLEY. It is the name of the road. It is very creative.

Chairman KLINE. Okay. Mystery solved. I drew the short straw back here and we had to know, so thank you.

You indicated in your testimony that there were overly prescriptive Federal rules on schools, and I think we have heard that theme often, and that sometimes those rules involving the AYP system actually hurt your ability to improve instruction. Did I hear that right? And if that is so, can you give me some example of that?

Ms. HAWLEY. Yes. Because currently the program is set up that, AYP is set up that it is a one-size-fits-all. And what hurts us is the tamping down onto the school systems, local school systems of specific standards and regulations, while we at the local level are trying to help individual students progress, but there is a disconnect between Federal standards and what we are doing, which is really looking at individual student progress as opposed to one standard that we hope all children will reach.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you. I am going to try to keep myself to the rule here. I have got about 20 seconds left. So what I would like to do is yield to Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you very much. And I really welcome all of your testimony. To me it is an indicator of how far we have moved from the original consideration of No Child Left Behind. At that time, if we had talked about Common Core standards we probably would have been lynched, but now the governors have taken on

that decision and they have decided that they want this for their States, and I think they see it as part of the economic competitive model, either you are going to have these standards and students performing at these standards or you are not.

The question comes, if that is the North Star, if those are the standards, then a lot of things can flow from that in terms of flexibility, a growth model can flow from that. I remember my State of California wanted a growth model about 7 or 8 years ago and when they published it, a good day would be when you grew to nowhere, a bad day would be when you could get credit for growth and yet the student was farther behind. So that kind of was a bad data system. That was something I didn't want to invest in.

So the question really is, that if you assume Common Core standards and the assessment process that is being developed again with competing forms of the groups of States that are working on this, then at that point you really then have the ability to talk about the information you would receive out of the assessments, both for teacher evaluation, for student evaluation and for school evaluation. And then comes the question of multiple measures. You cited a series of multiple measures that look into schools, really most of which were related to academic performance, but because students are taking AP courses or they are taking national courses or ACT, what have you, on graduation. But every time you start this discussion, because people want to come in and talk about the football team, about the spirit of the school, is it clean, has it been painted, all important, but I don't think it tells you what you want to know about whether or not you are getting a return on investment.

I started a discussion on No Child Left Behind by saying that in my district I didn't believe that a huge number of my parents were getting any return on their investment because their kids were hidden in this process and that is history.

So I would just like you to address this question because the extent to which we have confidence in the Common Core standards that the governors have developed, a lot of flexibility, a lot of things flow from that. And I would just like to know how you think that plays itself out across students, schools and teachers.

Ms. Skandera, you get to go first.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I do think the fundamental question is are we measuring inputs or outputs. When it comes to our expectations for our kids in the State of New Mexico, and I believe when we look across this Nation, we want to ask the question are we seeing improved student achievement. So when it comes to the query around multiple measures I think the fundamental question is are the things that we are using to measure, are they measuring student achievement and are they linked to improved student achievement via research. And so at the end of the day I also have heard a lot of conversation even within our State around those inputs, extracurricular activities, et cetera. And I would say we need to hold a high bar when it comes to improved student achievement and our expectations around accountability.

Ms. HAWLEY. Looking from the school level, what we need to look at in terms of multiple assessments is more ongoing assessments

so that we can monitor the progress of the student, and it needs to come from the local level; that is, specific to the needs of that local school system, and need to be a variety of assessments that are both formative and summative so that we can look at total progress, not just one snapshot of a child, which I think we all—it sounds like we agree to that. But the benchmarks looking at ongoing progress so that we can then individualize where we need to really build up students and their achievement as we go along as opposed to waiting until that standardized test and then getting the results a couple of months later and then saying, oh, you know, we could have, so this way we can be more prescriptive and diagnostic as we move along to truly help build student achievement.

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Miller, members of the committee, I think the reasonable approach to district accountability, school accountability is one that brings about the hybrid model that takes into account both specific proficiency targets but values and credits, growth and learning gains towards those goals. That is what the Florida system is based on. There is incredible credit given to, for example, the lowest quartile of children, which are in many ways representative of the subgroups, the aggregates of the subgroups envisioned under No Child Left Behind.

A model that recognizes both where we need to go, where we are and the growth towards that target is a reasonable model. It does not discourage communities; it does not confuse communities and gives credit for good teaching.

I will give you an example. After the devastating earthquake that took place in Port au Prince in Haiti a couple of years ago. We in Miami-Dade received close to 2,000 children. We received children who were 15, 16 years of age that were functionally illiterate in both languages, in Haitian Creole and English. Actually didn't speak any English and they couldn't write their own language. Yet by age they were placed in a high school.

The question here is, is there enough time afforded to them to reach that proficiency target within a reasonable timeline without disparaging the effort that the teachers and the leaders in the schools that they led put into that effort.

So I think that growth from that perspective is something that needs to be acknowledged. I will agree also with the premise that has been already explained, one that in fact values student outcomes above adult inputs. The day of just simply hugging and loving a kid and hoping that he or she will learn as a function of that is not sufficient, and if you cannot measure it I am really not certain what I will be able to tell the parent or a future employer as far as the skill set that this child will provide.

This is no longer a skill set conversation, it is a will set. We know exactly what it will take to teach America's children. Whether or not we have the resolve to do it within the timeline that is required of us so we do not lose our strategic position economically speaking in the world, that is the big question to be answered. But I think a hybrid model that takes into account, again, proficiency targets as goals, but recognizes and rewards, gives credit for the learning gains made in a process is one idea whose time has come.

Ms. SICHEL. Thank you for the opportunity. There is no question that we need a vast accountability model. And the accountability

model in Pennsylvania in the case of the Abington School District is extremely successful. It uses a system called e-metrics which incorporates all the AYP information, but most importantly there is a second system called the Pennsylvania Value Added System. And in this system you have every student's data. You can look at their growth month to month, year to year and over time. By doing this we can see if an individual child, a classroom, an entire third grade or an entire school is making growth.

To this data we can add what is called the Pennsylvania Getting Results Plan. That plan was developed for schools that did not meet adequate yearly progress. In the Abington School District we require, specifically me, every single principal with their teachers to complete a Getting Results Plan regardless of their status because all of our schools have made AYP. In that plan we look at the root causes, we look at the strengths in each classroom, we look at the needs. That includes those children that are advanced, whether they need to continue in their advancement, as well as those that are basic and below basic, and from there we create individual plans that are the basis for our remediation and our intervention.

This has to be the basis to any school's plan. And frankly the days of focusing on football are over.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you. Mr. Petri, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you all. Thank you for your commitment to education and for your testimony here today. I just want to ask your reaction to—in our State we, the State, has not gotten permission from the Federal Department of Education, but it still finds it very valuable and uses as part of its assessment, and we were doing every 3-year assessment of kids long before No Child Left Behind, something called adaptive testing. It is computer based. If a student isn't answering the questions it asks simpler and simpler questions. Or someone can even assist the student in operating the computer. So the full range of students can be—and if a kid is acing it, it asks higher and higher. So it assesses above and below grade and is an instant feedback practically. And so it is a good tool for the administrators and for the teacher and for the parents. And you can then have a growth model built on that. It has not been allowed, although they are starting to soften on it because they have been arguing it in Washington, students should only be asked to that grade level, which I don't quite understand, and that all kids should take the same test. And it is the same test, but questions may be asked differently as the child goes forward. So they say that is not the same test for everyone, which it is the same computer program.

Anyway, could you react to that at all? Is that the type of thing that we should be using or that you are already using in Pennsylvania or in Florida or planning to use in New Mexico or in our area?

Ms. SICHEL. I would be happy to address that. One of our intervention approaches that we use when we analyze our data is called the Compass Learning System, and we have a second one called Study Island. They are both computer based, they have an adaptive system. The student can spend some time on these systems, both

in the school and at home if they have access. And we also have created access in our public libraries. They go in at their grade level because we want everyone to be dealing at the rigorous grade level. However, if the student does not reach proficiency on some of the assessment items in there, it brings them back, it reteaches. And for the younger kids it has all kinds of built-in rewards with whistles and bells and scorekeeping.

I can give you a very specific example of a child who is not proficient on the 11th grade PSSA. When we do that, when a child is not proficient they are required to take remedial classes. This student was very interested in taking an advanced level science class. He committed to his principal that he would get on at that time the Study Island program a minimum of 20 minutes a day, and that by the time the next Pennsylvania system of assessing would come around he would be proficient. That student did it, we logged his time, he took the test in December. He not only moved from basic to proficient, he ended up being advanced.

So with motivated students this is a good system, but it has to be monitored by staff and we have to encourage children to use it.

Thank you.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, if I might just add, I do think you will see across States the sophistication of assessments is every year we are seeing greater and greater degrees of sophistication so we are able to measure at different points in time growth, et cetera. And I would think that is absolutely taking place. But I think the fundamental key in the assessment system is that we continue to have high expectations so when it comes to the Federal Government and its role with States that we still hold a high bar and that we have an expectation of an outcome.

I recognize that with No Child Left Behind the 2014 deadline is something that we will be passing soon. But I also think to lose sight of the expectation that all our students can learn that we should be closing the achievement gap and that even on a growth trajectory we should expect proficiency as an important part of the process.

Mr. PETRI. My time is getting short. I just want to switch really briefly to one other area, and that is when we talk about accountability. This is the Federal Government so it tends to drive accountability toward some sort of Federal standard. What are the strategies that you are using for accountability to parents, because obviously it helps a lot if they partner in the process, if they value the process, if they support their children, if there is a lot of feedback and communication back and forth? I know in districts now with everyone getting more or less on line teachers are able to have websites and posts and basically communicate—Johnny didn't, or Juan or whatever, didn't bring his homework to school today, was there a problem at home or whatever, rather than waiting until the test, and then why did the kid fail. Is this an important part of what you are doing, Mr. Carvalho?

Chairman KLINE. If I may interrupt, I am sorry. I see the heads nodding. I think that was an answer. And the gentleman's time is expired. The extra time that I give the ranking member doesn't apply to the rest of you.

Mr. Kildee, you are recognized.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been teaching since 1954. I have always believed that education is a local function, a State responsibility, and finally a Federal concern.

Is the Federal Government taking on a larger role than we should? What are we doing well and what are we doing poorly? [Question partially inaudible due to microphone malfunction.]

Mr. CARVALHO. I think there has got to be a balance and respect for, number one, the local and State responsibility for a high-performing educational system that benefits all students at all levels. But, also, that balance needs to take into account what I believe is an important aspect of student accountability, which is districts' ability, educated parents ability, business leaders, consumers of public education products' ability to gauge their own effectiveness compared to 49 other States in the country and, perhaps more importantly, their own States in America's competitiveness, vis-a-vis the rest of the world. And without having some degree of comparative ability to determine where we are among the Nation and where our Nation as a whole is vis-a-vis their competitors, whether it is western Europe, the emerging nations of Asia, central South America, then I think we are shortchanging ourselves and our ability to make rapid improvements with this stimulus and catalyst that is this concern for economic development and skill set building on the part of our workforce.

So, for me, this balance between the rights of States and districts that own the responsibility of providing a high-quality educational program, juxtaposed with this concern of mine to know where my children, from pre-K, kindergarten all the way through the adult system, are vis-a-vis 49 other States. But I am also concerned with our own performance compared to children in India, in Singapore, in Brazil, and in Finland; and without some degree of measure, some degree of accountability that provides an umbrella for that comparison it becomes incredibly difficult.

Mr. KILDEE. Ms. Hawley?

Ms. HAWLEY. Yes, I do agree there needs to be a balance and there needs to be some Federal role in providing support and guidelines and, to some extent, standards, but there should be some ability at the local level—local and State level to set up the specifics of the accountability system. Because each area of the country is very different, and we need to be able to understand our local system as well as what is important in our State and make those decisions specific to those particular needs.

I had another thought——

Mr. KILDEE. [Question inaudible due to microphone malfunction.]

Chairman KLINE. Unfortunately, the gentleman's time has expired. Too bad, because I would like to hear the answer to that.

Dr. Roe, you are recognized.

Mr. ROE. Mr. Chairman, thank you all. So is all education—[Question inaudible due to microphone malfunction.]

Chairman KLINE. Excuse me. Dr. Roe, I don't think your mic is working. You may just have to speak up.

Mr. ROE. You mean my outside voice?

Chairman KLINE. There you go. Thank you. And staff is going to work on this problem. Thank you.

Mr. ROE. [Question partially inaudible due to microphone malfunction.] I came here, the most frustrating group of people were doctors. Now it is teachers. You all four say I absolutely believe the most important person in the education is teacher, great quality teacher, a great [Inaudible]. We saw a local school, I live in Tennessee, east Tennessee, mountain Appalachia, and in one of our schools we changed one person—the principal—and it became one of the top 10 performing schools in our State. I think you see that.

Question number one, how do we attract the best and brightest in the classroom and stay there, because if you look at the data as we all have,our young teachers, frustrated and not next [Inaudible] elementary school 90 percent. And they have a higher approval rating.

Let me stop at that question and get that answered.

Ms. SICHEL. I would be happy to address that.

What is important to address, the best and the brightest, is to make sure that teachers, principals, as well as members of the superintendent's cabinet and superintendent has input into what is going to happen in each and every one of those schools and for the responsibility of the children. There has got to be plans that are collaboratively based with parents involved, and people have to feel that there is a return in their investment to come to school every day.

So, first, there is the intrinsic desire of teachers to want to be good teachers.

Secondly, let's get realistic. Teachers have to be paid at a rate to which they can afford to live and work well. We have made some progress in that area, but in the areas where you can't retain staff you have to look at what is going on in terms of the salary levels.

Fortunately, I come from a suburban Philadelphia school district that has a salary plan that is moderate compared to the county. That moderate ability allows us to attract terrific teachers; and because they have input into their future with goal setting and the materials that they need to get the job done, they don't leave.

Mr. ROE. And I agree with you on that. We were able to, as a city where I live, to pay more than the county teachers did, and I think we had a chance to do that.

Let me give you a brief example of why I think the AYP is flawed, and you can step right in.

One of my good friends and former patients is a teacher in an elementary school. I go every year and read in her second grade class. We did that this year, and I was talking about some of her students. She said, this young boy will be back with me next year. I said, why is he going to come back? Is he not able to read? No, he has missed 60 days of school this year. Why did he miss 60 days of school? Because his mother wouldn't get up and get him out of bed to get him to the corner to get to the bus to get the school.

So now my friend, who is an excellent teacher, because he is not making adequate yearly progress, is a bad teacher.

That is a flawed system. How do we do something about that? I heard all four of you say the current system is flawed, and I totally agree with that.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, if I might, I think the distinction I would say is a shift from a focus on credentialing and years of

experience when we look at the effectiveness of teachers to effectiveness linked to improved student achievements. And I think you look across the Nation and you will see States are consistently looking to create that link and say we have an expectation; and when we meet that expectation, we want to reward, honor our teachers and our school leaders in a meaningful way when it comes to pay and those things that are most important to our teachers.

But shifting the conversation from how many years have I been teaching and what degree do I have to what is happening for my students today and are they learning is a fundamental shift that I think needs to take place if we want to see the honor that you are talking about. I do think the Federal role in that is to acknowledge that important shift that States are making and give them the flexibility to emphasize those things that matter most when it comes to our kids.

Mr. ROE. And how do you answer this question? I told you I have been talking to a lot of teachers. They have a tremendous frustration in our State of Tennessee about we are just teaching to the test. And after the achievement tests are over, the kids are staring out the door because they know that they have had the achievement. How do you answer that? Because they are frustrated by, hey, I am just teaching to a test.

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, if I may address that and to go back to your initial question, because I think one thing that is lost in this argument or this question about what would it take to get the right people in front of our kids, we usually reserve that conversation for superintendents, for principals, and for teachers themselves. We completely discount this issue of teacher preparation formation.

Somehow we are dependent on the output of colleges and universities, colleges of education. Let me submit to you that I agree with my colleague that we value extremely individuals with Master's Degrees and EdDs, and we focus little attention on student outcomes and the ability of these folks to deliver on student outcomes.

So tough questions must be asked about the Nation's and States' willingness to push this envelope of teacher preparation formation, what it takes to become a teacher. If you look at the highest performing nation in the world right now, Finland, Finland recruits from the very top 10 percent of their graduates to be eligible to teach kids. And, yes, it was, as was said previously, in the compensation system for teachers it is not that divergent from that of an attorney or doctor. Let the market forces decide that.

But I do think that once you have a strong teacher preparation formation, then you need to have a system that incentivizes great performance and particularly incentivizes teachers to go into the toughest, to teach schools perhaps with up-front bonuses, if those recognize already performance demonstrated elsewhere. And when there is recognition specific to student outcomes that results, as I said, in incentives and bonuses for great performance for teachers. I believe that is how you move the needle.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Hinojosa.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller.

While No Child Left Behind has a flawed accountability system that needs to be improved, the Federal Government, in my opinion, must ensure that States and local school systems work to prepare all students to be college and career ready.

My first question is addressed to Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

I have read that you have a very impressive track record making significant strides in improving student achievement and graduation rates in your school district. There is a bill, the Graduation Promise Act, H.R. 778, which I reintroduced in this 112th Congress. Its supports a State-led system for identifying the lowest-performing high schools and implementing interventions based on their unique challenges.

In your opinion, how do we create an accountability and school improvement system that makes sense, one that leads to effective school reform, especially for our Nation's lowest-performing secondary schools?

Mr. CARVALHO. To the chair, thank you for the question, sir.

I think to a certain extent some of those systems in some States already exist. Certainly in Florida I believe that Florida's accountability system already puts an adequate amount of pressure on districts to ensure that high schools move swiftly from potential dropout factories in America to beacons of hope for communities that produce a highly qualified workforce that is ready to compete.

And the way to do that, number one, is by addressing not just academic adequacies. It is by simultaneously addressing workforce, workplace adequacies alongside personal and civic adequacies. And those last two, for whatever reason, have in many instances departed our public school systems. They are important, personal, civic, workplace, and academic adequacies for all kids.

Second, the way you reach that state of high performing high schools is by not compromising in any way on teacher and leader quality. And this addresses the comments of the representative a little while ago.

You need to recruit the very best principal, the leader who is empowered with making decisions that allow him to select the very best teachers that have the right balance of skill and will set. Meaning they understand instructional strategy, they understand data analysis and use data to drive instruction and then have the will for the job. They understand the communities they serve.

Three, they have the backbone and the support of a system that understands the predicaments of schools in a Miami-Dade. DATA/Com serves that. I am directly involved in supporting high school performance and principals.

Let me close by saying this, and I think this addresses part of your question. We have been dealing with this issue and I think it is prevalent in every one of your comments and certainly our own: rights of States and local systems versus the Federal Government. Here is the way I see it.

States build the road of student achievement and accountability. It is up to the Federal Government to install the guardrail to make sure nobody falls off. The road is ultimately the responsibility of our States. And I think this perfect balance between both account-

ability systems will lead to a more educated workforce at some point in the near future.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you for your response. I am very interested in listening to how your district addressed the needs of the English language learners and students with disabilities and minority students.

Mr. CARVALHO. To the chair, that is the beauty of public education is that all means all. Under the eyes of God, we have the responsibility to teach all kids, not being selective on the basis of their own disability or their ability to speak the language but being absolutely concerned with the full potential they have before them.

So in our district we have a history of developing the very best in the Nation, the ability to teach children who either immigrate into this country or who are born to first-generation parents. Not using poverty or language as excuses for their achievement deficit but using what research provides is the best way of catching them up. Putting the very best teachers in front of them. In some cases, providing them with double dosing of language and math; and, yes, in some instances, using the very best strategies to pick them up where they are and taking them to where they need to be. Offering them before and after school tutorial programs. Enforcing almost a mandatory Saturday school program called the Success Academy to bring these students into school using, in many instances, Federal resources such as Title I and Title III dollars.

I think those are just some of the strategies we have employed to, in just a few years, dramatically increase graduation rates.

I have one high school, Edison Senior High School, it was an F just a few years ago. When I became superintendent, we had nine schools and the threat of the State of being shut down for performance. Every one of those schools was high poverty and high minority demographic composition. We didn't accept poverty or disability or a minority composition as excuses. We leveraged great teachers, in some cases moving out, replacing 80 percent of the teachers. Yes, in many cases, in this case, firing all nine principals and replacing them with the most effective people I could find, regardless of whether or not they looked like the communities they served. Because it is time to appoint the very best people to the most challenging conditions. And that has made a world difference.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you for your response.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentleman.

Dr. Heck, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HECK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and thank you all for the truly outstanding testimony that you provided here this morning.

I represent the Clark County school district in southern Nevada, the fifth-largest school district in the country, over 300,000 students, large homeless, ESL, transient student population, with urban, suburban, and rural schools spread across 8,000 square miles. So to say that we have some interesting challenges is really an understatement.

In preparing for this committee meeting, I met with my K-12 advisory group while we were back home in August, and so the questions I have today are issues that they have raised.

First, we heard a lot the of talk about the AYP process and how it has failed schools. I heard from two teachers. One, Ms. Donadio, who is the principal at the Foothills High School, talked about how their school failed to make AYP because five students out of the entire student body failed to show proficiency in math.

Another teacher, Mr. Hale, who is a teacher at one of our magnet programs, the Aviation Academy at Rancho High School, talked about how 36 of his students scored perfect scores on calculus but yet their school was labeled as needs improvement. Their issue revolved about the end count. And the fact that while we try to look for new accountability measures, while giving flexibility to the States, it seems that subgroup numbers and how people are subgrouped differ from State to State.

So how do we achieve consistency in the end count while allowing flexibility across States.

Ms. SICHEL. I would be happy to address that, Chairman. I think what is important here is that we instead of focusing on just AYP, we focus on growth. If you focus on growth of each child and make sure that each child continues to improve, you won't have five students keeping you from making AYP or the 36 children who had excellent scores still having that school being on an AYP list. The key is that if schools make growth and if children make growth, there should be targets that show that that demonstrated growth makes a difference and that is what creates a school that is successful or not. Lack of growth should be what is it is all about, not one single target one point in time.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, I couldn't agree with my colleague more. I would just emphasize two things though. We talked a lot about what is wrong with No Child Left Behind and the things that need to be fixed. There are two things that I think are really important that we don't lose—maybe more than two, but I will highlight two.

One is that every child's expectation of growth, one of things No Child Left Behind does is look at subgroups. We need to ensure that we continue to hold ourselves accountable for every child and their progress and growth.

Secondly, the emphasis on reading, a minute ago we talked a little bit about the importance of graduation rates, et cetera. Annie Casey Foundation just put out a study this year that said third grade reading, if a student can read at third grade they are four times more likely to graduate. I think it is important we don't lose sight of the core, the basics that No Child Left Behind holds us accountable for.

Mr. HECK. The other issued they raised had to do with SES and the Title I set-aside. And they felt that it really impacted few students for the amount of money expended and there was a lack of vendor accountability. I would wonder if you share that opinion of SES, and if so, what types of measures can we look at putting in place to make sure that there is value added to the program?

Mr. CARVALHO. I will take that, Mr. Chairman, at the expense of upsetting the lobbying core attached to SES providers. Look, Miami Dade is—I apologize, I am a plain speaking person. Miami-Dade is the fourth largest in the Nation, Clark County is fifth largest, and I have had terrific conversations with your superintendent,

who is sending a team of individuals to our district to look at some of the improvements we have made.

By the way, keep trying to keep up to number 4. At one point I thought you would grow into number 4 in the Nation.

The interesting thing about SES is, number one, if done right with the appropriate individuals, providing tutorial services, bring value added based on best in class teaching strategies, it makes a great deal of sense. But there is a set-aside that in Miami-Dade results in $26 million invested or provided with very little say on my part, very little oversight or accountability attached to 400 different providers, 400 different providers. In the State of Florida, the entire State of Florida, there are 600 approved providers, 400 of them are doing business in Miami-Dade with very little accountability and a great deal of money.

Those are two ingredients that spell out disaster. I can tell you that we are unfortunately stuck with third party entities, and consume a great deal of time investigating fraudulent activity. And if you look at the research because there is little accountability and very, very little uniform accountability for performance attached to the value added results at the intervention of these providers, it is very hard for us to know what is going on and incredibly difficult for us to opine to parents as to what is best for their kids.

So I will give you a couple of ideas. Number one, we have been able to, get through recent State legislation that we advocated for in Tallahassee, the adoption of a single instrument for assessment, establish a pre and post test for SES providers, so that every single kid, regardless of who tutors them, has to take the pre and post assessment. So at least there is uniformity of results that parents then can use as wise consumers of the products.

Two, I do think that school systems and our system via waiver is a provider itself, but school systems need to be empowered with more ability to utilize those dollars in a more strategic way that compliments thecomplements good practices their system is already employing to begin with.

Mr. HECK. I thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentleman. Ms. McCarthy.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the witnesses. This has been terrific testimony from all of you. And I happen to agree with you that every child can learn to the best of their ability if they have the tools also.

And to Mr. Carvalho, one of the things that I have felt, New York State right now is in the process of changing how our teaching colleges are teaching their teachers to be able to reform the school. This has been an ongoing issue since I first came onto this committee 15 years ago. When I graduated from nursing school, we put on our white uniform and we had to know everything when we got on that floor, and I think that is from the training that we had. And that has to be into our teaching colleges mainly. In my opinion, today the world is a different place, and we have to send more experienced teachers, especially into the early grades.

One of the things I wanted to ask you, no one talked about, and I think this is one of the biggest problems we have seen when I go into my schools, the kids start to do really, really well in the

lower grades, then we get to the middle school and we start to see a great deal of loss of educating and the kids start to drop out.

So what have you been able to do to be able to look at that and how have you been able to hopefully prevent it?

When you talk about flexibility, I would also like to see a little more examples. Everyone throws that word out, flexibility, flexibility. We understand that schools and the States need some flexibility, but what you are exactly looking for as we go forward?

And again, I think—you have talked about a lot, especially for the superintendents on what they have been able to do. The schools are the front line of student learning, but they cannot meet high expectations without support and involvement from their districts and the States. As both of you as district superintendents can you talk about the importance of involving districts, including things that districts can do to help schools in raising achievement and closing gaps? And some of you talked about that already. What are the consequences accountability measures should in your opinion exists for districts that fail to raise achievements or close gaps. We can't just keep closing schools. We have to have answers for those students.

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, well at the risk of maybe sounding a bit disagreeable, I do think that sometimes closing a school is legitimate. I moved to close about five schools this year because I thought they were dropout factories. Some of them were alternative education centers, where in my opinion the kids got a one-way ticket.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. When you say you closed the school, did you reopen it with a whole new fresh—I am not talking the building itself.

Mr. CARVALHO. I understand. In some cases I did and some cases I didn't. In some cases I actually closed the school and I made the school available for an independent board to come in and provide a charter option. In other instances I closed the school and created a center for middle schools to catch up, kids who were over aged, and in others the building sits empty. So I think there's room for everything.

Let me go back to your initial question because I think it is fundamentally important. If we want to address the issue of dropouts and increased graduation rates across America, we make a more robust investment in early childhood education.

What you described as this negative progression from high proficiency, high result at the elementary levels, and then see a decrease going to middle school and then a significant decrease going to senior high school, I believe in all the research, all of the peer-reviewed research, not just the think tank and foundation driven research, indicates that it is rooted on early childhood education.

Sometimes you pass the tipping point and don't recognize it until the child is in middle school. So this goes back to the point of, and there is a second tactic. I do think we prepare better, across the board better elementary school teachers in many instances than we do core subject area, secondary teachers.

And this goes to the issue I addressed earlier, the issue of teacher preparation formation. In many States to teach sixth grade math and science you need only a Bachelor's degree with one single

course during your 4 years of college in math or science. That does not give you the skill set necessary to be able to teach effectively math or science.

So it is a combination of early strategic investment in early childhood education, a clear idea how to discern the data, analyze the data, make instructional decisions based on the data that provides for differentiated instruction, reading coaches, interventionists early on, in addition to a serious conversation about teacher preparation formation, particularly for the secondary course levels.

Chairman KLINE. I am sorry, the gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. Thompson, you are recognized.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Chairman, and thanks to the panel for being here and for your expertise and your leadership in your respective areas.

The administration's ESEA blueprint and the Common Core standards intend all students to be college and career ready. How do you believe Congress should define career readiness? And would this require more than evaluation of math and science skills, but also looking at a variety of workplace skills?

Ms. SICHEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In terms of college and career ready, it is imperative that every child graduate from high schools across this country being prepared to go on to college and/or taking a career. At this point most of the careers require the kinds of skill bases that freshmen and sophomores should be able to accomplish in school. So every student has to be proficient in high level mathematics, to be able to deal with upper level science, to be able to do the problem solving and analytical thinking that relates to good reading and writing.

Think about what goes on when your car is repaired. It is no longer the days of just changing the oil. They need to know how to deal with computer programs, they need to know how to do diagnostic and intervention. These are higher level thinking skills. So it is imperative that we raise the bar for everyone.

You have an educational columnist here in Washington, Jay Mathews from the Washington Post. He talks about the fact that for students to be successful today every child needs to have the opportunity to be involved in rigorous, relevant high level academic classes. So it is important that we open the doors for everyone to be able to attain those goals.

Mr. CARVALHO. To the chairman, I would simply add to that. My colleagues spoke to the issue of academic adequacies focusing on reading, math, and science proficiencies. And those are important I believe every single child graduating high school needs to demonstrate proficiency in those.

But in addition to that, there is a value to putting some focus on workplace adequacies, those skills, the set of skills that future employers will be looking for. We have achieved that by expanding aggressively parental choices in senior high schools, offering thematic instruction through career academies, through thematic instruction providing within the public school system a wider variety of choice for parents. About 41 percent of children in Miami are in nontraditional programs. And in our career academy, specifically in high school it is biomedicine, robotics, engineering, STEM driven academies. Children both learn and develop proficiency in the core

subject areas of reading, math, science and writing. But they also begin to master industry specific adequacies that I believe are important in developing their future workplace proficiency and adequacy.

Mr. MILLER. Would the gentleman yield, Mr. Thompson?

Mr. THOMPSON. Sure.

Mr. MILLER. I don't want his question to slip away. He was asking whether or not this is the responsibility of the Federal Government or the States to set these high standards. I think that is an important distinction for the discussion in this committee. Most of you testified about support for the Common Core, which was not—that is not our work product. If you could just tell us what you think there.

Mr. THOMPSON. Just reclaiming my time, specifically and I appreciate your responses as co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, congratulations on the program that you are doing. The question was specifically should Congress define career readiness or how should Congress define career readiness?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chair, no one wants to touch that one. I would simply say that all States should be required to implement, but it should be a State decision. The expectations of high standards and rigors should be established and expected of all but States should have the opportunity to choose their standards, measured to a high bar. And to that end what it comes to is, is it an either/or or both/and. I think it is a both/and when it comes to reading and math because, as my colleagues stated, those are our fundamentals. That is a given expectation. Those are the skills that we want to build on for our workforce readiness.

Mr. THOMPSON. I think a comment, one of the flaws I see of No Child Left Behind, it appears to have been built under the premise that every child should go on to a 4-year college. That is just not true. In fact, it is not fair and fails to recognize there are many different pathways to success.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chair, just a quick follow-up on that. I do believe when we talk about reauthorization and the opportunity to acknowledge differentiated accountability, I will tell you as we look at our school grading in the State of New Mexico we are looking at nationally recognized vocational education and acknowledging that as it links to graduation as an important component as well.

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, that is why in the State of Florida there is credit given to industry certification alongside graduation rates and proficiency rates, because I think America has done a great job at convincing every kid that preparation for college is critical and I believe in that. I think we ought to prepare every kid to succeed in college, but not at the expense of demonizing the value of career technical education.

There is a reason why apprenticeship programs in Germany are high paying and high demand. And America has allowed that to go to waste shamefully. And to a certain extent I believe we have lied to kids.

I go into my senior high schools, I ask kids questions, what are you going to do after the last day of high school, and a percentage of them tell me that they will go to college to be a doctor and an attorney, and the other percentage tell me they are going to play

ball. And between those two extreme realities there is a chasm, and we need to readdress this issue of career technical education in our Nation if we are to ensure economic viability.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Carvalho, you have talked about the importance of having highly qualified math teachers. Why do you hire math teachers who are not qualified in math when there is—instead of all of those who have applied that majored in math?

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, if I understand the question correctly, I try not to if they do not meet the qualifications, but understand in most of our States, including Florida, the State certifies teachers. So there is law that basically declares the certification for a teacher. Certainly——

Mr. SCOTT. Do you have highly qualified math teachers applying for the jobs that you are ignoring?

Mr. CARVALHO. Therein lies the issue. The designation of highly qualified in my opinion does not necessarily reflect high quality for teaching in a subject area. It is pursuant to a State statute that declares those individuals highly qualified if they met the criteria required for such.

Mr. SCOTT. Is the problem that we need to instruct the superintendents to hire people who are qualified and taken the math courses instead of the ones that have not taken the math courses? It would seem to me if you have people in line for the jobs you would have hired them.

Mr. CARVALHO. Through—Mr. Chairman, I agree with you. There is an issue of scarcity of talent in a highly competitive environment. So the idea that there are a lot of individuals out there, and I think this is a concern of the Nation, ready to teach math—particularly math and science at the higher levels, is very scarce. And certainly it is our responsibility to go through the resumes of these individuals in very aggressive interviews to determine that notwithstanding those who meet and fulfill the State certification requirements we are looking for their effectiveness.

Mr. SCOTT. One of the challenges we have is when we just mandate that you hire people who have taken a lot of math courses, that is kind of meaningless if none have applied. I think you mentioned salaries. If we are not paying enough, it is not going to get people who have taken a lot of courses.

One of the things that some of us are trying to do is improve the community that the young people are in to make it more conducive to learning, to make sure the young people have early childhood education, after school programs, mentors so that when they get to school they have the support of the community.

Can you comment on the promise neighborhoods investments and how they would help you do your job?

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, I will start, our best answer to that was development of the Parent Academy. It is an academy for parents based on three specific pillars: Number one, a host of courses, about 200 different courses and a course core directory offered in 80 plus locations throughout the district, not necessarily

in schools. We offer these courses wherever parents are, specifically targeting high poverty areas and high minority areas.

The three pillars of Parent Academy are as follows: Number one, helping parents negotiate and navigate the school system on behalf of their kids. Said in a different way is inspiring parents to demand more of their school systems, know what their options are, what their rights are, and availing themselves of them.

Second pillar of the Parent Academy is helping parents negotiate their own personal development from an academic perspective, adult literacy skills, helping them become more literate so they can become a second teacher, an echo to the teaching that takes place in the school at home.

And the third pillar is helping parents negotiate civic life in America. So this issue of understanding of the Constitution and understanding of the laws of the State of Florida, so they can also provide an echo for their kids. It has been one of the most remarkable and research documented investment, and I am proud to say this does not invoke taxpayers dollars. I went to the business community with this proposition and the business community has invested in this Parent Academy. So questions on financial literacy are provided by Citibank, courses on workforce development specific to key industries are provided by Braman Automotive Group and the like.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. One of the challenges that we have is what to do when a school is failing. We have a cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all response; that is, you get tutorial services for everybody, everybody can go sneak out and try to get to another school choice. But if it is only one subgroup that has failed, that caused a failure, it seems it me that the response ought to be addressed to the cause.

Can you comment on how we should respond to a subgroup failure?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would say that the choice and SES provisions in No Child Left Behind today are excellent, but we need additional proven strategies and options when a school is struggling. To your point about one subgroup, I do think if we——

Mr. SCOTT. Should the resources be addressed to the subgroup that failed?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, yes. And I believe as we capture individual growth, which is something we talked quite a bit about, we will begin to be able to target our resources to those most in need. We see that even if we differentiate accountability from a school standpoint, right now that is difficult to do because we have this pass-fail system. As we begin to differentiate at the school level, and then all the way down to the student level, we are going to begin to be able to use resources in a more meaningful way. But I do believe there is a place for more flexibility with resources as long as they are linked to proven strategies and there is accountability in place for those resources.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired. Ms. Biggert, you are recognized.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing. My question, I will start with Dr. Sichel, I believe. I

am somebody that really is concerned and working in the STEM community and I think the administration really is into this, too. But I think that science scores should be given strong consideration as Congress reforms our K through 12 accountability system. Right now supposedly the schools are moving into science as being included for this past year, year and a half.

In what ways have the accountability provisions of the current law affected the way that science is taught in your school?

Ms. SICHEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. Science is an integral component to what needs to be measured and to be accountable. There is no question that the majority of school districts have focused on mathematics and reading and writing skills, but science in the last 3 to 5 years has really taken a forefront. This is probably the harder nut with which to improve because it is very content laden and it is extremely difficult to obtain both quality teachers that can excite the students to have the content happen.

However, we have seen that when you have a hands-on approach, when you use realistic applications that the students understand, such as physics principles and understanding how physics is used as a great adventure, there is often a lot of excitement that goes along with that. So it is a way to have the standard become realistic with students and make sure that you have quality people in the room and then to measure it. I think science is an area that has been grossly overlooked and that we need to get on top of that.

Mrs. BIGGERT. So science should really be part of a new accountability?

Ms. SICHEL. Yes, it should.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Ms. Hawley, I was happy to see in your written testimony you did mention that you support the growth models and, moreover, that these models should be used to gauge the social and emotional development which lays a foundation for short and long-term academic and personal success. What are some of the ways that assessments, both formative and summative, can be used to measure social and emotional learning?

Ms. HAWLEY. Well, the social and emotional learning really comes from the program and the environment that you provide to the students and the quality teachers and the quality instruction. When a child feels the basics—when a child feels safe and secure in an environment, then they are ready for learning. So in terms of assessments, both formative and summative, we are going to find that students will perform better if there is an environment that is conducive to learning.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Do you think that teachers and principals are familiar enough with the positive aspects of this type of learning?

Ms. HAWLEY. Absolutely. Certainly not everywhere, but in my experience, especially at the elementary level, a lot of what we are doing is school-ready at the beginning, in early childhood years. It is getting students ready for learning and ready for school. And in my experience I understand the importance of the whole child and making sure that what we are providing is an experience that would promote learning.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Do you think that there is any legislation necessary in this area?

Ms. HAWLEY. I think if we look at measured progress and progress along the way, ongoing progress, ongoing assessments is really what I mean, I believe that that will address that.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you. I have got one more question. I have heard from some of the educators who regret that they have missed out on what they call a teachable moment and because it often requires risking a loss of "instructional time," and the rigid focus, which has been talked about, of teaching to the test and afraid that then their scores will be lower. I think this all will change hopefully, but what suggestions do you have for broadening the scope of subject matter while maintaining accountability?

Chairman KLINE. Excuse me, unfortunately as much as I would like to hear the answer to that question, the gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. BIGGERT. If I might submit that for the record.

Chairman KLINE. You may. I would love that. The trouble is we really want these answers, we are just out of time and got a lot of members who need to ask questions. So they will throw daggers at me later.

Ms. Hirono, you are recognized.

Mr. HIRONO. Thank you very much. This committee has had many hearings over the years on appropriate changes to No Child Left Behind and I think that—because there is consensus around allowing States to use the growth model and that is also verified by all of you. If there was one other priority part of No Child Left Behind that you would want to change, what would that be?

I ask that of all of you very briefly.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chair and members of the committee, I would say that I think it is the differentiated accountability, the ability to differentiate between a pass-fail model that we currently have and capture a more nuanced approach to what is happening when it comes to growth and progress in our classrooms so that intervention and resources can be targeted and most effective in a meaningful way.

Ms. SICHEL. I would share with that, that one of the most important things that needs to be considered in the reauthorization is the accountability measures for growth for special needs children, special education children. They need to be measured according to their individual educational program, not according to some arbitrary measures that are placed upon either the school, the district or the State or the Federal level dollars.

Mr. HIRONO. Let me just clarify. I wanted to know whether there was something else besides allowing the use of growth models because there is consensus that we ought to make those appropriate changes. So anything besides?

Mr. CARVALHO. Chairman, I will give you three. Number one, I think it is time to ensure fair accountability by providing flexibility for special needs students, special education children, and English language learners, and out of formula adjustments by requiring identical tests for Title I and Title III students in nonpublic schools. I think if we are going to have an accountability system it ought to be for all.

Two, I think the time has come to establish new qualification requirements, and I spoke about this issue of teacher quality, nothing

more important. Establishing new qualification requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure that teachers are highly skilled in content areas as well as pedagogy.

And last but not least, it is embedded in the formula, recognizing great variance in the distribution of immigrant funds in Title III based on a formula that often ignores the total number of recently arrived foreign born children. It is complex to arrive at that formula. I think a more targeted look at specific nuances by regions needs to be considered.

Ms. HAWLEY. One issue that would be helpful, which makes it flawed, is the focus, the over focus on certain groups so that that is at the detriment of other groups that we need to focus on.

Mr. HIRONO. Thank you. There is recognition as 2014 comes around the corner that so many schools, in fact a lot of schools, the majority of the schools in our country will not meet AYP. So Secretary of Education has established a waiver process. Are all of your States going to apply for that waiver?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, I will say New Mexico will be applying for the waiver. I would emphasize two or three things in that waiver application I think is very important. Number one that a high bar be maintained when it comes to accountability. Number two, that differentiated accountability and growth be absolutely prioritized. And also to my colleague's point about effective teaching and school leading, that we begin to provide flexibility and encourage States as they seek to honor and acknowledge effective teaching linked to improve student achievement.

Mr. CARVALHO. Chairman, I certainly have had conversations with the Commissioner about the necessity of applying for the waiver and we are in conversations regarding that matter. I do believe that Florida will be submitting a waiver.

Mr. HIRONO. What about the other two?

Ms. SICHEL. Pennsylvania is still wrangling on whether they will be submitting a waiver or not. So I cannot speak about the direction they will take. Thank you.

Ms. HAWLEY. And I don't know whether Maryland is.

Mr. HIRONO. My next question on the Early Learning Challenge Fund, are your States applying for those grants, $500 million in grants.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, yes. New Mexico is applying for that with an emphasis on the importance of reading and aligning our standards from pre-K through third grade.

Mr. HIRONO. Yes to all of you? Thank you.

I only have a little bit of time. I was very excited to hear about the Parent Academy, because we know what the factors are that go into a successful school, great teachers, principal, leaders and parental involvement. We have been wrestling with how do we get parents more involved.

I would like to get a little more information from you, Mr. Carvalho, as to how that works in your statement. I have run out of time. I will follow up with you.

Chairman KLINE. We really would like answers for the record here. Staff will be working with you. The Parent Academy and background discussion here would like more information on that.

The gentlelady is right, her time has expired and, Mr. Hunter, you are recognized.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First question is this: Doctor, you talked about your district building systems to collect and analyze data to improve instruction. Ms. Hawley, in your testimony you talk about the importance of using assessment data to inform instruction. The question is this: Are your metrics and evaluations specific enough and advanced enough to be able to say it is the principal's fault, it is the teacher's fault, it's a lazy kid, it's parents' fault? Can you break it down? How do you know whose fault it is, one. And two, is there any room for Federal involvement in analyzing your data for your growth model that is specific to you?

That is my first question for all of you. My second question is this, since the growth model is specific to a subgroup or is specific to an individual child over time, I guess you could have relevant growth models that you can compare and contrast between different subgroups if they have the same type of background, but can you have a standardized growth model that the Federal Government can use or impose upon you to say, hey, this is the growth model you are going to use and it is kind of—I guess the question is this, is there such as thing as a one-size-fits-all growth model?

Those are my two questions.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, no, I do not believe there is such thing as one-size-fits-all. And when it comes to kind of getting back to the core question today about what is the role of the Federal Government, I do believe it is to have high expectations and hold our States accountable for the resources and investment but to allow States, because they know best what will serve their students and schools and districts, to allow them to establish the next layer of how do you measure, et cetera. So have a high bar, make sure we are getting a good return on investment and improving programs, but don't prescribe how we get there.

Mr. CARVALHO. I agree with my colleague. So I won't repeat what she said. The only thing I will add is the value of the growth model is not to be able to compare one subgroup to another. The value of the growth model is to actually compare that group to itself, to compare the child to itself over time. If you don't do that, you are comparing two different groups of student cohorts over time, and that really in many instances does not make sense. This year's group of ninth graders may not necessarily be equivalent in terms of their preparation leaving middle school as last year's group of ninth graders. And when you do not use a growth model comparison, you are really comparing one group of students to a very different group of students.

The beauty of a growth model, if arrived at in a very legitimate way, it actually allows for a clear examination, data driven examination, of the same cohort of children down to a single kid over a period of time. That is exactly what you want to see. That is what we do in the private sector. Once you hire somebody over time are they producing and meeting their goals? How do they produce year one up to year two. And I think there is a great deal

of merit to actually reflecting that same philosophy in a public sector, in public schools.

Ms. SICHEL. I couldn't concur with my colleague more. A growth model that is based upon data that is multi-dimensional, standardized test scores, formative assessment, local driven assessments, common assessments, grade levels and curriculum that brings it down to the individual level, the class level, you could see growth over time, and I think that is what is most important. And in Pennsylvania we have a very successful growth model that should be the basis of what we are doing and it should be State driven.

In terms of your first question was—you use the term looking at fault. I think here what is more important is to look at root causes. If we can identify what is needed in that classroom for those children and then go in and intervene, we will make a mountain of difference with children.

Mr. HUNTER. Can you do that? That was my question.

Ms. SICHEL. We can do that with a quality growth model that pulls all the data together, and we have to give teachers and principals the time to analyze their data and get in there and intervene and then there has got to be consistency over time. You don't change the focus, change the intervention. It has got to be clear, driven goals that go on over time for a long period of time.

Mr. HUNTER. I am running out of time, so let me drill down on the growth model really quick then. Is it even possible for the Federal Government to, let's say, reward success or punish bad behavior then State by State based on a growth model? If you are comparing a student to him or herself over a period of time, how would you compare a school to another school or a school district to another school district or a State to another State when the growth model is only specific to another individual or even a subgroup to itself over time?

Ms. SICHEL. With a growth model you can roll it up from the individual to the classroom to the grade level to the school to the entire district. That data is available and there are ways to look at it, but it is progress over time. It is not this year's ninth grade to last year's ninth grade. It is how this year's ninth grade did and did they improve more than a year in 1 year, because every year a child is in school there should be at least 1 year of academic growth if not more.

Chairman KLINE. And the gentleman's time has expired. Mr. Holt.

Mr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for good testimony. I had to leave the room during some of the questioning and so let me talk about some things and ask you to talk about some things that might be repetitious, but even if they are, they are important enough. I think it warrants it.

Science education. I know Ms. Biggert touched on that and talked about the resolution we have that says in any reauthorization or other actions, strong consideration should be given to science education in accountability, in any accountability measurements. And I am sure it has been said but it is worth saying, you know, science is not just another subject, whether we are talking about jobs that will await students, the technological innovation this country needs, the global competitiveness or whether we are

talking about the fact that students like science unless they are told that they don't. And students who do well in science, especially those who are not planning to become scientists, tend to be students who do well in other subjects. And there is some evidence that there's some causality there, that the science actually helps them.

And I think it is a route, and for many students the best route, for critical thinking, understanding the value of data and observation and experiment and so forth. The question is will it work. Can we, now that we are collecting, we are testing and collecting data on science, can it be included reasonably in an accountability system.

Let me start in reverse order with Dr. Sichel here, if you have thoughts on that.

Ms. SICHEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it absolutely can be included in the system of accountability. There are national and State science standards that we believe all students should be graduated from our high schools with the ability to master, whether it is Earth science and biology and chemistry and physics. There are components of all of those subject areas that are crucial to be good citizens, career, lifelong learners, higher education, et cetera. So it needs to have just as important a place as reading, writing and mathematics does.

Mr. CARVALHO. To the extent that you assign importance to reading and math, and those are the two key criteria on No Child Left Behind, I do believe that assigning importance to science and writing is equally important. There is a reason why American children are performing comparatively better in reading and math than their international counterparts than they are in science. It is because what you don't measure sort of denotes you don't value it. So there is a lot to be said. Take it from a former physics teacher.

Mr. HOLT. I know that you were, and I was pleased to see that, I must say.

Mr. CARVALHO. A physics teacher and chemistry teacher both at the high school and college level courses. If you value it, you need to engage in the degree of data collection and measurement across the country. You are not going to be able to reach the 25th in the world performance in science unless you do so. Nobody in Finland cares about how people in Georgia are doing or California or Florida. They are all betting that we don't reach the 25th in the world ranking as a Nation because they keep on improving.

So I do think that, beyond Sputnik I think we lost some momentum and it is time to regain it. And to a previous question is it possible, in part of an earlier question is it possible to do, of course it is possible. The Nation that put the first man on the Moon can absolutely do this. This is not a skill set problem.

Mr. HOLT. We know how to teach science. Students want to learn it. The question is can we make it part of the accountability system?

Ms. Hawley.

Ms. HAWLEY. I agree that we can. I think that we need to be careful on how we assess that, because often in the assessment you are not always assessing just the knowledge base. It comes back to math and reading—well, reading and writing and things like that.

So I think that we need to approach it from the angle that we need to look at what exactly are we assessing. But absolutely.

Mr. HOLT. I was alluding to the fact that I would like to see it assessed in a way that particularly looks at its value for the non-science students.

Ms. Skandera.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired, I would love to have your answer in writing if we could, please.

Dr. DesJarlais.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks to the witnesses. The first question is going to go to Dr. Sichel and Ms. Skandera. We have seen graphs showing that over the past 30 years, despite increased Federal spending, we have not seen great improvement in NAEP scores compared to other industrialized nations.

How can the Federal Government, and feel free to be very candid, best ensure taxpayer dollars are spent effectively and the parents have options to escape struggling schools?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, I mentioned earlier, one, I believe there are strategic levers for change, and one is asking the big question what is the best return on our investment. When it comes to the Federal Government I believe they can provide us flexibility when it comes to funding but hold us accountable for the investment to be made in proven strategies. So we have got plenty of research out there today that tells us things that work and things that don't. It is no longer to me appropriate to send down hundreds of millions of dollars to States today without the expectation that there is a link to proven strategies for improved student achievements. That is our expectation of the State and I believe that is also good taxpayer accountability as well when it comes to funding.

So my ask and request as we look at reauthorization is that as monies flow through that States also would have the ability when we are failing in our schools to hold our schools and districts accountable in that failure for investing in proven strategies.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Dr. Sichel.

Ms. SICHEL. What I would like to add to that, because I think the response really addresses many of the things that need to be done, is it has got to be State driven with flexibility, but what also has to happen is transparency. Every school district across this country has an obligation to post, to have a community meeting, to have a school meeting, both school and district related report cards, if you would call it, much as Florida does or New Mexico is talking about, where we rate and rank how our schools are doing, where we talk about our successes, where we talk about our targeted needs, where we invite parents and community members to be a part of our collaborative effort to make a difference.

Transparency is really important. You need to put out you are good, you are bad and you are ugly and deal with it.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you. Ms. Hawley, through the school improvement grants program the Department has mandated that States and school districts receiving those funds use one of the four turnaround models. What are the downsides to mandating one-size-fits-all Federal requirements for improving low performing schools?

And I would just add that I represent a very rural district area in Tennessee's Fourth District. And as we were talking earlier, sometimes a good applicant pool isn't available and a lot of these turnaround programs eventually require replacement of teachers, principals and administrators.

Ms. HAWLEY. Well, first of all, I would like to address the aspect of the turnaround model where the automatic firing of principals. My belief is that schools should be given—you know, if a school is struggling, failing, schools should be given the authority, autonomy, time to identify what the needs are so that they can address what those specific needs are. I think we need to look at the whole turnaround model as a whole and look at specifically what each school needs and make sure that schools are provided with the tools they need in order to pinpoint what their specific issues are so they can succeed and progress.

Mr. DESJARLAIS. All right. Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentleman. Ms. Woolsey, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is clear, and we all know this, that when a youngster enters the classroom if that youngster is ready to learn that it makes a big difference in the results of that school day, that school year, and it really makes a big difference in how the teacher is evaluated because all public schools teach all kids and they come from many economic backgrounds, they come from all kinds of situations and many home situations that make it impossible for them to enter the classroom feeling safe, having had a meal sometimes, feeling—being healthy physically or mentally and feeling at all secure before and after school.

So, Mr. Carvalho, you in your written testimony talk about wraparound services and about bringing services to some of your schools. And I would like to know if any of the rest of you, I don't know if you call them wraparound services, I call them coordinated services, it is bringing the services to the school site that these particular communities would benefit from having the student and absolutely affecting the outcome and affecting the scoring for some teachers. So would you start with what you do?

Ms. SICHEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to address that. I am going to specifically focus on one of our elementary schools that has the highest rate of poverty, the most socioeconomically disadvantaged children, so it really does address what you are talking about.

What is important is the first thing is a no excuses approach. We are not going to change their home situation, we are not going to change their socioeconomic level, but they are our children and we need to help them become ready to learn. So as soon as they have crossed our doorsteps we need to use a variety of assessment measures to find out where they are. And if they are not ready for the full day kindergarten program that we offer, then we have got to move in with a whole bunch of remedial sources and attempt to get them up to stuff as soon as possible. Included in that procedure is to engage their parents right away, to try to, quote, contract with their parents to be reading with them at home at night, to be doing their homework, to be making sure that meals are provided, to

using our local community to provide medical services when needed, getting glasses and things like that. You have to be resourceful and you have to turn around and say we are going to get in there, roll up our sleeves and do whatever it is we can to make our children ready to learn.

In the school that I am thinking about we had that kind of situation. And we really spent the last 2 years dealing with the staff. They are saying what do you need, what is going to happen, what is going to make a difference, but we are going to hold you accountable. And I am real pleased to say that over a 2-year period one of our lowest functioning schools is now beginning to catch up with some of our more affluent schools that didn't have to do the work as difficult as this building did. It can be done.

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, I will offer about four of the examples of the wraparound services that we provide. This is one of those things that one plus one is more than two, the value of partnerships, community partnerships. So number one, you know, I never met a broken kid but I have met a lot of—I have come across a lot of broken systems and broken systems usually allow for broken kids to come into our system. So important factors in a wraparound service are those first and foremost dealing with school health. So we partner through our school Health Connect partnership with the University of Miami and other entities that provide early screening even before kids come to our schools and provide school clinics in schools to make sure our kids don't have to leave school and be absent to get critical care. We have gone actually and put an RFP on the street to open our own health care clinics, not only for our workforce, but for parents of those kids, managed privately but in our schools.

Second, the value of social work as a school psychologist, privately funded, as well as publicly funded, provides an essential component of the wraparound model.

I spoke about the value of the Parent Academy in providing educational services to the parent community in the three different pillars so that parents understand the school system that they send their child to and make wise choices that lead to demand driven reform in our public schools.

And last but not least, you know, we are a county-wide system spanning over 34 different municipalities. So as superintendent I have negotiated about 14 different municipal compacts with mayors, to in a very regional almost zip code driven way arrive at negotiations that bring value added to the lives of kids and parents. So cities make actual investments in social issues in our schools. If a community decides to have an international baccalaureate guarantee for all the schools, you know, help me get there, let's pony up money to afford the professional development for the IB program for teachers. That is the case for the City of Miami Beach.

So that is sort of just the flavor for the wraparound services we have in our school system.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question to be answered in writing?

Chairman KLINE. You may, if it is a short question.

Ms. WOOLSEY. It is a very short question. I would love it if each one of you would answer. Should the waivers be—should wrap-

around services be evaluated in part of the decision on whether a district or a State should receive waivers?

Chairman KLINE. We will take those for the record. Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for having this hearing and for bringing us four excellent witnesses that have been very responsive and really cleared up a lot of issues. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Dr. Sichel, did I pronounce your name correctly, Sichel.

Ms. SICHEL. Sichel.

Mr. ANDREWS. Dr. Sichel, I think you have accentuated a point the committee takes very seriously, that there has been more closure in the gap between minority students and white students in the 10 years since No Child Left Behind than there was in all the other years put together since 1965, and it has accelerated I think because of No Child Left Behind. And I think we need to be very careful not to lose sight of that fact.

Is there anything—and you cite the remarkable progress that you are making with African American children in your district and young people. Is there anything in No Child Left Behind as it is presently written that impedes your ability to continue that progress?

Ms. SICHEL. In thinking about how to respond to that I want to balance the positive impact that No Child Left Behind has made, but I also must share with you that we have had a problem—we have had a process, excuse me, of data driven decision making since 1990. It is not new to the Abington School District. If you have data, you need to manage it. And we have been managing it for well over 20 years.

So that needs to be the forefront of any single program that goes on. Now, what No Child Left Behind did for us is opened our eyes to the fact that the old group wasn't the only data that we should manage, that we should be looking at it from a desegregated point of view.

Now, what gets in the way is this whole issue of one-size-fits-all, and let me give you an example of Abington Senior High School, where presently over 80 percent of our children are proficient in reading and mathematics, where our economically disadvantaged and our African American children are approaching 70 percent in many cases. What is happening is with our special education students, they are at best 40 to 50 percent proficient, though when we started this process they were 20 percent proficient. So they have made remarkable results.

I think we have to be flexible. We have to look at attainable goals.

Mr. ANDREWS. Are you saying that there are resources that you are taking to address the demands on the special ed side that are degrading the quality of what you are trying to do for nonspecial ed kids? What is the impediment?

I think you have accurately described a problem with the way we measure AYP for special ed kids. I agree with you. The question I asked was what is there in the law that is impeding you from continuing the progress that you are making.

Ms. SICHEL. Well, there is nothing in the law that is continuing from impeding the progress. But what will happen if this continues is this high school will be considered a failing high school when it is one of the premier high schools in Pennsylvania.

Mr. ANDREWS. Let me come to this point. I know it. I live in Haddon Heights, New Jersey.

Ms. SICHEL. There you go, so you know.

Mr. ANDREWS. And Abington has a great reputation, richly deserved.

I will ask any or all of the four of you this. I think I heard a consensus that a growth model should replace the present static model. I agree with that. And Mr. Hunter asked a question I want to follow up on, which is the ideal growth model is one that drills down to the level of the individual student. I think we should head in that direction. But given that aspiration to get down to one student at a time, what parameters should we put around acceptable or unacceptable growth?

And I realize that there should be a different answer for every child. But let me phrase the question this way. What do you think the mean or median progress should be in any given year for a child to have achieved success under a growth model? How much is enough?

And again, I understand it is going to be a wildly different answer given the child's situation coming in. But looking at the middle, the bell curve, the 50th percentile kid, what do you think is enough progress under a growth model?

Mr. CARVALHO. Mr. Chairman, how about one year's growth during one year's time. One year's worth of teaching results in one year's worth of growth.

Mr. ANDREWS. Anybody disagree with that?

Ms. SICHEL. No, I don't. And Pennsylvania's model is based on that. We have schools that are considered in the green and they do more than one year's growth, we have schools that are in the yellow which are one year's growth, exactly what it should be.

Mr. ANDREWS. I completely agree with that proposition. I think that is very fair. And I think there should be standard deviations.

Yes, ma'am.

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ANDREWS. I am not the chairman.

Ms. SKANDERA. And members of the committee.

Mr. ANDREWS. Am I Mr. Kline?

Mr. MILLER. Apparently. You are using her time.

Ms. SKANDERA. Absolutely the expectation of one year's worth of growth in one year's time. But I would add an additional component. When we begin—and you asked previously what is impeding us, and I mentioned multiple times the importance of having the freedom and flexibility to acknowledge effective teaching linked to improved student achievement, and here is why. Because we have students that are coming in so far behind that one year's worth of progress in one year's time is not going to get to closing the achievement gap in a meaningful way. At some point we have got to acknowledge, do you know what, an effective teacher, and there is plenty of research that tells us this, can close more than one

year's progress in one year's time. And we need to acknowledge and reward that in a way that is meaningful because we must do it.

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank the witnesses for excellent presentations today. Thank you.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you. I am going to follow up, Ms. Skandera. You just mentioned, and this is really my question, about effective teaching. As I have sat here, and I missed some of the discussion, I haven't heard much discussion of teacher and principal evaluations. I would like to know where you see that fitting in. What is the Federal role in either incentivizing, in using a carrot and stick approach?

Obviously all the schools that receive funding from the Federal Government should have a system in place. That should be a local decision, a statewide decision. I served on the school board in a major city, so I understand how important this is to have this buy-in at the local level. But what role does it play in that? What would you like to see? If there is language in the reauthorization, how should it motivate, incentivize, have accountable school systems that do this in a way that creates a widely acknowledged and accepted system for doing that which actually moves toward better achievement of kids, not just in and of itself?

Ms. SKANDERA. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, as we were talking about earlier, I believe the role of the Federal Government is to encourage States and provide the freedom for them to pursue these different evaluation systems that begin to acknowledge improved student achievement. Today the law emphasis is the highly qualified status, which is more linked to years of experience and credentialing. We need to make that shift and encourage that shift in our States.

Mr. CARVALHO. I would add to that that we encourage, incentivize, financially incentivize. And I think it is fair to even push as hard as the establishment of new qualification requirements for teachers and leaders across the board that result in pay consideration for teachers in fields in which there are shortages in high need communities, create career ladders. Because right now if a teacher wants to move on, move up, usually the only option is to leave the teaching profession and become an administrator. There has to be career ladder options for teachers that recognize great talent.

And last, perhaps even envisioning assistance with housing, particularly in areas where housing costs are extremely high, to incentivize great teachers and reward them with housing assistance.

Ms. SICHEL. Mr. Chairman and the committee, I would share with you that school districts that are making a difference do have very fine-tuned teacher and principal evaluation systems that do have components of student accountability built in. Pennsylvania is very much moving in a direction to require that statewide. I think there has to be some ability for the school district and the State to negotiate what that should look like based upon the needs of the school and where you are at. Some of us are ready to do that, some of us are not ready to do that. But it is important that we are prod-

uct-driven when it comes to children, we need to be product driven when it comes to professionals as well.

Mrs. DAVIS. Is there a reasonable amount of time that one could ask of a system, I assume this would be at the State level initially, to develop that? I mean, you have seen—you have a strong data system.

Ms. SICHEL. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Performance-based data system, as I understand it, and that is great. But absent that, I mean, if you don't have that in your district and yet you want to use performance, but you don't want to use it entirely based on data, I think the industrial skills that we are talking about is also a measure of success for students and something that should be built in. How do you do that? What does that take on your—and where does that buy in? How do you do that?

Mr. CARVALHO. Well, Mr. Chairman, to the chair, in Florida there is legislation that requires that every district by a certain timeline develop and negotiate in many cases a performance system for evaluation of teachers, and in my position for leaders as well, that incorporates student outcomes as part of that measure, usually along the lines of 50 percent. It is actually objectively driven by the State's accountability exam, the FCAT, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. And 50 percent of that evaluation is relegated to the local districts to develop, some of which can incorporate objective local data as well, and we do. The same thing applies to the leaders, to principals and assistant principals. And what we have gone as far as doing this year, and the ratification vote took place 2 weeks ago and benefited from an 84 percent ratification vote on the part of the teachers, is that we arrived at that model 3 years earlier than some of the requirements that take full advantage of a race to the top Federal investment. We arrived at that model, we developed a contract and a performance evaluation system that incorporated objective measures, and many of those tied to student performance data.

Chairman KLINE. The gentlelady's time has expired. I would like to recognize Mr. Miller for any closing remarks.

Mr. MILLER. Well, thank you very much. And first of all, Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for assembling this panel. I think it has been a remarkable morning. And I think given their very backgrounds in the districts and the levels of which they operate in our educational system, they have really described where I think we would like to end up in the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind and where I think new teachers would like to go to work. Because the districts that you are administering, the schools that you are administering, start to begin to sound like the modern workplaces that their friends go to work in and not something that is stuck in the past, a workplace that is stuck in the past.

I think it also recognizes that school districts are a very different place than they were 10 years ago when we did No Child Left Behind and they were a very different place when we did No Child Left Behind for whatever preceded it on ESEA.

And what I also think I am hearing from this panel, and you can respond to that in writing if I didn't hear it right, but is the idea that the stakeholders are greater than we traditionally thought

about in schools. It is no longer just the principal or the teacher, it is no longer just the school board.

Dr. Sichel, you mentioned in your opening statement about a collaborative process that goes through with these stakeholders. And a number of you have mentioned the question of the involvement in the community, whether it is the academy or it is the process of meeting with the community, is getting a lot of attention, because I think a lot of people are asking the same question, what return am I getting for sending my kid to this school and paying my taxes to support this school.

I think the most dramatic example of that is in California, and I think being adopted in some other States. I don't think it is the best necessarily, but I think it is indicative of how we have to pay attention, and that is the parent trigger. That there are parents who just say, wait a minute, this school has been failing for year after year after year after year, I happen to live here, I need to live here, I want a better school and I am not going to—you know. And that is viewed as—some people believe that is a warning shot in combat. No, it is not, it is a cry for help, and hopefully a cry to be involved in how that is designed.

Ms. Woolsey raised a question about wraparound services. Many of the members certainly on this side of the aisle are very concerned about that. And when I look at districts now, and Mr. Carvalho, you sort of suggested this, but in my discussions with Oakland School District in California with Tony Smith, the partnerships that you have to create to keep this district viable and responsive to your constituents, the students, are numerous. And what we are working our way through is to try to figure out how you can look, you know, again, I want this money spent on the poor children. But we understand in many instances Title I becomes a block grant with the high proportion of students in that school. But the idea of being able to repurpose the spending of Title II money and Title III money, as you pointed out with the English learners, to think about how do we repurpose the SES money, what can schools do with that. It starts to give you the opportunity to really think about working within existing resources. And I say that simply because those are the economic conditions that we are in at this time, but I can't—you know, I am not going to sacrifice, I am not going to be part of the first generation to sacrifice our children to a recession. So we have to rethink about how to do this so you can use your best judgment on how to cobble that.

But my sense of flexibility is based upon the idea that we do have these high standards and that we maintain this high bar, Ms. Skandera, that you kept talking about. That you know we went through—out of the last 10 years we have gone through about 8 years where people just pounded on it and said but for that one kid with disabilities or but for those English learners we would be an all-star school. I got news for you, they weren't before and there wasn't a lot of likelihood. There are some specific cases, but this has become almost urban legend. And while we are saying we don't want to accept one-size-fits-all, we don't want to give up on one-expectation-for-all. And you know playground English isn't good enough if you really want those English learners to participate in this democracy and this economy. And we can't lose sight of that.

And we have struggled, and I mean struggled, because we know the problems presented by students with disabilities. We also know we see again school districts that are doing remarkable work with those students. We see the fastest acceleration in Massachusetts is among students with disabilities on a very rigorous exam. They are not all going to get there, but we can't trade that in. And I really appreciate you talking about maintaining that high bar and that access to that opportunity at that high bar, because if that is there then the options for us are greatly expanded in terms of really having you administer the outcomes.

So thank you very, very much for your spending this time with us this morning.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Miller. I want to extend my thanks again to the panel. We have a lot of excellent panels here with really, really good witnesses. You are at the top of the list. Absolutely fantastic. The work that you are doing, the innovation that you are bringing, the challenges, your participation here today, you have been fantastic. But you can see how we are grappling. It is sometimes easy, and I don't mean to be pejorative or anything here, but it is fairly easy to say to us that the Federal Government should, quote, encourage, it is a lot harder for us to figure out what exactly does that encourage mean. And it is, again, fairly easy to say, well, you should set a high bar and then leave it to us to decide how to achieve that. Well, what is that high bar, how do we define that? Is it do we mandate a Common Core, do we mandate a common assessment and then it makes it high? I don't think so. But those are the things that we are grappling with.

I mentioned in my opening remarks that Mr. Miller and I often agree on a great deal of what the problem is and we agree almost exactly on what part of the solution is. It doesn't mean that we have yet agreed on what this piece of legislation should look like. And so your input today and the input we are going to get from other panels, people who are addressing the problems of how do we get our kids to achieve what we know they can, all of the kids, to the point that Mr. Miller made earlier, we don't want to start leaving any children behind, those are problems that you are grappling with and have made remarkable, remarkable progress. So at the very minimum I want to make doggone sure that as we move forward we don't do anything that impedes, to the question that was asked by a number of my colleagues, what you are trying to do.

So again, thank you very, very much for your great work, and thank you for being here today. There being no further business, the committee stands adjourned.

[Questions submitted for the record and their responses follow:]

U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2011.

Mr. ALBERTO CARVALHO,
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Suite 912, Miami, FL 33132.

DEAR MR. CARVALHO: Thank you for testifying before the Committee on Education and the Workforce at the hearing entitled, "Education Reforms: Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability," on Wednesday, September 14, 2011. I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than October 13, 2011, for

inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Dan Shorts of the Committee staff who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you again for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

JOHN KLINE, *Chairman,*
Committee on Education and the Workforce.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZIE HIRONO (D-HI)

1. Mr. Carvalho, could you please provide me with a little more information about how the Parent Academy works in your state?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Superintendent of Schools
Alberto M. Carvalho

Miami-Dade County School Board
Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Carlos L. Curbelo
Renier Diaz de la Portilla
Dr. Wilbert "Tee" Holloway
Dr. Martin Karp
Dr. Marta Pérez
Raquel A. Regalado

October 11, 2011

Mr. John Kline, Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6100

Dear Mr. Kline:

On behalf of Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho, I am responding to the inquiry from Representative Mazie Hirono (D-HI). The Parent Academy is a free, year-round parent engagement initiative of Miami-Dade County Public Schools empowering parents to become full partners in their children's education. When we educate parents about the importance of their roles, in their child's education, parents gain a fuller sense of their rights, responsibilities, and the educational opportunities available to their children and to them.

The Parent Academy curriculum helps parents acquire more skills, knowledge, and confidence. Classes and workshops are developed around five subject area strands: Arts & Culture, Health and Wellness, Help Your Child Learn, Parenting Skills, and Personal Growth. The "campus" is spread throughout the Miami-Dade community, giving parents the opportunity to participate in workshops that are convenient to their homes and workplaces.

Virtual learning and Family Learning Events are part of The Parent Academy program, as well. Online webinars, videos, and workshops extend learning opportunities to working families, and Family Learning Events, held in such venues as the Miami Science Museum, give families the opportunity to learn and have fun at the same time.

To date, The Parent Academy has served more than 250,000 parents throughout Miami-Dade County in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole. As a public/private venture, The Parent Academy has forged partnerships with the private sector, higher education, government entities, and a wide range of community-based organizations, with the goal of maximizing outreach and service. For more information, please visit www.theparentacademy.net.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at 305-995-1497.

Sincerely,

Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya
Assistant Superintendent

IRM-C/hr
L139 (R993)

School Board Administration Building • 1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue • Miami, Florida 33132
305-995-1000 • www.dadeschools.net

U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2011.

Ms. A. BLAINE HAWLEY,
Red Pump Elementary, 600 Red Pump Road, Bel Air, MD 21014.

DEAR MS. HAWLEY: Thank you for testifying before the Committee on Education and the Workforce at the hearing entitled, "Education Reforms: Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability," on Wednesday, September 14, 2011. I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than October 13, 2011, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Dan Shorts of the Committee staff who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you again for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

JOHN KLINE, *Chairman,*
Committee on Education and the Workforce.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN KLINE (R-MN)

1. Effectively using assessment data is an important part of quality classroom instruction. Could you describe how that process works, what you are developing and implementing in your school to build this capacity among your teachers, and the impacts of such an approach on student learning?

2. What types of parental engagement strategies have you implemented to engage parents in their children's education?

3. Your written statement discussed the importance of locally developed curriculum and instruction. Why is the freedom to develop curriculum and instruction strategies for your students important?

REPRESENTATIVE JUDY BIGGERT (R-IL)

1. I've heard from educators who regret having to miss out on "teachable moments" because often it requires risking a loss of, quote "instructional time," and the rigid focus on 'teaching to the test' means teachers risk lower class scores by doing what they know is actually best for their students.

a. What suggestions do you have for successfully broadening the scope of subject matter, while maintaining accountability?

b. Are you concerned that an expanded curriculum would undermine the current focus on math and reading, subjects with which our students are still currently struggling?

Response From Ms. Hawley to Questions Submitted for the Record

On behalf of our nation's elementary level principals, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony at the hearing held on September 14, 2011, "Education Reforms: Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability" as the Committee considers legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The role of the principal continues to change and become more complex and challenging. The current social and educational context of the principalship—which combines high-stakes accountability with the high ideals of supporting social, physical and emotional needs of children—demands that all principals demonstrate the vision, courage and skill to lead effective learning communities where all students reach their highest potential.

As requested by you and your staff, please find the attached responses to the additional questions for the hearing record.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide the principals' perspective and considering the view of school leaders in the Committee's important deliberations. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at blaine.hawley@hcps.org.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN KLINE

1. Effectively using assessment data is an important part of quality classroom instruction. Could you describe how that process works, what you are developing and implementing in your school to build this capacity among your teachers, and the impacts of such an approach on student learning?

Principals understand the importance of the role the teacher plays in the classroom with data driven instruction and ongoing assessment of student progress. The foremost signature of a successful school includes a culture of collaboration and teamwork to help every student succeed. At Red Pump Elementary, the tactical expectation to achieve collaboration includes grade level teams that participate in ongoing in a Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) protocols. To begin this process, which is implemented district-wide, principals are trained on the protocol and provided the necessary materials to allow them to bring the professional development back to the teachers.

As a school, our School Improvement Team develops an annual plan to keep our focus on what is crucial for the students we serve in our school. Additionally, one of the charges of the team is to find the time necessary, often in creative ways utilizing all staff members, to allow teachers to meet together—purposefully, to study student work instead of faculty meetings. This often occurs before or after the school day, as well as carving out other times during the day, and includes a cycle of analysis, knowledge of research- based practices, instruction, varied assessments and reflection. Together, grade level teams and building specialists make collaborative decisions that inform instructional practices. Teachers know and understand their students, and can better provide a differentiated program for student success. Decisions about individual student remediation, enrichment, and intervention are essential to the process. Reflection then helps bring teachers back together to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction to ensure all students are moving forward.

In sum, teachers work together as teams utilizing a protocol for examining student data, typically gathered from the use of formative and summative assessments to have a full picture of a student's learning and progress. This approach helps to ground the culture on a continuous cycle of effective teaching and improved student achievement.

2. What types of parental engagement strategies have you implemented to engage parents involvement in their children's education?

At Red Pump Elementary, parental engagement is the cornerstone of our students success. Our mission is to involve parents in every step of the learning process and ensure that the social and emotional needs associated with learning are also addressed as part of helping all students move forward.

As a principal, a core standard of effective school leadership includes engaging the entire learning community focusing on parental outreach. In addition to traditional on-going communication routes to parents such as monthly newsletters and website updates, we host sessions with parents to provide information about academic subject areas featuring 'make and take' activities that help parents support their children's learning at home. The topic and focus of the activities is driven both by the student body, and the School Improvement team. As with many school communities, the PTA also plays a critical role in our communications and outreach efforts with parents.

3. Your written statement discussed the importance of locally developed curriculum and instruction. Why is the freedom to develop curriculum and instruction strategies for your students important?

While the school district general sets the curricular expectations, however, it is the principal's responsibility as an instructional leader to provide teachers with the tools and resources needed to have the greatest impact on learning in the classroom. Daily formal and informal formative assessments are an integral part of every lesson, and having the flexibility to tailor the curriculum for appropriate instruction to meet the contextual issues in our school building is absolutely essential. The principal works to adapt curricular strategies that best support teachers and ultimately improved student outcomes or learning gains. The reauthorization of ESEA must promote the greatest level of flexibility for principals and teachers to retain the ability to develop instructional strategies that will best meet the individual needs of students—to meet students where they are, and help them make progress along a trajectory of successful learning within particular content or subject matter area.

REPRESENTATIVE JUDY BIGGERT (R-IL)

1. I've heard from educators who regret having to miss out on "teachable moments" because often it requires risking a loss of, quote "instructional time," and the rigid focus on 'teaching to the test' means teachers risk lower class scores by doing what they know is actually best for their students.

a. What suggestions do you have for successfully broadening the scope of subject matter, while maintaining accountability?

Federal policy must encourage and support state and local assessments that include growth models and multiple measures of student performance (both formative and summative) to accurately gauge social and emotional development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As noted, the appropriate federal role in education is to promote equity and provide targeted resources to assist states and local districts. Federal policies should ask states and local districts to set high expectations, but also must support state- and locally-developed accountability systems, curriculum and instruction to best meet the needs of the students in the local school context.

When alignment between standards, curriculum and assessment is successfully accomplished through a mastery of pedagogy and effective instructional practice, it is easier to expand the "core" content areas. Giving teachers the right tools to impact the classroom and helping them use data to inform teaching practices on a timely, on-going basis can help them expand to additional areas that will give students are more robust, well-rounded educational experience.

At the school building level, our teachers work with our special emphasis areas to incorporate content both directions—teachers incorporate the arts into their teaching on a regular basis, and the arts incorporate content area information into their classes. We have a school-wide character education program, and our school counselor is on-hand to address social and emotional development. In addition, the learning day can be restructured so that students understand and see the interconnectedness throughout all areas of the curriculum, including art and music.

b. Are you concerned that an expanded curriculum would undermine the current focus on math and reading, subjects with which our students are still currently struggling?

Children must be educated to meet the demands of the 21st century. In addition to succeeding in subject matter, the four C's—creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication—all factor into the quality of an educational experience. If we continue to focus solely on math and reading and neglect the areas we know give students the 21st century skills needed to succeed in today's workforce, our students will continue to fall behind their peers in a globally competitive economy. As a nation, we need to do a better job of recognizing that, while mastering math and reading are pivotal to a student's success, there are other skills and knowledge areas we must equip and arm students with in order to succeed in today's workforce.

History Begins With Me!

U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2011.

Dr. AMY F. SICHEL,
Abington School District, 970 Highland Avenue, Abington, PA 19001-4535.

DEAR DR. SICHEL: Thank you for testifying before the Committee on Education and the Workforce at the hearing entitled, "Education Reforms: Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability," on Wednesday, September 14, 2011. I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than October 13, 2011, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Dan Shorts of the Committee staff who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you again for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

JOHN KLINE, *Chairman,*
Committee on Education and the Workforce.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN KLINE (R-MN)

1. Your school district has built systems to collect and analyze data to improve instruction. Could you give some specific examples of how this is being implemented in your district and the impact it has had on instruction?

2. Could you provide specific examples of how your Opportunities to Learn initiative is helping you address achievement gaps among your students?

REPRESENTATIVE JUDY BIGGERT (R-IL)

1. I've heard from educators who regret having to miss out on "teachable moments" because often it requires risking a loss of, quote "instructional time," and

the rigid focus on 'teaching to the test' means teachers risk lower class scores by doing what they know is actually best for their students.

a. What suggestions do you have for successfully broadening the scope of subject matter, while maintaining accountability?

b. Are you concerned that an expanded curriculum would undermine the current focus on math and reading, subjects with which our students are still currently struggling?

Response From Dr. Sichel to Questions Submitted for the Record

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN KLINE (R-MN)

Question #1: Your school district has built systems to collect and analyze data to improve instruction. Could you give some specific examples of how this is being implemented in your district and the impact it has had on instruction?

Abington School District has a long history of using multiple data sources to improve instruction. Over the past twenty years, principals have been given building goals to increase students' proficiency on state tests as well as in the district's curriculum-based assessments. With the implementation of NCLB, this has included disaggregated groups as well. Pennsylvania has a plan for schools that are in Warning, School Improvement, or Corrective Action entitled the "Getting Results" plan. In Abington we have chosen to use this framework even though our schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Fortunately, all of the Pennsylvania state data is pre-populated in the document in an on-line secure portal. Each Abington school, under the direction of the building principal, forms a Getting Results team made up of teachers, building administrators, and members of central administration. The team critically analyzes the school data by building, grade levels, disaggregated groups, and individual students. They add district and school data as well to the document so that the plan is not based on one single measure but rather a variety of validated assessments, which are more sensitive to student growth. The teams meet extensively to develop the plan. During the school year, grade level or department level teams meet to discuss new data as it becomes available, and, if necessary, to modify the plan. Continuous improvement is the goal.

By doing the extensive planning process from August until mid October, the "root causes" for academic and social issues are apparent. The data drives the interventions. For example, is the issue due to a gap in the curriculum or is there a need for more differentiated instruction? Some students may need to be re-taught, some may need more time on task, some may need modified testing, some may need drill and practice, etc. Instruction needs to be customized to the situation. Curriculum issues are addressed with the help of the Central Office Curriculum staff. Instructional strategies are developed at the building level. The Getting Results teams in each school are charged under the direction of the principal with support from Central Office staff and the Office of the Superintendent to implement the school plan, monitor progress, change course, if needed, and make ongoing progress.

Question #2: Could you provide specific examples of how your Opportunities to Learn initiative is helping you address achievement gaps among your students?

The Opportunities to Learn (OTL) Initiative has helped to narrow the achievement gap. Over the five years of its implementation, the gap between the "All" students and students with an IEP or African American students has narrowed significantly. The charge for the OTL committee in 2005 was "To identify, collect, and analyze appropriate data and to formulate cost effective strategies, programs, activities, and other initiatives which encourage and support broader number of students to achieve proficiency and success in rigorous academic course." The results to date are astonishing. On October 11, 2011 an update on OTL was presented to the Board of School Directors and the public for the purpose of sharing these terrific outcomes. Whether you look at grade level data or cohort data, progress continues and the achievement gaps are narrowed. (See page 8 to 13 of the attached PowerPoint). What is even more encouraging is that our growth data indicates that in many areas, our 8th to 11th grade students exceeded more than one year of growth in a year (See pages 11 and 12 in the PowerPoint).

The attached PowerPoint recognizes the key initiatives, which included de-tracking and offering only rigorous, college preparatory, or honors/Advanced Placement courses with the needed supports for students to be successful. These are the only academic alternatives, for anything less does not prepare students for post secondary education and the world of work. School-based supports take priority during the school day but not at the expense of courses in the arts and the interests of

the students. The initiatives are outlined on pages 5 to 7 on the presentation PowerPoint.

Members of the Abington School District staff have presented our OTL program at local, state, and national meetings for many districts want to replicate our model. We have written articles for national educational magazines and our work with OTL is noted on many websites. Just recently in 2011 the American Association of Curriculum and Development published a new book by A. Wade Boykin and Pedro Noguera entitled Creating the Opportunity to Learn: Moving From Research to Practice To Close the Achievement Gap (ASCD, 2-11). The Abington School District was noted in the following quote:

"Sadly, the number of suburban districts that are also achieving progress is smaller. Montgomery County, Maryland; Abington, Pennsylvania; and Brockton, Massachusetts stand out because they have made steady progress in reducing academic disparities between affluent White students and more disadvantaged children of color. However, these districts are the exceptions."

REPRESENTATIVE JUDY BIGGERT (R-IL)

Question: I've heard from educators who regret having to miss out on "teachable moments" because often it requires risking a loss of, "instructional time," and the rigid focus on 'teaching to the test' means teachers risk lower class scores by doing what they know is actually best for their students.

(a) What suggestions do you have for successfully broadening the scope of subject matter, while maintaining accountability?

The key to broadening the scope of subject matter while maintaining accountability is to ensure that the curriculum is aligned to academic standards from both a state and national level, the common core curriculum. What is taught in class must be the eligible content and not teaching to the test. Teachers must cover this core curriculum and use their creative teaching styles and approaches to lead students to mastery and proficiency. This can be done in a creative fashion by using technology, such as interactive whiteboards, web-based and video-based real-time instruction, computer- based learning, etc. To do this well a school district must have a pacing guide with instructional time for subjects delineated to make sure that the broad curriculum is covered and to implement common assessments to ensure that learning is taking place. It is possible to create an instructional timeframe that allows teachers a limited amount of time for activities of their choice.

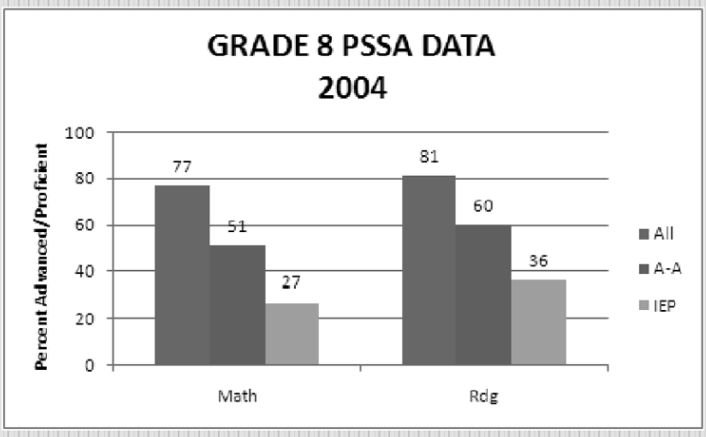
(b) Are you concerned that an expanded curriculum would undermine the current focus on math and reading, subjects with which our students are still currently struggling?

The curriculum in Abington has always been expanded to be far broader than just mathematics and reading. All students, including struggling students, need a broad-based, comprehensive, standards-based curriculum in all subjects including social studies, science, health, art, music, physical education, etc. Mathematics and reading underpin, support, and are reinforced by the instruction in all of these areas. A structured weekly schedule that allocates an appropriate number of minutes each day to the various subject areas coupled with required lesson planning, common assessments, and data-driven intervention plans will establish a setting in which students learn in all subject areas.

District's Commitment to A Continuous Improvement Model

- Student achievement is at the heart of the mission of the Abington School District
- ASD Strategic Plan and school-based plans focus on goals for academic achievement
- ASD focus predates NCLB and AYP
  - Prior to 2002: Each principal was given building goals for improvement
  - Since 2002: Each principal is given targets based upon AYP goals and is required to submit to the Superintendent a building improvement plan in the format of PDE's "Getting Results"

The Brutal Facts Behind the Initiative



The Opportunities to Learn Initiative

A Structure for Change

Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium (DVMSAC)

- In 2004, Abington School District joined with the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education and 14 school districts to form the DVMSAC.
- The goal of the DVMSAC is to help districts network and build capacity for addressing the challenges of the "achievement gaps."
- 2005 – 2006 was year one of a projected three-year program which included meetings, seminars, and workshops with leading researchers.

Abington School District Opportunities to Learn Initiative Superintendent's Charge

To identify, collect, and analyze appropriate data and to formulate cost-effective strategies, programs, activities, and other initiatives that encourage and support broader numbers of students to achieve proficiency and success in rigorous academic courses

Opportunities to Learn Initiative Task Force

Chair: Dr. Amy Sichel, Superintendent

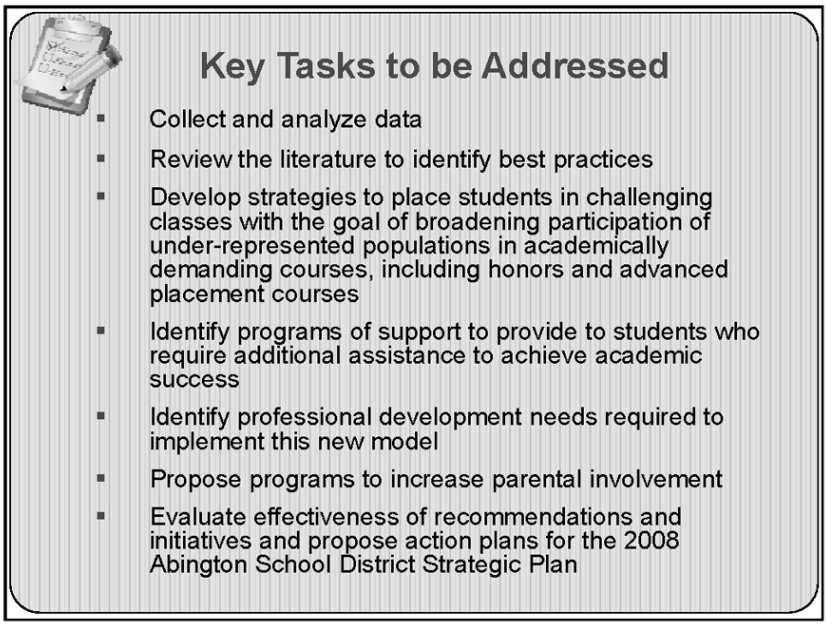
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES
Administrators	36
Teachers	64
Board Members	1
Parents	9
Community Members	3
Students	6

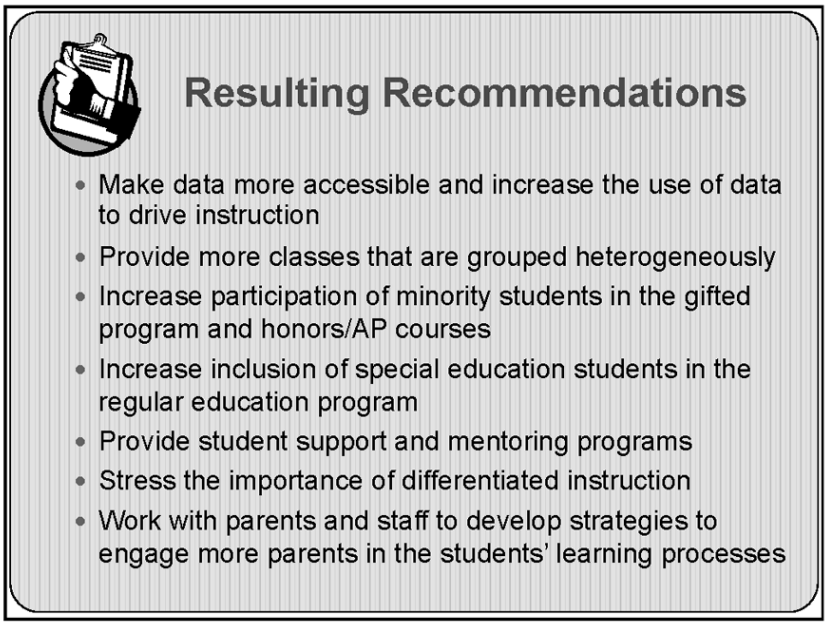
Task Force Organization

STEERING COMMITTEE		
Elementary Team	Junior High School Team	Senior High School Team

TOPICS FOR STUDY:

- Data (Achievement, Course Enrollment, Graduation)
- Student Support
- Parent Involvement
- Placement Procedures
- Professional Development


Key Tasks to be Addressed
Collect and analyze data
Review the literature to identify best practices
Develop strategies to place students in challenging classes with the goal of broadening participation of under-represented populations in academically demanding courses, including honors and advanced placement courses
Identify programs of support to provide to students who require additional assistance to achieve academic success
Identify professional development needs required to implement this new model
Propose programs to increase parental involvement
Evaluate effectiveness of recommendations and initiatives and propose action plans for the 2008 Abington School District Strategic Plan


Resulting Recommendations
Make data more accessible and increase the use of data to drive instruction
Provide more classes that are grouped heterogeneously
Increase participation of minority students in the gifted program and honors/AP courses
Increase inclusion of special education students in the regular education program
Provide student support and mentoring programs
Stress the importance of differentiated instruction
Work with parents and staff to develop strategies to engage more parents in the students' learning processes

Implementation

The 2005 – 2006 Plan

In grade 10:

- **De-track**:
  - Two levels: Honors and College Preparatory
  - Open enrollment for Honors courses
- **Include**:
  - Special education students in College Preparatory courses
- **Support**
  - Provide intervention for students needing support
  - Provide included special education students with humanities and/or math/science support
- **Retain traditional replacement courses for special education students who need this structure**
- **Provide professional development for staff**

Equity, Access

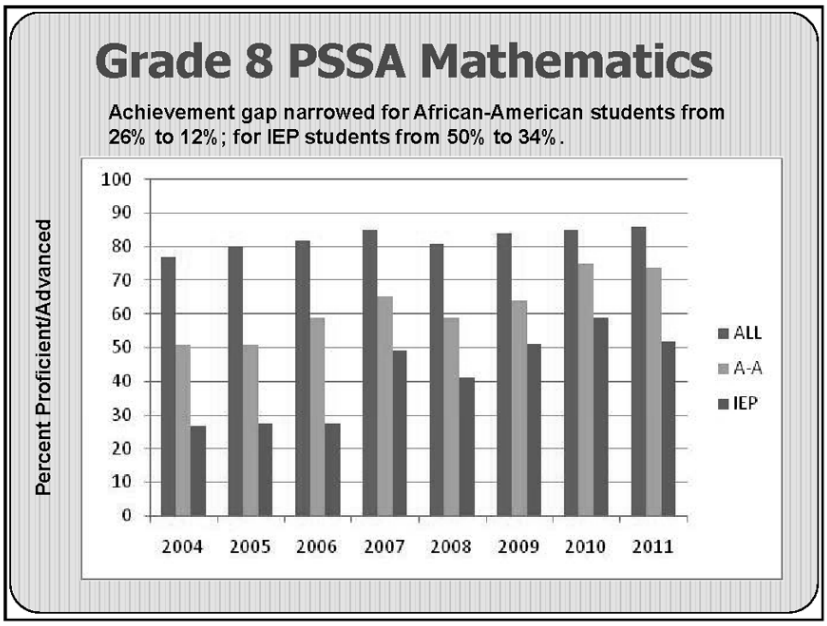
Time

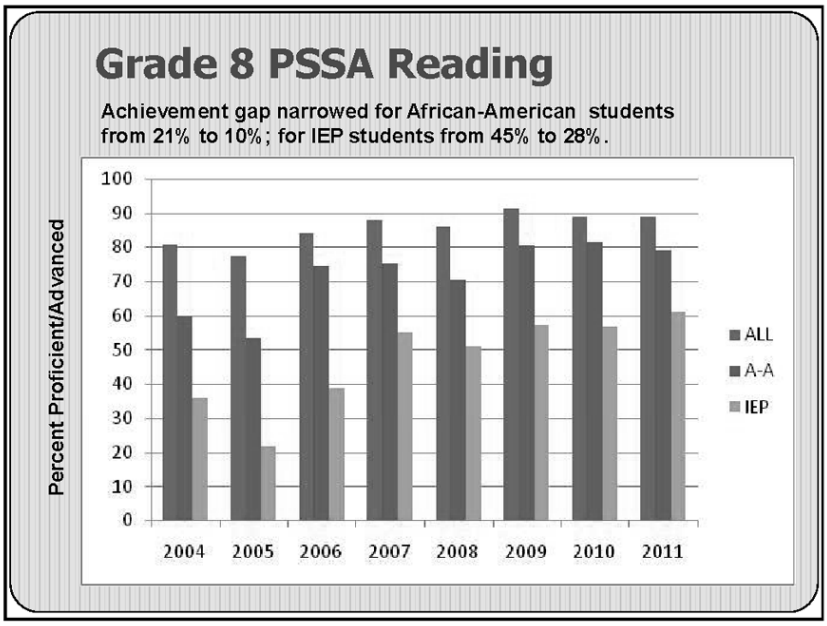
Programs to Support Continuous Improvement

- **Additional instructional time**
  - ✓ Secondary School Reading: 2 - 5 periods per week
  - ✓ Secondary School Mathematics: 5 - 7 periods per week
- **Flexibility in scheduling of electives**
- **Study hall options**
  - ✓ Tutorials
    - Assigned
    - Self-selected
- **After school**
  - ✓ Help from classroom teacher
  - ✓ Student and teacher tutors
  - ✓ Homework Clubs

ABINGTON

What Are the Brutal Facts Since 2004?


Grade 8 PSSA Mathematics
Achievement gap narrowed for African-American students from 26% to 12%; for IEP students from 50% to 34%.
Percent Proficient/Advanced
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
ALL
A-A
IEP


Grade 8 PSSA Reading
Achievement gap narrowed for African-American students from 21% to 10%; for IEP students from 45% to 28%.
Percent Proficient/Advanced
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
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2004
2005
2006
2007
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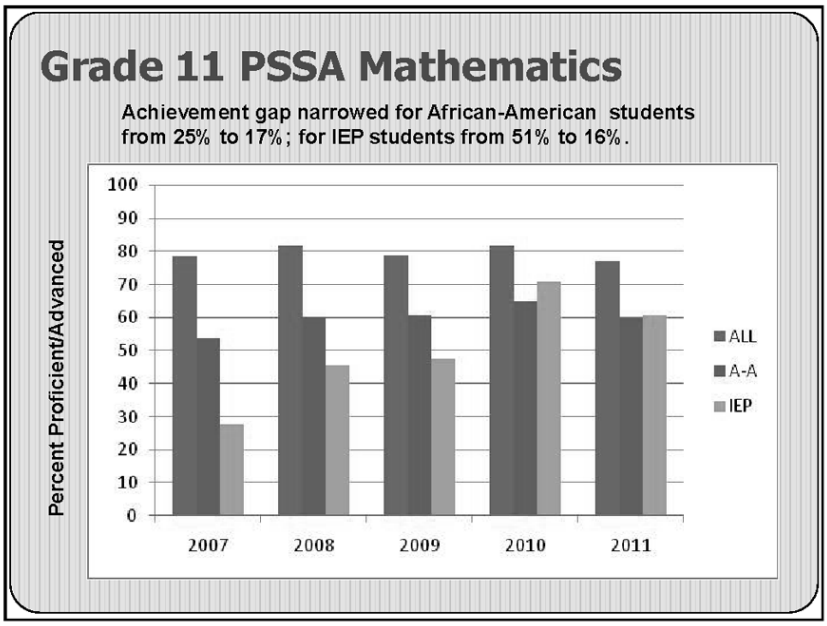
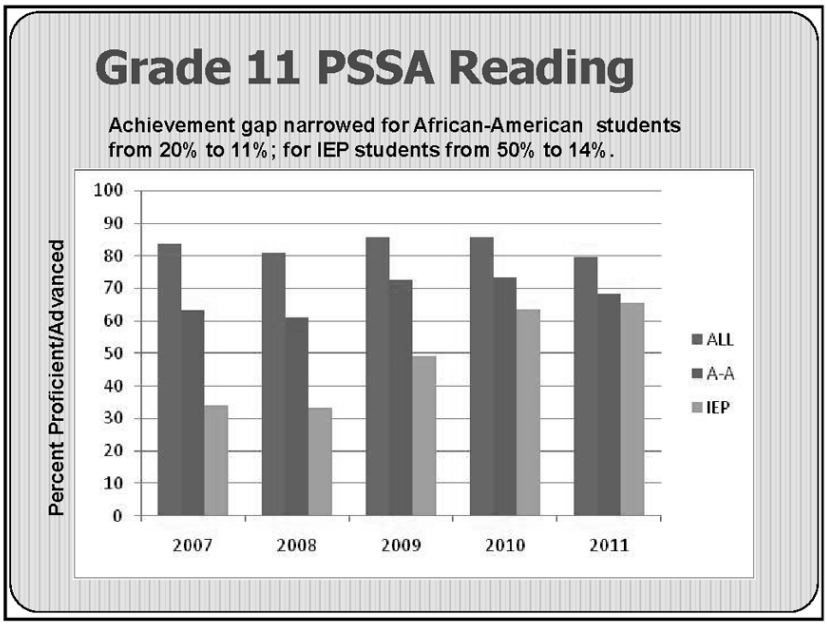
2009
2010
2011
ALL
A-A
IEP


Grade 11 PSSA Mathematics
Achievement gap narrowed for African-American students from 25% to 17%; for IEP students from 51% to 16%.
Percent Proficient/Advanced
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
ALL
A-A
IEP


Grade 11 PSSA Reading
Achievement gap narrowed for African-American students from 20% to 11%; for IEP students from 50% to 14%.
Percent Proficient/Advanced
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
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20
10
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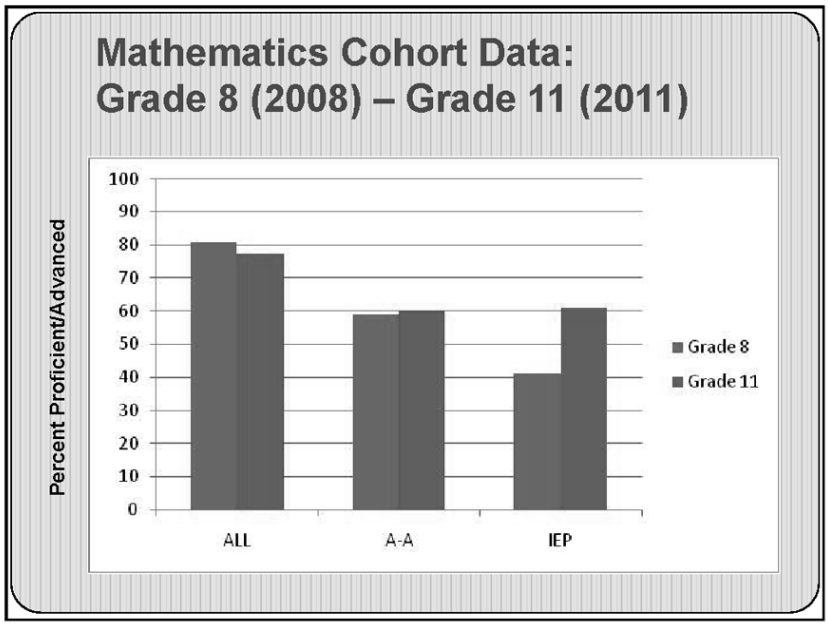
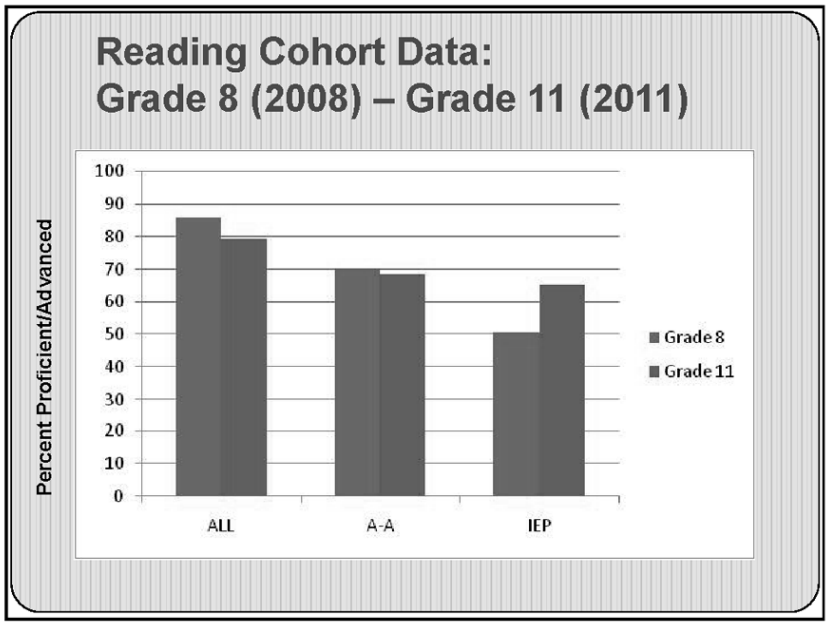
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
ALL
A-A
IEP


Mathematics Cohort Data:
Grade 8 (2008) – Grade 11 (2011)
Percent Proficient/Advanced
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
ALL
A-A
IEP
Grade 8
Grade 11


Reading Cohort Data:
Grade 8 (2008) – Grade 11 (2011)
Percent Proficient/Advanced
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
ALL
A-A
IEP
Grade 8
Grade 11

PVAAS Data: Mathematics

2011 School Value Added

Abington Senior High School in Abington School District

PSSA 9-11 Math

Subject	Year	# of Students	Avg PSSA Score	Avg %-ile	Avg Predicted PSSA Score	Predicted Avg %-ile	Growth Measure	Standard Error
Math	2009	466	1542.6	78	1486.0	71	55.8 DB	6.3
	2010	513	1526.8	72	1478.9	66	47.4 DB	6.5
	2011	506	1488.0	67	1470.7	64	17.0 DB	6.1
	3-Yr-Avg	1485	1518.5	73	1478.3	67	**40.0** DB	3.6

DB	Significant evidence that the school exceeded the standard for PA Academic Growth
LB	Moderate evidence that the school exceeded the standard for PA Academic Growth
G	Evidence that the school met the standard for PA Academic Growth
Y	Moderate evidence that the school did not meet the standard for PA Academic Growth
R	Significant evidence that the school did not meet the standard for PA Academic Growth

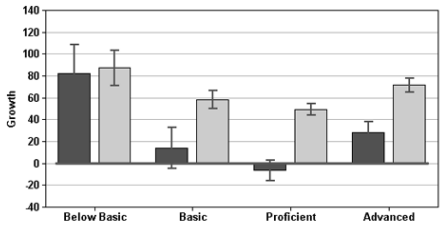
Achievement results (PSSA) and growth results (PVAAS) must be used together to get a complete picture of student learning.
PA Academic Growth defined as:
Science, Writing, Math & Reading Grades 9-11: The standard for PA Academic Growth is met when the student group's actual achievement meets their predicted achievement - based on the average schooling experience.

2011 School Performance Diagnostic Report

Abington Senior High School in Abington School District

PSSA 9-11 Math

Select Subgroups



			Predicted Performance Level Group			
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Math	2011	Growth	82.6	13.8	-6.6	28.0
		Standard Error	26.1	18.6	9.1	10.3
		# of Students	36	64	187	219
		% of Students	7.1	12.6	37.0	43.3
	Previous Years	Growth	**87.2**	**58.2**	**49.3**	**71.4**
		Standard Error	16.1	8.5	5.2	6.7
		# of Students	91	193	519	610
		% of Students	6.4	13.7	36.7	43.2

Growth is defined as average PSSA score minus average predicted PSSA score

PVAAS Data: Reading

2011 School Value Added

Abington Senior High School in Abington School District

PSSA 9-11 Reading

Subject	Year	# of Students	Avg PSSA Score	Avg %-ile	Avg Predicted PSSA Score	Predicted Avg %-ile	Growth Measure	Standard Error
Reading	2009	466	1554.9	75	1487.9	67	65.3 DB	7.2
	2010	524	1500.6	69	1460.7	63	38.8 DB	6.6
	2011	503	1470.4	62	1457.4	61	12.7 LB	6.6
	3-Yr-Avg	1493	1507.4	70	1468.1	64	39.0 DB	3.9

DB	Significant evidence that the school exceeded the standard for PA Academic Growth
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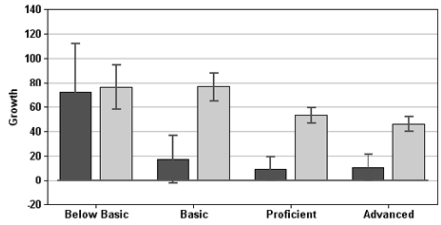
Abington Senior High School in Abington School District

PSSA 9-11 Reading

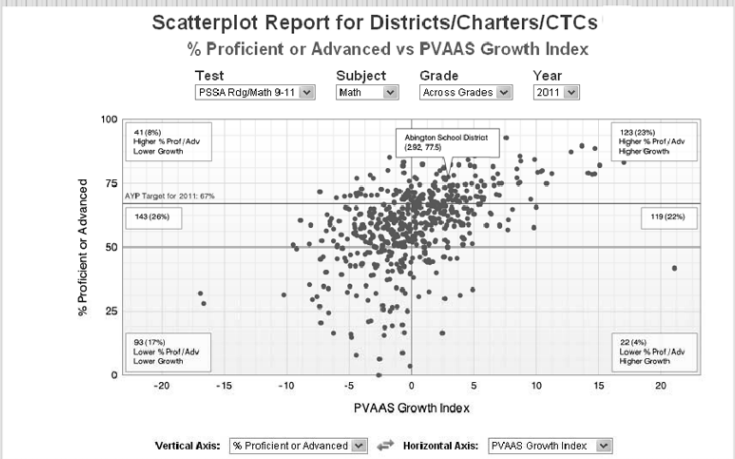
Select Subgroups



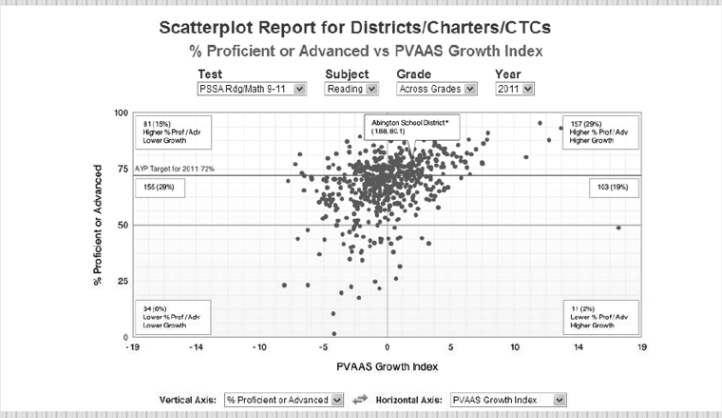
			Predicted Performance Level Group			
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Reading	2011	Growth	72.1	17.1	9.2	10.8
		Standard Error	39.7	19.9	10.1	10.7
		# of Students	17	65	211	210
		% of Students	3.4	12.9	41.9	41.7
	Previous Years	Growth	76.1	76.5	53.1	46.1
		Standard Error	18.4	11.6	6.1	6.1
		# of Students	65	151	553	654
		% of Students	4.6	10.6	38.9	46.0

Growth is defined as average PSSA score minus average predicted PSSA score

PVAAS Growth: Mathematics



PVAAS Growth: Reading

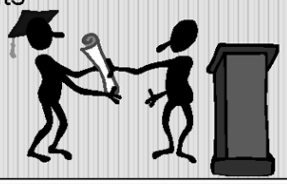


Some Conclusions

- **Students are finding success in the program**
  - Trend lines show increase in percents of students Advanced/Proficient on the PSSA
  - PVAAS growth trend is positive
  - Achievement gaps for African-American students and for IEP students have narrowed significantly
  - Percent of students enrolling in post-secondary education has increased from 80 to 90 percent
- **There is a need to continue to review the data**
  - While the trend is positive, the year-to-year data fluctuates

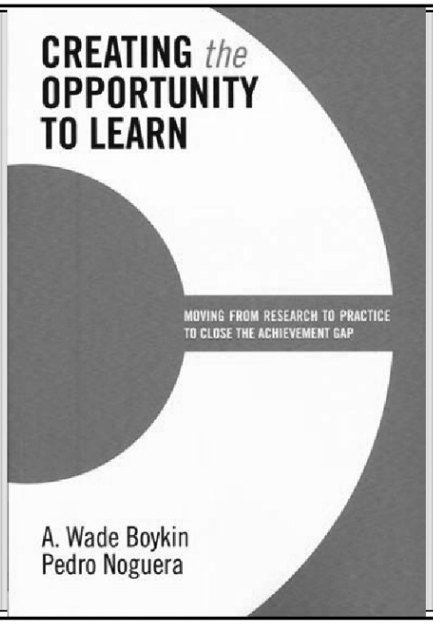
Additional Successes

- Percents of students passing Honors/AP courses ranged from 90 to 100 percent
- Number of discipline referrals was reduced
- One hundred percent parent support for including IEP students in regular education core subject courses
- Recognition for successes achieved by minority students as well as all students



Sharing Our Success

- Abington High School hosts visiting teams from other school districts interested in OTL
- Presentations on OTL invited at conferences and workshops of PASA/PSBA, DVMSAC, PASCD, etc.
- Educational achievement is recognized by Money Magazine, US News and World Report, Philadelphia Magazine, and the America's Promise organization
- AASA spotlights Abington



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Creating the Opportunity to Learn
Moving from Research to Practice To Close the Achievement Gap

Wade Boykin and Pedro Noguera; ASCD, 2011

Mission Statement

"Building upon the historical and culturally diverse roots of our community and its proud traditions and recognizing the uniqueness of each student, the Abington School District promotes excellence as our standard and achievement as the result."

U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2011.

Ms. HANNA SKANDERA,
New Mexico Public Education Department, Jerry Apodaca Education Building, 300 Don Gaspar, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

MS. SKANDERA: Thank you for testifying before the Committee on Education and the Workforce at the hearing entitled, "Education Reforms: Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability," on Wednesday, September 14, 2011. I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than October 13, 2011 for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Dan Shorts of the Committee staff who can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you again for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

JOHN KLINE, *Chairman,*
Committee on Education and the Workforce.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN KLINE (R-MN)

1. What is the proper federal role in ensuring states are intervening in a significant way in schools that are not performing?

2. Should the federal government dictate how states construct growth models, or what type of growth models they use, as part of their state accountability systems?

3. States and districts should provide parents effective options when their students' schools are performing poorly. How can the presence of additional choices drive improvement within the entire system?

REPRESENTATIVE JUDY BIGGERT (R-IL)

1. I've heard from educators who regret having to miss out on "teachable moments" because often it requires risking a loss of, quote "instructional time," and the rigid focus on 'teaching to the test' means teachers risk lower class scores by doing what they know is actually best for their students.

a. What suggestions do you have for successfully broadening the scope of subject matter, while maintaining accountability?

b. Are you concerned that an expanded curriculum would undermine the current focus on math and reading, subjects with which our students are still currently struggling?

Response From Ms. Skandera to Questions Submitted for the Record

1. What is the proper federal role in ensuring states are intervening in a significant way in schools that are not performing?

While the federal government should require states to intervene in low-performing schools, the federal government should not prescribe what intervention models and methods must be utilized. For example, under the current School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, many schools are required to replace the principal. However, in small rural communities, that is often unrealistic. Further, depending on why the school is low-performing, proven strategies for real change should be are the center of what interventions are undertaken. Prescribing specific methods and models does not allow states, in collaboration with districts, to effectively target the specific need(s) of a school.

2. Should the federal government dictate how states construct growth models, or what type of growth models they use, as part of their state accountability system?

In no way should the federal government prescribe the use of growth models for accountability, or specific models that must be used. While all states should be encouraged to develop accountability systems that measure both student proficiency and growth, the weighting of such components and how those components are calculated should be determined by the state.

3. States and districts should provide parents with effective options when their students' schools are performing poorly. How can the presence of additional choices drive improvement within the entire system?

What is key is that effective options are provided. Further, by holding all schools—traditional, charter, virtual, etc—to the same expectations, transparency and accountability will be consistent. If a school continues to under-perform, the state should have the ability to intervene and support the school in its efforts to

improve. However, if the school continues to under-perform, the state should have the discretion to exert more oversight. If a charter school fails to raise student achievement, there needs to be a concerted effort to help that school improve despite their status as a charter. If a traditional public school improves significantly, there should be the opportunity for that school to receive more flexibility.

4. I've heard from educators who regret having to miss out on "teachable moments" because often it requires risking a loss of, quote "instructional time" and the rigid focus on "teaching to the test" means teachers risk lower class scores by doing what they know is actually best for their students.

a. What suggestions do you have for successfully broadening the scope of subject matter, while maintaining accountability?

An effective teacher can teach math through a science lesson, teach reading as part of a social studies lesson, etc. States should still be required to implement accountability systems that include measures of student proficiency and growth on core academic subjects. By providing states with the flexibility to design accountability systems that include additional content areas, it is likely that overtime, states will work towards implementation of including subjects such as science and writing.

b. Are you concerned that an expanded curriculum would undermine the current focus on math and reading, subjects with which are students are still currently struggling?

Currently, New Mexico offers assessments in writing and science in addition to reading and math. While those subjects are nor currently included in the states A-F school grading initiative, that will be considered at a later date. But because reading and math are the building blocks in the early grades for future academic success, a command focus on those content areas must be maintained. The federal government should not require states to include assessments in other content areas—that should be a state's decision.

[Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]