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REVIEWING THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

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

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 29, 2014

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REVIEWING THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, April 29, 2014
House of Representatives,
Committee on Education and the Workforce,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:01 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John Kline [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Kline, Petri, Foxx, Roe, Thompson, Walberg, Salmon, Guthrie, DesJarlais, Rokita, Bucshon, Gowdy, Heck, Messer, Byrne, Miller, Scott, Hinojosa, Tierney, Holt, Davis, Grijalva, Bishop, Loebsack, Courtney, Fudge, Polis, Sablan, Wilson, Bonamici, Pocan, and Takano.

Staff present: Janelle Belland, Coalitions and Members Services Coordinator; Lindsay Fryer, Professional Staff Member; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Nancy Locke, Chief Clerk; Brian Melnyk, Professional Staff Member; Daniel Murner, Press Assistant; Krisann Pearce, General Counsel; Jenny Prescott, Legislative Assistant; Mandy Schaumburg, Education Deputy Director and Senior Counsel; Emily Slack, Professional Staff Member; Alex Sollberger, Communications Director; Alissa Strawcutter, Deputy Clerk; Brad Thomas, Senior Education Policy Advisor; Tylease Alli, Minority Clerk/Intern and Fellow Coordinator; Jeremy Ayers, Minority Education Policy Advisor; Kelly Broughan, Minority Education Policy Associate; Jody Calemine, Minority Staff Director; Jacque Chevalier, Minority Education Policy Advisor; Eamonn Collins, Minority Fellow, Education; Jamie Fasteau, Minority Director of Education Policy; Scott Groginsky, Minority Education Policy Advisor; Julia Krahe, Minority Communications Director; Brian Levin, Minority Press Secretary; Megan O'Reilly, Minority General Counsel; Rich Williams, Minority Education Policy Advisor; and Michael Zola, Minority Deputy Staff Director.

Chairman KLINE. A quorum being present, committee will come to order. Well, good morning. Welcome to our guests. Thank you to Secretary Duncan for joining us. Mr. Secretary, we know your time is valuable and we appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today.

Each year, the Secretary comes before this committee to discuss the administration's policies and priorities for the Department of Education. And each year, he is faced with the undesirable task of defending a budget full of new, unproven programs, burdensome federal mandates and competitive grants that pressure schools to adopt the President's preferred policies.

For fiscal year 2015, the budget request for the department clocks in at an incredible $82.3 billion. This includes nearly $70 billion in discretionary spending and $13 billion in mandatory funding for pet projects such as the President's Preschool for All proposal and new teacher preparation initiatives, both of which, I might add, are redundant of dozens of existing federal programs.

Families, school leaders, and taxpayers deserve a better way forward. Rather than continue to throw good money after bad and pound new program on top of old, we need an administration to work with Congress to advance lasting solutions for the challenges facing schools nationwide.

But instead of supporting our efforts to strengthen K–12 education, the administration has implemented a convoluted temporary waiver scheme which now has waivers to waivers that makes the Secretary of Education the sole arbiter of elementary and secondary education policy.

Instead of helping us address problems in postsecondary education through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the Obama administration continues to push for shortsighted mandates and federal price controls that will limit innovation and levy new regulatory burdens on colleges and universities.

Instead of working with us to ensure the federal government fulfills its basic commitment to students with disabilities by prioritizing funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Obama administration has opted to ramp up spending on untested and often duplicative programs. Worse, the President's budget threatens to further reduce IDEA funding for most districts by shifting the funds into yet another competitive program.

Each of these initiatives is undermining progress in the nation's schools and preventing the students from accessing the quality education opportunities they need for success. The House Education and the Workforce Committee has advanced a number of proposals that will reshape our education system, provide teachers, school administrators, and postsecondary education leaders with the flexible framework necessary to more effectively serve students.

For example, last summer, the House approved the Student Success Act, legislation to restore state and local control in K–12 education, empower parents, and reduce federal burdens in the classroom. The Student Success Act is the first bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that has been considered on the floor in either the House or Senate in more than a decade.

Mr. Secretary, you have repeatedly noted the importance of reauthorizing this law. Clearly, many differences remain. Though prospects may seem unlikely, I believe we all share a sincere desire to find enough common ground to craft a solution that puts student first. But we need support from the administration, not just more waivers.

In addition to our progress in reforming K–12 education, the committee has spent more than a year preparing to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. We have held more than a dozen hearings to examine a myriad of issues facing postsecondary institutions and students and moved legislation to enhance transparency and eliminate federal regulations that will disproportionately harm low-income students and threaten the strength of our higher education system.

As we continue working toward a rewrite of the Higher Education Act, I urge the Secretary to abandon the intrusive policies and punitive regulatory proposal outlined in the President's budget and instead work with us to craft legislation that will help meet our shared goals of improving transparency, affordability, and access to postsecondary education.

Before I yield to my distinguished colleague, Mr. Miller, for his opening remarks, I want to make one final request to Secretary DUNCAN. Mr. Secretary, after each hearing, the committee members on both sides of the aisle submit to your department questions for the record. As our time here in the hearing is limited, these supplemental questions help us continue our oversight of the department's programs and policies.

However, I am troubled by the significant delay in response to these questions. Just a few days ago, Mr. Secretary, the committee finally received answers to the questions submitted to you at this hearing last year. I sincerely hope this will not be the case with the questions received following today's hearing.

I will now yield to the senior Democrat, Mr. Miller, for his opening remarks.

[The statement of Chairman Kline follows:]

Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Hearing on "Reviewing the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Proposal for the Department of Education"

April 29, 2014

Good morning. Welcome to our guests, and thank you to Secretary Duncan for joining us. We know your time is valuable, and we appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today.

Each year, the secretary comes before this committee to discuss the administration's policies and priorities for the Department of Education. And each year, he is faced with the undesirable task of defending a bloated budget full of new, unproven programs, burdensome federal mandates, and competitive grants that pressure schools to adopt the president's preferred policies.

For fiscal year 2015, the budget request for the department clocks in at an incredible $82.3 billion. This includes nearly $70 billion in discretionary spending and 13 billion in mandatory funding for pet projects, such as the president's Preschool for All proposal and new teacher preparation initiatives – both of which, I might add, are redundant to dozens of existing federal programs.

We have discussed time and again the fact that more programs and higher spending have had little measurable impact on students' academic achievement. Though the administration has pumped billions of dollars into the nation's education system since 2009, student achievement remains largely unchanged.

Families, school leaders, and taxpayers deserve a better way forward. Rather than continue to throw good money after bad and pile new program on top of old, we need an administration that will work with Congress to advance lasting solutions to the challenges facing schools nationwide.

But instead of supporting our efforts to strengthen K–12 education, the Obama administration has implemented a convoluted, temporary waiver scheme that makes the secretary of education the sole arbiter of elementary and secondary education policy.

Instead of helping us address problems in postsecondary education through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the Obama administration continues

to push for shortsighted mandates and federal price controls that will limit innovation and levy new regulatory burdens on colleges and universities.

And instead of working with us to ensure the federal government fulfills its basic commitment to students with disabilities by prioritizing funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Obama administration has opted to ramp up spending on untested and often duplicative programs. Worse, the president's budget threatens to further reduce IDEA funding for most districts by shifting the funds into yet another competitive grant program.

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For example, last summer the House approved the Student Success Act, legislation to restore state and local control in K–12 education, empower parents, and reduce federal burdens in the classroom. The Student Success Act is the first bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that has been considered in either the House or Senate in more than a decade.

Mr. Secretary, you have repeatedly noted the importance of reauthorizing this law. Clearly, many differences remain. Though prospects may seem unlikely, I believe we all share a sincere desire to find enough common ground to craft a solution that puts students first. But we need support from the administration, not more waivers that serve as roadblocks to real reform.

In addition to our progress in reforming K–12 education, the committee has spent more than a year preparing to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. We've held more than a dozen hearings to examine myriad issues facing postsecondary institutions and students, and moved legislation to enhance transparency and eliminate federal regulations that will disproportionately harm low-income students and threaten the strength of our higher education system.

As we continue working toward a rewrite of the Higher Education Act, I urge the secretary to abandon the intrusive polices and punitive regulatory proposals outlined in the president's budget and instead work with us to craft legislation that will help meet our shared goals of improving transparency, affordability, and access to postsecondary education.

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However, I am troubled by the significant delay in response to these questions. Just a few days ago, the committee finally received answers to the questions submitted to the secretary after this hearing almost one year ago. I sincerely hope this will not be the case with the questions you receive following today's hearing.

I will now yield to the Senior Democrat, Mr. Miller, for his opening remarks.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us here today to discuss President Obama's agenda for improving the lives and the education of our nation's students.

This hearing comes at a time when our parties are putting forth two very different visions of our nation's education system.

On the one hand, my Republican colleagues have passed a draconian budget that guts resources for students and schools, putting sequestration back in place and slashing education even further.

On the other, President Obama has proposed greater investment in our nation's schools because he recognizes that education leads to better jobs and a more competitive workforce.

Republicans want to be the party of "NO:" NO federal involvement; NO accountability; NO equity protections for disadvantaged students.

President Obama has put forward a budget that supports college and career readiness for all students and encourages greater equity.

These are more than just opposing theories or competitive ideologies; how these budget priorities end up playing out will have real consequences for our students, teachers, schools and for our economy.

It is a shame that we find ourselves at such odds when we are talking about the very future of our nation.

The recent past had shed some light on the possibilities for our future. Over the last 5 years, schools have undertaken a massive transformation on a scale that I have never seen before in my lifetime.

Schools are raising expectations for students so that they graduate prepared for life's next steps, be they toward college or toward a career.

Schools are ditching bubble tests in favor of new assessments that measure critical thinking and other skills necessary to have success in the 21st century.

Schools are experimenting with new ways to measure and encourage achievement, including efforts to improve struggling schools.

Communities are setting children up for life-long success by providing high-quality preschool programs for more kids than ever before.

We need to support our nation's educators as they undertake these dramatic shifts in education in this country.

We in the federal government should be helping students and schools make these leaps, not cutting them off at the knees. Instead of doubling down on austerity, we should pass a bipartisan law to fix No Child Left Behind, not jam partisan bills through the House that the President will never sign.

We should continue to bolster early childhood education so that our youngest citizens stop falling through the cracks.

We should strengthen the workforce by improving college access, increasing transparency to help students make smart choices, and increasing college competition, not gutting the Pell Grant, the backbone of student aid.

It is time for Congress to get back into the business of partnering with states and districts in support of schools. It's a time to start saying "Yes" rather than always saying "No."

I am pleased to say that we have taken some small steps to do this. The recent passage of the bipartisan charter school bill and the education research bill are encouraging signs, as was the funding for preschool development grants that was included in the bipartisan omnibus bill.

But they are just a down payment on the challenges that lie ahead of us in revising the primary laws that impact the nation's education system.

Given the heavy-handed Ryan budget and the overall Congressional inaction on pressing education matters, I want to recognize and commend the actions your department has taken on the equity issues.

I would like to commend you for your vigilance on ensuring the districts allocate resources more fairly and improve student access to effective teachers.

I would like to praise the actions of the Office of Civil Rights to document and reduce inequitable discipline practices.

I applaud the administration's attention to sexual abuse in schools at all levels.

And I am heartened by your work in behalf of students with disabilities to ensure states continue to hold that population to high standards.

And I appreciate your ongoing efforts to ensure that colleges adequately prepare students for gainful employment.

And I appreciate the ongoing efforts to make high-quality early childhood education a reality for all children, not just a privilege for the few.

I also urge you to maintain a laser-like focus on equity in the ESEA waiver renewal process. You have the authority in that process to bring the focus back to equity for disadvantaged students. And you must hold the line when states and districts seek to dilute or camouflage efforts to equitably serve all students.

Thank you for being here today, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you for all the work that you do day in and day out on behalf of our students and our schools and our communities.

And I look forward to your testimony. I yield back my time.

[The statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you Secretary Duncan for joining us here today to discuss President Obama's agenda for improving the lives of our nation's students.

This hearing comes at a time when our parties are putting forth two very different visions for our nation's education system.

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I also urge you to maintain a laser-like focus on equity in the ESEA waiver renewal process. You have the authority in that process to bring the focus back to equity for disadvantaged students. You must hold the line when states or districts seek to dilute efforts to equitably serve all students.

Thank you for being here today, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for all the work you do, day in and day out.

I look forward to your testimony.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back. 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.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back. You are recognized.

STATEMENT OF HON. ARNE DUNCAN, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Secretary DUNCAN. Just quickly, Mr. Chairman, in response to your last question. We were too slow in getting back the answers to those questions. I apologize for that.

I give you my word it won't happen again.

To Chairman Kline, to Ranking Member Miller and to all the members, the story of American education today is a good news/bad news story. First, let me begin by thanking you for your work on the 2014 budget which increased our investment in education over the previous year.

This investment is essential for the good news side of the story, which is that our students are making substantial progress in graduating from high school and going on to enroll in college, be that at a 2-year university or 4-year college, trade, technical, voca-

tional training. Our nation's on-time high school graduation rate reached a record high in 2012: 80 percent.

And if you guys look at the newspapers today, there are number of headlines that were extraordinarily positive about the hard work that is going on. And I want to thank our students, our teachers, families, community members, administrators for all the hard work in seeing those high school graduation rates hit a record high.

In addition to that, college enrollment is up as well, with Latino and African-American students leading the way in a country where the school system is going to become, as soon as this fall, majority-minority. That is a hugely important step in the right direction.

The bad news, the flip side of that, is that we still have unacceptable opportunity gaps in America. It will be very difficult to close those gaps when federal discretionary funding for education, excluding Pell Grants, remains below the 2010 level.

Our international competitors are not making the mistake of disinvesting in education. And their students are making more progress than America's students, endangering our country's competitiveness and prosperity.

As everyone here knows, in a knowledge-based global economy, the need to close these opportunity gaps and strengthen our competitiveness is one of the most urgent challenges facing our nation. To continue to fall behind would hurt our country economically for generations to come.

So I appeal to you today to continue America's longstanding bipartisan commitment to investing in education. Dating back to our nation's founding, the federal government has provided incentives to state and local governments to invest in education and expand educational opportunity.

Before the states ratified the Constitution, the continental Congress required townships to reserve money for the construction of schools and granted federal lands to states to create and support public schools. During the Civil War, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, incentivizing the creation of our nation's land-grant colleges, which today educate more than 4 million students.

Just 2 weeks after D–Day, President Roosevelt signed the G.I. bill, providing access to education to returning service members and veterans. And after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, President Eisenhower and Congress together passed the National Defense Education Act to bolster mathematics and science education.

Despite these key investments and the educational progress we have made as a nation, large opportunity gaps remain at a time when education is more important than ever to accelerate economic progress, increasing upper mobility and reducing social inequality. President Obama's budget would increase investment in education to boost that progress and close those insidious opportunity gaps.

Sadly, those opportunity gaps start with our youngest learners and early learning. If we could look at the first slide, please. America is 25th in the world—25th in the enrollment of 4-year-olds in preschool. Four in 10 public school systems in the United States don't even offer preschool, setting the stage for a huge gap in school readiness that not only President Obama but most of our nation's governors find unacceptable.

In the real world, outside of Washington and away from the dysfunction of Congress, this has become an absolutely bipartisan issue. In fact, last year, 30 governors, and more Republican governors than Democratic, 17 Republican governors and 13 Democratic governors increased funding for preschool in their state budgets.

In tough economic times, these leaders chose to use scarce taxpayer dollars to expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities. Budgets, not words, not empty rhetoric, reflect our true values.

And these 30 governors walked the walk. Just one quick example, Governor Schneider in Michigan committed to putting 65 million more dollars into the state program to ensure children in need of preschool have access to it.

He said that he was going to make Michigan, and I quote—"a no-wait state for early childhood education." And we need to help every state be able to make that same claim. And that is why the President's request for $500 million for Preschool Development Grants and $75 billion in mandatory funding for the Preschool for All program are so essential to our nation's future.

They would support state-led efforts to provide access to high-quality preschool through a mixed delivery system, both public and private, for all 4-year-olds from low and moderate-income families. And a diverse, highly unusual coalition has come together and is working together to support these efforts.

States attorneys, sheriffs and police associations support high-quality early learning because it reduces crime when kids grow up. They are tired of locking people up. Military leaders, admirals and generals across the nation support it as well because three-fourths of young adults today are not able to serve in the military because they have dropped out of high school, can't pass the entrance exam, are physically unfit for service, or have a criminal record.

High-quality early learning, as we know, reduces all of these problems. Our military has always been our strongest defense. America's education system must be our strongest offense.

Hundreds of hard-headed business leaders, CEOs, chairmen of the board, are big advocates because they know high-quality early learning produces a better workforce and has a high ROI, or return on investment. In fact, Nobel Prize-winning economist, James Heckman, found a return of $7 to every $1 of public investment in high-quality preschool programs.

How many other uses of scarce taxpayer dollars returned that kind of investment to America's people? Unfortunately, opportunity gaps in early learning continue all the way through high school as new data from our civil rights data collection program shows. And let's go to the next slide.

Students of color, students of disabilities and English language learners don't get the same opportunity as their white and Asian-American peers to take the basic math and science courses necessary that figure so importantly in preparing for college and career. Often, this lack of access means students can't take the required classes they need to apply to 4-year colleges or it means they go to college but must then burn through Pell Grants and financial aid taking noncredit-bearing remedial classes.

Nationwide, black and Hispanic students are close to 40 percent of high school students but just over a quarter of students taking AP classes and 20 percent of those enrolled in calculus classes. This dumbing down of expectations is devastating to students, to their families, to communities, and ultimately, to our nation.

And if we can go to this final slide, it highlights opportunity gaps and access to high-speed broadband in our schools. Most schools today have nowhere near the bandwidth speed they need to support current applications and instruction.

Two-thirds of our teachers wish they had more technology in their classrooms. As folks here know, technology both empowers teachers in very important ways and engages students in their own learning and helps teachers to individualize instruction.

Simply put, once again, other nations take these responsibilities, these opportunities much more seriously than we do. In South Korea, a very high-performing nation educationally, 100 percent of their schools have access to high-speed internet.

Here in the United States, it is only about 20 percent—20 percent versus 100 percent. So our students, our teachers and our schools often lack the bandwidth to take advantage of new technologies and tools that could accelerate efforts to close achievement gaps and assure that all students graduate from high school both college and career ready.

How is that fair to our children or how is it fair to our hard-working teachers? Making progress on closing these opportunity gaps is the ribbon, the theme, that runs throughout President Obama's 2015 education budget request.

It is the overarching goal of the preschool development grants and the Preschool for All proposal. It is behind our request for both a $300 million Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity Fund to help states and districts develop road maps to ensure all students can reach their potential; and also, our $200 million ConnectEDucators initiative to provide teachers with the expertise they need to use technology to teach students to high standards and to help them individualize and customize instruction.

By contrast, the House Republican budget would widen, would increase opportunity gaps. OMB estimates that the Ryan budget would cut funding for education by 15 percent in 2016, or by about $10 billion. If that 15 percent cut were applied this year, Title I for our nation's poorest children would be cut by $2.2 billion. IDEA grants, special needs students, special education, those grants to states would be cut by $1.7 billion.

And Mr. Chairman, with the Recovery Act, which you voted against, that increased IDEA funding by $12 billion. The Ryan budget, which would cut funding, you voted for.

And so again, it is one thing to talk about it. But I wanted to just make sure that folks are paying attention not to our words, not to our rhetoric, but to the reality of our votes and to budgets. Those cuts to our students, most disadvantaged children, poor children, children with special needs, that is exactly the wrong direction to go for our children and for our nation's future.

We can and we must do better together. The American dream has always been about opportunity. Today, our nation is failing to live up to that core American ideal for all of its citizens; we must

do more now to level the playing field and make a great public education available to every child.

That is who I think we are. As former Florida governor Jeb Bush says, the sad truth is that equality of opportunity doesn't exist in many of our schools. That failure is the great moral and economic issue of our time.

And it is hurting all of America. So let's get back to working together, to close opportunity gaps that we all agree are deeply at odds with the American promise of equal opportunity. And I appreciate the bipartisan work of the committee to pass a charter school bill.

Bipartisan education bills coming from Congress have frankly been few and far between in recent years, to no one's benefit. I hope that you can start taking that work to scale again and creating bipartisan support for a fiscal year 2015 budget that will take important steps to provide our nation's students and teachers with the support they need.

And Mr. Chairman, just quickly, before I close, I would like to say a quick word about my good friend, Congressman Miller. I think this might be the last committee which I will be testifying that you are at.

And I can't say I love testifying in these situations, but I have loved working with you over the past 6 years. I talked to a retired member of Congress over the weekend, and he said that of the entire Congress, he thinks you are the smartest member in terms of education issues.

[Applause.]

And I think that is a very accurate sentiment. But I have to say what I have been more impressed with than your intelligence is your courage. And you have been willing to challenge the status quo.

You have been willing to take unpopular positions. You have been willing to take on party orthodoxy in the base in a really profound way. And if we had more legislators, more members of Congress who had that level of courage, I think our nation would be a better place.

So thank you so much for your service and leadership. Thank you.

[The statement of Secretary Duncan follows:]

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statement by
Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
on the
U.S. Department of Education Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Committee:

I want to begin by thanking Congress for your work on the 2014 appropriation for education. I appreciate the funding increases that you included in the fiscal year 2014 appropriation. However, it's important to recognize that total discretionary funding for the Department of Education, excluding Pell Grants, remains below the fiscal year 2010 level, and I worry about the long-term impact of the continuing slide in Federal education funding on the health of our economy and our democracy.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S 2015 BUDGET REQUEST

Turning to 2015, the overall discretionary request for the Department of Education is $68.6 billion, an increase of $1.3 billion, or 1.9 percent, over the 2014 level. Within this total, we have six key priorities: (1) increasing equity and opportunity for all students; (2) strengthening support for teachers and school leaders; (3) expanding high-quality preschool programs; (4) improving school safety and climate; (5) promoting educational innovation and improvement; and (6) ensuring access to affordable and quality postsecondary education.

EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY

We are requesting $300 million for a new Race to the Top – Equity and Opportunity competition centered on improving the academic performance of students in our Nation's highest poverty schools. RTT—Opportunity grantees would support: (1) developing systems that integrate data on school-level finance, human resources, and academic achievement;

(2) developing and retaining effective teachers and leaders in high-poverty schools; (3) increasing access to rigorous coursework; and (4) other evidence-based activities that mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

A second priority in our 2015 request is to provide significant support for school teachers and leaders who are implementing new college- and career-ready (CCR) standards, turning around our lowest-performing schools, and using new evaluation systems to improve their practices. A key request in this area is $200 million for ConnectEDucators, that would help educators transition to using technology and data to personalize learning and improve instruction, in support of the FCC's ConnectED initiative to equip our Nation's schools and libraries with high-speed connectivity. The program would benefit educators and students by creating high-quality, open digital learning resources aligned to CCR standards; using digital tools to personalize learning and implement new assessments; analyzing real-time data to improve student outcomes; using technology to increase student engagement; and providing remote access to effective educators.

We are requesting $2.3 billion for Excellent Instructional Teams, which would provide both formula grants and competitive awards to help States and LEAs increase the effectiveness of teachers and principals. This total includes $2.0 billion for Effective Teachers and Leaders State Grants to provide flexible, formula-based support for States and LEAs; $320 million for the Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund to reform school leader advancement and compensation systems; and $35 million for a transformed School Leadership program to expand the Department's focus on current school leaders aimed at strengthening essential leadership skills.

EXPANDING HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL

The third major priority in the 2015 request is to continue the President's commitment to expanding educational opportunity for millions of children through a $75 billion mandatory Preschool for All program that would partner with States to support universal access to high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families. Our preschool request also includes $500 million to expand the Preschool Development Grants program that would help build State and local capacity to implement high-quality preschool programs.

In addition, we are requesting $441.8 million for the Grants for Infants and Families program under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an increase of $3.3 million to help States implement statewide systems of early intervention services for all eligible children with disabilities from birth through age 2 and their families.

AFFORDABILITY AND QUALITY IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Our 2015 request also includes key initiatives to improve affordability and quality in postsecondary education. For example, we are asking for $7 billion in mandatory budget authority over 10 years for new College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus grants to reward colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time. This initiative would support innovations to further increase college access and success by providing funding to eligible institutions based upon the number of Pell students they graduate on time. The Satisfactory Academic Progress initiative would make changes to the Pell Grant eligibility provisions by strengthening academic progress requirements to encourage students to complete on time. The Budget would also provide Pell Grant eligibility to students who are co-enrolled in adult and postsecondary education as part of a career pathway program to

allow adults without a high school diploma to gain the knowledge and skills they need to secure a good job.

Second, we would use $4 billion in mandatory funding to create a State Higher Education Performance Fund that would make 4-year competitive grants to States to support the successful implementation of performance-based policy and funding reforms that encourage and reward college affordability and ensure that students attend and complete postsecondary education.

Third, our 2015 request proposes $100 million to expand support for the First in the World fund to make competitive awards to support improving educational outcomes, including on time completion rates, and making college more affordable for students and families, particularly for low-income students. The request also asks for $75 million for College Success Grants for Minority-Serving Institutions, which would make competitive awards to minority-serving institutions designated under Title III and Title V of the Higher Education Act.

Lastly, we are continuing our efforts to help student borrowers with existing debt to manage their obligations through income-driven repayment plans. Our 2015 request proposes to extend Pay As You Earn, which caps student loan payments at 10 percent of discretionary income, to all student borrowers.

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

We continue to support innovation and improvement in elementary and secondary education, beginning with $165 million for Investing in Innovation (i3), an increase of $23.4 million, to maintain strong support for using an evidence-based approach to scale up the most effective approaches in high-need areas. The i3 request would provide up to $49.5 million for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Education, an initiative that would pursue

technological breakthroughs with the potential to improve the effectiveness and productivity of teaching and learning.

Second, we are requesting $150 million for a new High School Redesign program to support the transformation of the high school experience by funding competitive grants to school districts and their partners to redesign high schools to help ensure all students graduate from high school with college credit and career-related experiences or competencies.

Third, our 2015 request seeks $170 million in new funding for a comprehensive STEM Innovation proposal to transform STEM education. This total includes $110 million for STEM Innovation Networks to provide competitive awards to LEAs in partnership with institutions of higher education, other public agencies, and businesses to help increase the number of students who are effectively prepared for postsecondary education and careers in STEM fields. We also are asking for $40 million to support STEM Teacher Pathways that would make competitive grants for recruiting recent college graduates and mid-career professionals in the STEM fields in high-need schools. An additional $20 million would support the activities of a National STEM Master Teacher Corps, which would identify models to help America's brightest math and science teachers make the transition from excellent teachers to school leaders and advocates for STEM education.

In addition, the Budget provides a $100 million increase for Special Education State Grants. This increase would support Results Driven Accountability incentive grants to improve special education services for children with disabilities. States awarded these grants would identify and implement promising, evidence-based reforms while also building State and local capacity to improve long-term outcomes.

Our 2015 request also includes a request of $1.1 billion for a reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education program. The reauthorization proposal would build on the experience of the i3 program by creating a discretionary fund aimed at promoting innovation and reform in CTE and replicating the success of proven models.

IMPROVING SCHOOL SAFETY AND CLIMATE

The 2015 request would continue support for the Now is the Time school safety initiative by providing $50 million for School Climate Transformation Grants to help create positive school climates that support effective education for all students; $45 million for a Successful, Safe, and Healthy State and Local Grants program that would award grants to increase the capacity of States, districts, and schools to create safe, healthy, and drug-free environments; and $25 million for Project Prevent grants to help LEAs break the cycle of violence through expanded access, school-based strategies that prevent future violence.

OPPORTUNITY, GROWTH, AND SECURITY INITIATIVE

The Administration's Budget also includes a separate $56 billion Opportunity, Security, and Growth Initiative. Our Education Budget would use this initiative to include additional investments of $250 million for Preschool Development Grants, $300 million for the ConnectEDucators initiative, $200 million for Promise Neighborhoods, and also could be used to make other investments to ensure students have access to high-quality education, from preschool to college. All of these funds are in addition to the discretionary requests under the caps.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our 2015 Budget reflects the President's determination to make the investments necessary to secure America's future prosperity. I look forward to working with the Subcommittee to secure support for the President's 2015 Budget for education.

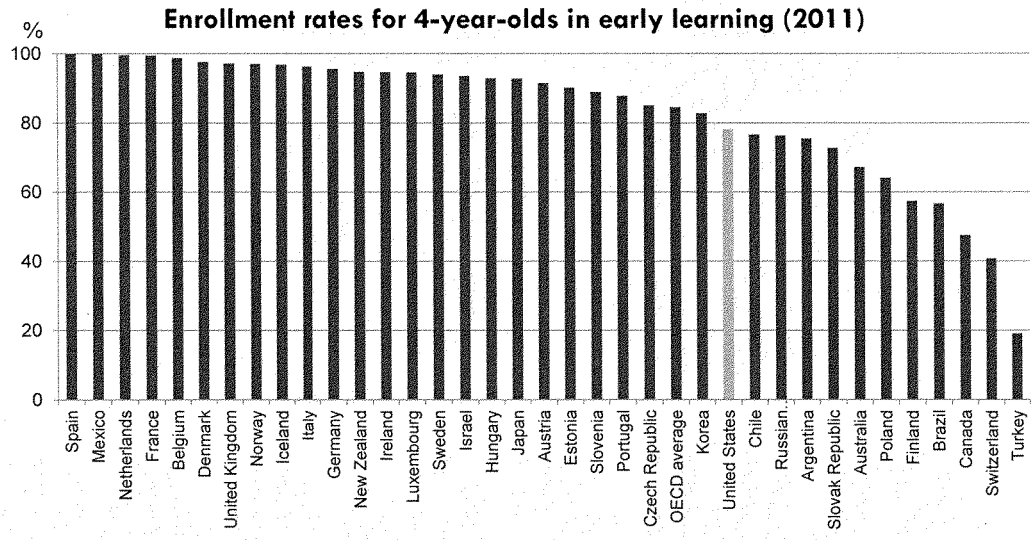
TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN

TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2014

ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING

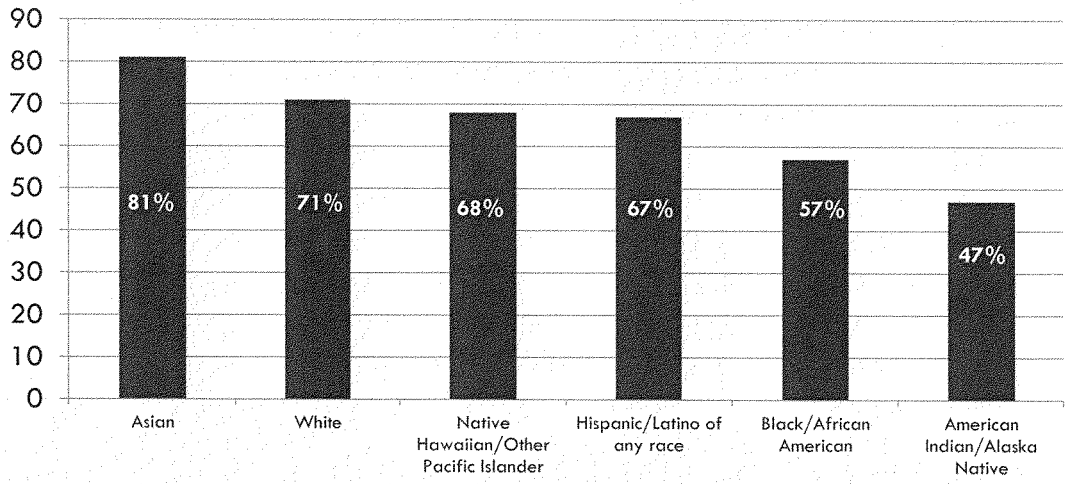
THE UNITED STATES RANKS 25TH IN THE WORLD IN ENROLLMENT



1

LACK OF ACCESS TO THE FULL RANGE OF MATH AND SCIENCE COURSES

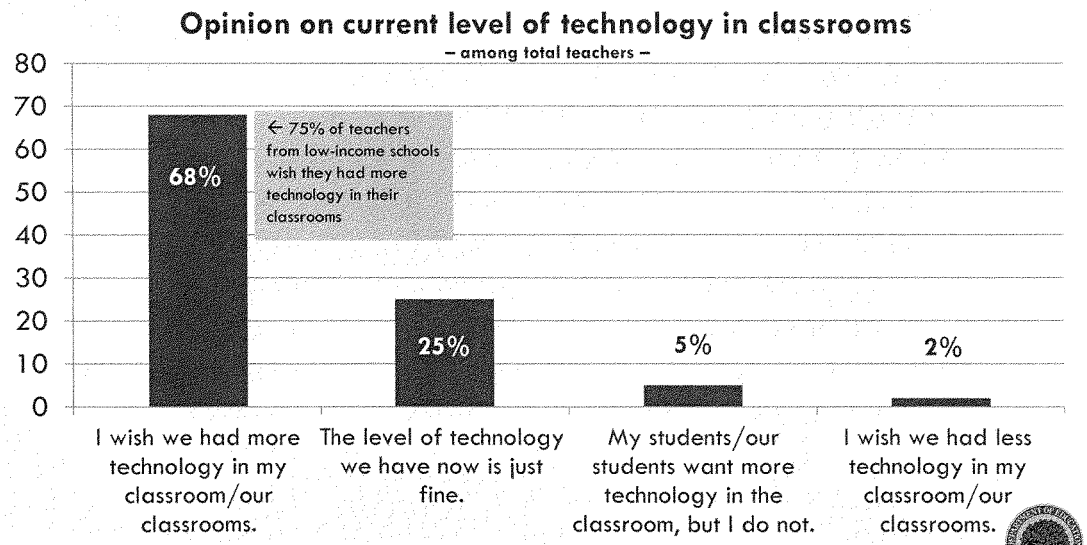
Students with access to the full range* of math and science courses, by race and ethnicity

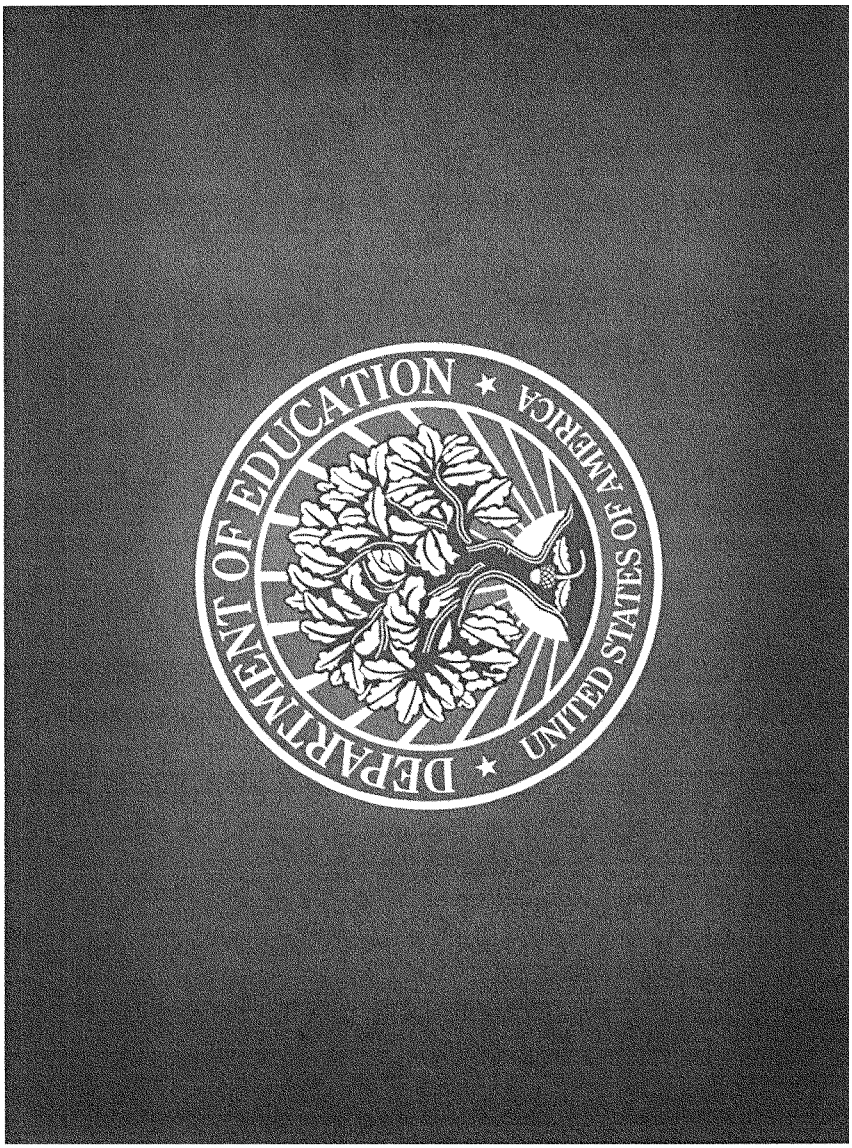


*Full range of courses includes: Algebra I and II, geometry, calculus, biology, chemistry and physics.

TEACHERS EXPRESS DESIRE FOR MORE CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

MORE THAN 68 PERCENT OF TEACHERS EXPRESS DESIRE FOR MORE CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY




DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We will talk about budgets for just a minute. You mentioned the so-called Ryan budget and the President's budget. There are some very significant differences there, of course.

The President's budget, as you know, never balances, continues to add to our nation's debt and to the burdens of our children forever, whereas the Ryan budget balances within 10 years. And just to note, the Ryan budget in itself doesn't cut a dime from special ed.

It allows prioritization. And I would hope that we would start to prioritize, Republicans and Democrats, administration and Congress, the spending for special ed.

You remember very well, Mr. Secretary—I am sure if you don't, I do, very well, your first appearance here when I was sitting back over there and asked you about special education funding. And you pointed out the spike that you just did again which was in the stimulus bill.

We had a discussion at that time about how a 1-year spike is really not very useful to IDEA and the special education because it doesn't allow schools to program, to hire more teachers and to get an ongoing program. One-year spike is only a 1-year spike.

Secretary DUNCAN. Just to be clear, it wasn't a 1-year spike. That is over a couple of years. That was an additional $12 billion—

Chairman KLINE. It was a spike, Mr. Secretary. Reclaiming my time. It was a spike. And whether you call it a 1-year spike or a 2-year spike, it was a spike.

Mr. TIERNEY. Will the gentleman yield—

Chairman KLINE. I will not. Just hang on just a minute. So what we have been asking for, what I have been asking for, is a commitment to increase funding for special education. It is a shortcoming that Republicans and Democrats have had in administration and in Congress.

And we need to work together to increase that funding. When I travel to schools, not only in my district in Minnesota and around the country, the thing they want most from the federal government is for it to start to step up and meet its commitment towards that 40 percent of increased funding, which was supposed to be provided. We have never gotten over 18 percent.

So I guess my question, then, Mr. Secretary, you have got over a dozen new programs in this President's budget. But you don't have any increase of funding that is available for special education.

Secretary DUNCAN. So again, I just want to be very clear and correct the record. Our budget has a $100 million increase for special education. As I said early, the Recovery Act increased funding by $12 billion, by far the largest increase in special ed funding ever in our nation's history.

And you voted against that.

Chairman KLINE. I absolutely voted against that, because it set us on this path where we are running up huge deficits and debts that keep piling on, and because that spike in spending doesn't address the needs for our special ed kids, for our children across the spectrum. Whether you are special needs or not special needs, we need steady funding for special ed.

And that is what we ought to be working towards. And what I am asking—the $100 million so-called increase, you put a set-aside so actual funds available to fund the program go down.

Secretary DUNCAN. No, that is not accurate. That is not true. But again, just to be clear, we are both repeating ourselves, the $12 billion increase that you voted against, a Ryan budget that would lead to a couple of billion-dollar decrease—

Chairman KLINE. Okay, we are repeating ourselves. So let's stop. The Ryan budget will not decrease special ed funding. It allows prioritization where that we can increase that spending if we so choose.

All right, so apparently, you are not going to increase that spending year-over-year.

Secretary DUNCAN. No, to be clear, our budget asks for a $100 million increase in special ed funding.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you. So you are not going to increase year-over-year usable special ed funding. Let's move to waivers real quickly. In the last 2 weeks, you rescinded Washington's waiver because of provisions in the state's teacher evaluation law that are inconsistent with the waiver requirements, and granted a waiver to Illinois despite the fact the provisions in the state's teacher evaluation law are inconsistent with the waiver requirements.

In Washington, you have, in effect, overruled the will of Washington citizens as enacted by their elected representatives to uphold a requirement that cannot be found anywhere in federal law. On the other hand, in Illinois and other states, you have shown a willingness to bend your waiver requirements to fit state needs.

How do you find consistency? How do states expect to find consistency under those circumstances?

Secretary DUNCAN. No, it is very simple. So Washington made a series of commitments in writing a year or 2 ago. And in any good-faith agreement, both parties need to live up to their commitments.

And Washington, despite the governor's best efforts, despite the state lieutenants' best efforts, Washington couldn't live up to their commitments. And so, when, in an agreement, folks can't do that, the agreement has to end.

So the door is always open. We welcome them to come back at anytime they want. But both parties have to work in good faith.

Chairman KLINE. Mr. Miller?

Mr. MILLER. I yield to Mr. Tierney.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Miller. I was trying to get your attention, Mr. Chairman, because I think history is a good thing for us to remember once in a while. You weren't here.

And I don't think the Secretary was here either, but there was a time when the Republicans had 10 points that they were running on. They have got 10 points to save America, whatever the slogan was, one of which was to increase the spending for IDEA.

When we got into Congress that year after that election and the Speaker of the House now was the chairman of this committee, long time from Wisconsin, I offered an amendment to the bill that would fully fund IDEA. Not a single member of your party voted for it.

Not one. And everybody on this side did. So there is a degree of seriousness about who wants to do something, who wants to talk

about it. If you have—if people in the Ryan budget thought it was so good to prioritize it, they would have specified it, not just left it out there so they can say, we are going to cut a zillion dollars, just not going to tell you where.

So I hope we get real on this subject at some point. Thank you.

Mr. MILLER. I thank the gentleman. I would also point out that at that time, there were 345 signatures on a letter to the administration calling for full funding of special ed. And we couldn't get a vote in the subcommittee.

There is always a reason. And when you talk about prioritizing, we had amendment after amendment on the Republican side to cut special ed, to provide money for another program. So they were always playing the shortages in education, one against the other.

But the question always was if they increase special ed, you had to salvage another program to do that, rather than to grow the pot. The record isn't great on special ed, other than all of the rhetoric from elected officials about how much they support it.

But when the vote comes, they are never there. That is the record on special ed. So thank you for adding money at the administration level. We will see where the Congress falls through with that at the budget level.

And by the way, you should know there is about $380 billion in tax cuts coming out of the ways and means committee which aren't paid for—simply aren't paid for. Or they are going to add in the base.

They have a gimmick. They are going to add in the base but just not paid for. So if you need those tax cuts among the wealthiest, large enterprises in the country, yet you don't have to pay for them, but if you need money for special ed, you have to pay for that.

So we will sort that out over time, I guess.

Mr. Secretary, I want to touch on an issue that you have touched on in your opening statement that is very important to me, and your response on the question of dealing with the—with now, the renewal of the waivers. And that is the issue of equity.

I had the honor of participating the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act at the LBJ Center in Austin, Texas, 2 weeks ago. And you know, President Johnson made a dramatic commitment to equity with that—with the Civil Rights Act.

And he made the commitment to equity that the—and his recognition that equity was not just the absence of oppression but it was the existence of opportunity. And that is really what—when we look at Title I, when we look at the historic federal role, it is really about ensuring that there is an opportunity there for all students in our public school systems, no matter what their zip code, no matter what their neighborhood, that they have that opportunity.

And as we go through the renewals of the waivers, my concern is that we are starting to see people trying to mask and combine groups to disguise once again so that parents and community leaders and others don't know how individual students are doing in that school and whether or not they, in fact, have the opportunity to take full advantage of that education. And I just wonder if you

might play out a little bit how you can look at that renewal process—

Secretary DUNCAN. Sure.

Mr. MILLER.—with respect to equity.

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, first, obviously, everything we are trying to do in terms of budget requests is trying to increase equity, so raise the top equity opportunity, the access—the focus on technology. Obviously, the early childhood play, I think, is the best investment we, as a country, can make.

But actually, I think a great waiver, a great partnership has actually been with Chairman Kline's home state of Minnesota. Minnesota is a pretty interesting state that historically had very high achievement but had some of the largest achievement gaps in the nation.

So overall very strong, but huge disparities in outcomes. Thanks to some real courage in leadership, from the governor and state commissioner. They have put those issues front and center.

They have given districts targets for cutting achievement gaps in half. They are being absolutely transparent and putting all of this data out and still a long way to go.

But they are making some very real and significant progress. So it is those kinds of examples of people being honest, being truthful, being out there, being transparent, we want to support that and folks who are trying to mask things or hide things, please hold us accountable for challenging that.

But there are some other great examples. But I think Minnesota is right there at the top of the list of folks who are taking these very real challenges seriously and in a very honest and straightforward way.

Mr. MILLER. Well, you mentioned the second one, and the Congress gave you the funding for early childhood. And I think how those grants play out with that in mind, because again, we know what the denial of that opportunity in early childhood learning opportunities will mean to a child as they enter the rest of their educational experience. And I think again, we have to look at the equity in those grants.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, and again, just seeing the type of coalition, bipartisan governors, CEOs, military leaders, faith-based community, states' attorneys, to see so many folks coming behind this early childhood play, I just hope and wish and plead that members of Congress can look at what is going on in the real world and all of their home states and come together to increase access. The average child coming from a disadvantaged community starts kindergarten at 5 years old a year to 14 months behind.

And frankly, we don't always do a great job of catching them up. We have to stop playing catch-up. We have to get our babies off to a better start.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you.

Mr. Petri?

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. I have got a little statement that I am going to read. And I appreciate your reaction, if any, to it.

I am concerned about the state of our federal student loan system. Currently, about 15 percent of borrowers who will default within 3 years and many more over the life of their loan. A portion of these defaults come from excessive borrowing, partly driven by the high cost of education today. And these are serious problems that need to be addressed by this committee.

Many other defaults are more easily avoided, and in this regard, we must consider how we structure the repayment process for student loans. Sue Dynarski and the economists at the University of Michigan pointed out in a recent paper, the vast majority of students do not borrow large amounts of money. Yet many of these students are still defaulting at high rates.

In fact, the average loan in default is about $14,000. She argues that for these students, "We do not have a debt crisis but rather a repayment crisis. The current system turns reasonable levels of debt into crippling payment burdens that can prevent young workers from attaining fiscal independence and stability," end quote. She advocates for a simple streamlined system, where payment amounts are linked to a borrower's income, automatically protecting them during periods when their income is lower.

So you know we have options like this now in the federal system, income contingent repayment, and income-based repayment. President Obama has added to the mix with his pay-as-you-earn proposal that reduces the amount borrowers have to pay and provides forgiveness after 20 years.

But I am very concerned that the direction the administration has chosen to go with this idea. Anyone who has used our federal loan system knows that it is a bureaucratic nightmare. So finding these income-driven options, let alone using them, deters most borrowers.

At the same time, by providing generous forgiveness, pay-as-you-earn option is likely contributing to significant over-borrowing, particularly among graduate students.

As Jordan Weissmann wrote in The Atlantic last year, quote—"We have a student debt system that leaves the most vulnerable, least sophisticated borrowers to fend for themselves and we are seeing the unfortunate results in our default rates. Meanwhile, the high-debt levels among borrowers and income-based repayments suggest that many of them are probably former graduate students who are generally better equipped to navigate the federal government's byzantine repayment system," end quote.

I know you proposed changes in your budget to scale back some of the forgiveness options.

However, I am not sure if these changes go far enough. In a recent report, Beth Akers and Matt Chingos of Brookings advocate for doing away with the forgiveness portion of these programs to protect taxpayers and to reward prudent borrowing.

I have advocated through my ExCEL Act legislation for streamlining the federal loan system by linking payments to income for all borrowers in a way that is simple and intuitive. At the same time, this bill eliminates the forgiveness provisions of the current program while still offering strong protections to borrowers with low post-graduate earnings.

The current program is sadly flipped on its head. The bureaucracy prevents most students from taking advantage of protections they need while the forgiveness rewards those with the largest debts.

We need the opposite—a streamlined system that protects all borrowers from default, while being fair, budgetarily sustainable, and rewarding prudent borrowing. I am really just hoping that you might comment on any of these observations.

Secretary DUNCAN. There is a lot there. So I can't say I can comment on every issue. I would say quickly—

Mr. PETRI. Very quickly—

Secretary DUNCAN. I think we all share your concern with high levels of debt and high default rates. And we all need to work together to reduce those.

So a couple of quick things, and love to have a further conversation with you and your staff on your proposal, don't know all the details there. We are trying to do a lot to increase transparency, just getting young people and their families basic information, what is a grant, what is a loan.

This process can be overwhelming to people and trying to help them understand that. We also know there are some fantastic for-profit universities. They are doing a great job.

We know others that are taking advantage of disadvantaged folks. And for-profit colleges represent about 13 percent of the total higher ed population but 46 percent of loan defaults.

So clearly, there is an imbalance there where people end up in a worse position where they started. And we need to look at that seriously. The President has challenged us to look and think about a college rating system, where we are looking at access, we are looking at affordability, we are looking at completion rates, trying to, you know, get some sense of value there.

And again, just getting more information out to people will be very important. The IBR, income-based repayment, pay as you earn, happy to talk about that more but giving incentives for people to go into the public sector to take on critically important work that we need them to do in classrooms, in legal aid clinics, in medical clinics. We feel good about that.

We think that is a good thing. And then finally, just clearly, a hugely important federal role, but this is about shared responsibility. So states have to increase their investment to higher education.

Many states cut during the tough economic time. And when states cut their funding, universities jack up their tuition. But, also, our universities have to do a better job of containing costs and using technology in very different ways and focusing not just on access but around completion as well.

So we have an important role to play. Again, this should be a topic that we should work in a very bipartisan way on. But we also have to challenge other players to come to the table and work with us to do the right thing.

Chairman KLINE. Mr. Holt?

Mr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. A few comments before I get to questions. First of all, I noticed it was said earlier that your commitment, Mr. Secretary, to Preschool for All is a pet project.

I don't think this is a frivolous pet project. And that should not go unanswered. And as for waivers, I know you are attacked often for waivers.

If the leadership of this committee and this House would actually get to work and get the Elementary and Secondary Education Act up to date and working, there would be less need for waivers, I am sure. I want to commend you for the funding for the state longitudinal data systems.

That is critically important for understanding students' progress. And finally, I wanted to make a comment and invite you to respond, if you want to. It is not actually a question.

I want to call attention to the TEACH Grants, as one of the authors of the TEACH Grants and someone who is very interested in the 34,000 students who are taking advantage of those grants to go into math and science and other important subjects as teachers, I think, this needs to be enhanced. That is barely—well, it is not sufficient.

A couple of questions. Recent—or last year, in fact, the deputy assistant secretary for international programs, the office of international and foreign languages, stepped down, has not been replaced, I think has not even been named—the replacement has not been named. Given that one of your objectives is increasing global competency, and you can define that or I could, I suppose, how—what are you going to do to address the continuing lack of support for language learning, global competency in K through 12, problems in higher education with anemic funding for Title VI and the Department of State's Fulbright-Hays. A second question I would like to bring up and then I will turn it over to you, has to do with your comments about Nobel economist James Heckman's findings that the highest return on investment is in the first 3 years of education.

I am a co-sponsor, as are many of us here, of Representative Miller's Stronger Start for America's Children. Disparities in child outcomes are evident at 9 months. They are large by 24 months.

You know, I understand that early Head Start is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. But can you provide a picture of how under the President's proposal and George Miller's Stronger Start for America's Children's Act and HHS and DOE, Department of Education, would work with the states to expand early learning opportunities?

In particular, is the 15 percent infant-toddler set aside sufficient? And if there is time, I have other questions, but thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN. I think I have four or five. I will try and go through them really quick. As everyone here knows, the waiver plan was always plan b. Plan A was always bipartisan reauthorization of the ESEA.

I just want to keep coming back to that bipartisan theme. I am not interested in Democrat-only bills. I am not interested in Republican bills. That is not how the world works.

I am very interested in your charter bill, because that seems to have significant bipartisan support. There is a kernel of something there that I think is really worthy of attention.

So we continue to ready, willing, able, today, tomorrow, next week, to work in a bipartisan way to fix the law. That is first. Second, TEACH Grants are very important. We want to make sure they are going to individuals, but also to institutions that are truly preparing future teachers for the rigor of that very important, very complex job so you know some teacher prep institutions, schools, do a pretty good job.

Many, frankly, don't. And far too many young teachers feel they are unprepared to enter the classroom. That is not good enough, and we want to challenge that status quo.

In terms of international competitiveness, foreign languages, we want to do more there. Happy to talk with you about it. Met with my counterpart from Japan yesterday, talked about trying to significantly increase the number of exchange students going both ways. And I am just a big fan, obviously—multiple benefits that you understand so well.

And finally, just to be clear, we have worked in absolute partnership with HHS from day 1. All of this work on the early childhood space has to be a seamless continuum of opportunity from birth through age 5, entering kindergarten, early home visiting, strengthening families, early Head Start, Head Start, going to pre-K.

HHS team has been fantastic partners, met with them actually again yesterday. And so we are linked at the hip. They are not being redundant, not being duplicative, but trying to make sure that young people have opportunities to enter kindergarten not a year to a year-and-a-half behind.

Mr. HOLT. Well, since you didn't really answer the specific questions I had on those programs, I hope you will provide that in writing as soon as possible, please. But—

Secretary DUNCAN. Happy to do that.

Mr. HOLT.—thank you very much.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Foxx?

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Duncan, for being here. I remain concerned about current state authorization regulation and draft regulations coming out of the negotiated rulemaking session.

It is one thing to say states must authorize institutions that operate within their states. It is an entirely another thing to dictate precisely how those states are to do it. And then, if you don't agree with it, punish the students for attending the institutions within the state.

Aren't you using the federal regulatory process to push states into regulating institutions according to a federal idea rather than what may work for students in the institutions within the state?

Secretary DUNCAN. I am happy to continue that conversation with you further. Again, we just want to make sure that young people are being well-served.

Ms. FOXX. I would also reiterate what the Chairman said at the beginning. We would like some answers to some of the questions that we send you in a more timely fashion.

So I look forward to getting more information—

Secretary DUNCAN. I commit to you on that. And I apologize for that.

Ms. FOXX. Last year, the President announced the development of a new college rating system that would compare colleges with similar missions, and will be based on access, affordability, and outcomes. I appreciate you have taken steps to gain some feedback from the community on this proposal.

I speak to a lot of students and families about their college search and actually spent some time during the Easter break visiting campuses with my grandson, who is a junior in high school this year. And so I am seeing this from a very personal level.

So in my experience, every family looks at different options. Why do you assume the federal government can rank colleges and thereby, presume to know what is best for millions of students and their families as they research their postsecondary options?

Secretary DUNCAN. No, I don't—we don't presume to know anything. It is—I think you know that we have gone into this with a great sense of humility and really trying to listen and talk to folks, have had multiple forums with folks around the nation.

But it is interesting, your state is not dissimilar to very, you know, probably every other state. You have institutions of higher education that have like a 95 percent graduation rate.

You have others that have a 12 percent graduation rate so 95 percent to 12 percent. And we, at the federal level, thanks to your support, we put out about $150 billion in grants and loans to institutions of higher education each year.

And that $150 billion is all based upon inputs. None of it is based upon outcomes. And again, I think this is an area that should be a huge interest to our Republican friends of trying to have some accountability there and our graduation rates going up or down.

Are people taking their mission seriously, not just on the access side but on the completion side? That is a massive taxpayer investment each year. And we want to make sure that taxpayer investment is being used wisely.

Ms. FOXX. We had, many, many hearings on the Higher Education Act as well as all the legislation that we have put forth in this committee. And one of the things that we hear over and over and over again is that the department collects mounds and mounds of data.

But from that, we get very little—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Ms. FOXX.—information. So rather than the department setting up rating systems—there are lots of ratings systems out there done by the private sector—why don't you just make information public? Why don't you revise the way you collect data and then, make that available to the public?

We like transparency. We don't think we are getting a lot of transparency from the department. So why not just put out useful

information and let the public make the decision about how to rate the institutions?

Secretary DUNCAN. So we have done a tremendous amount to increase transparency. I would agree with you, we have to continue to do that. I think as you are going through with your grandson, this could be an overwhelming process, and for families who are first-generation college goers or new to the country, navigating all of this—what is a grant, what is a loan, not what is the 1-year cost, what is the 4-year cost, what are graduation rates, what are the chances to get a good job at the back end?

There is a huge amount of information we should have out there. So we are going to do everything we can to increase transparency. And please partner with us and please challenge us to do a better job there.

At the end of the day, though, we think of that $150 billion annual investment over time, we would like to see more of that money going to places that are serious about graduation rates, that are serious about reducing their own costs, that are serious about making sure young people actually prepare to go into the world of work and get a good job, and away from those places that don't take college completion seriously, that just see—you know, that see a free paycheck coming from the government every single year. So we think taking that next step is important as well, in addition to transparency.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you.

Chairman KLINE. Mr. Grijalva?

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. I appreciate very much, Mr. Secretary, the reminding all of us that the issues that we are dealing with in education is indeed a civil rights issue. It is an equity issue.

It is an opportunity issue. It is an economic issue. And with that backdrop, let me ask two questions with regard to equal access and opportunity. How will the President's new proposal on early childhood affect existing state and local early childhood programs such as pre-K or child care programs, and in particular, Head Start, which is under the Ryan budget, taking a crippling, destructive $750 million hit.

How is this initiative overlay with those?

Secretary DUNCAN. So our goal is very simple on the early childhood space. We simply want to remove children from waiting lists at the state level.

And as I travel state to state to state, despite the, you know, 30 governors who are investing, which we feel very good about, you see 6,000, 8,000, 13,000, 15,000 kids routinely on waiting lists. So our goal would be to keep kids going to existing programs.

But for those hard-working children and families who are trying to do something better for the kids before they start kindergarten, giving them that chance in a very concrete way, that is what this money would go for. And I want to be clear, you can't do this on the cheap.

You are paying for teachers. You are paying for classrooms. You are paying for materials that don't exist today. So anyone who says

they are for early childhood education but not willing to invest more money, they are not walking the walk.

They are not living their values.

Mr. GRIJALVA. And elementary and secondary education, the 2013 GAO report outlined the failure of far too many charter schools to report critical data, particularly with regard to students with disabilities, English language learners, and poor kids in general. In the current budget climate, Title I is at pre-sequestration levels, is below pre-sequestration levels in this budget.

What assurances can you tell us about that the $248 million proposed for charter schools will go to institutions that provide equal access to—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. GRIJALVA.—distinct population, English learners, students with disabilities, poor kids, compared to what traditional public schools are being required to do at this point?

Secretary DUNCAN. Happy to follow up on the details of your question. But simply put, we only want our money to go to replicating high-performing charter schools. There is often a debate charter versus traditional.

I just think it is the wrong debate. It is a false debate. We just need more high-performance schools, traditional charter, whatever they might be.

High-performing schools are a part of the solution, low-performing schools are a part of the problem. So we want to be expand, to be very clear, those charters that are getting great results but are working with, to your point, their proportional share of poor children, English language learners, special needs kids, homeless kids. so many charters are set up. That is their mission, was to serve kids that have not had all the advantages and haven't had great opportunities traditionally, and again, hold us accountable to make sure we are doing that correctly.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Appreciate that. And just, we talked about the Ryan budget is about prioritization. So if it goes to IDEA, that is a priority, that this Congress would—by definition, the Ryan budget means that severe cuts will be in other areas on top of the cuts that are already part of the Ryan budget. If indeed, prioritization for IDEA, and meeting our mandated 40 percent is part of the issue, that will require extra resources.

And we shouldn't be afraid to talk about extra resources as opposed to robbing Peter to pay Paul in this particular instance.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back.

Dr. Roe?

Mr. ROE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I know that our Chairman is one of the most supportive people of the disabilities—ever since I have known him, the 5–1/2 years I have been here, he has been incredibly supportive.

Mr. Secretary, I think probably the biggest challenge we have in education in the country is to narrow the achievement gap. And I had spent a lot of time since you were here last, I have read a number of books and research.

And one of them I have read and everybody in this room should read, "I Got Schooled" and I know you have met with the author

of this book. And we find out that the achievement gap, our schools, really, in a lot of places, are doing a fantastic job.

In many places, they are doing a very poor job. And so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We know what to do and what works and what doesn't work. And we know we need effective teachers.

We know we need leadership in the classroom. We know we need data to find out if what we are doing is actually working. We need probably smaller schools.

That is a bigger one, because that is a very expensive thing and then more time in the schools. So we start—I want to start with just your—early education.

If you look at a child that is—lives in a poverty area, they hear 30 million less words by the time they get to kindergarten than a child in a higher income does—30 million less words. The problem with it is if we go through pre-k and don't continue these other metrics I have talked about, you lose all of that.

Vanderbilt just published a study, not a year ago, that showed that very thing, that those gains are lost by the end of the first grade, I think it is. One of the things I would ask you to do is to certainly look at HHS, the Head Start program, which works in some places and doesn't work in other places. Find out what works there.

And if you are thinking about increasing this and certainly governors around the state are, combine those programs instead of here committing to another gigantic program. Let's look at what we have got, the money—because our resources, as the Chairman pointed out, are limited.

Definitely, we would want to do that. And just so that everyone in this room understands and how well some schools are doing, if you take schools that have 10 percent or less poverty, and that is 75 percent or more free and reduced lunch.

We have the highest PISA scores in the world. So it is pockets that we have to go to and focus on. And are we doing that? Or are we just taking a gigantic shotgun and shooting at the whole country?

Secretary DUNCAN. No, I think you have really studied this issue. And I appreciate your sincere commitment to thinking it through. So I agree with many of the points you made.

Just to challenge you on two. We absolutely have to look at Head Start and look at everything. But to be clear, we can't get to where we need to go simply with existing dollars.

And we want to go from about 1.1 million children with access to prekindergarten to 2.2 million. So simple reallocation doesn't help you to do that. Second, just to challenge a little bit the assumption that all of these gains disappear, what Dr. Heckman talks about—again, it would be great to have him come and testify and you can ask him lots of questions.

He came to this with a great deal of skepticism, frankly. What he saw is not over a year, but over three, four, now going on five decades' massive return on investment—

Mr. ROE. No, I agree with that, Mr. Secretary. One of the things that also is lost, it is not in your budget here, is in the summertime—I don't know whether any summer programs or not but low-

income children lose almost 3 months, 2.8 months of gains in reading during the summer.

Your children, my children, they don't. We are going to have them at the library. We are going to have them doing all kinds of things. So that is fairly simple thing that would negate those losses.

And if you lose 2.8 months in 3 or 4 years, you are a year behind no matter how good you do.

Secretary DUNCAN. No, so again, couldn't agree more. Not a lot in our budget Title I resources for poor kids can absolutely be used in that way. More schools are thinking about year round.

Maybe of the successful charter schools are just working longer hours. So we love that kind of innovation. And one place we don't need another study is around summer reading loss.

Mr. ROE. Yes.

Secretary DUNCAN. You hit the nail on the head. And we just need to stop—we need to end that cycle.

Mr. ROE. I agree. Well, let me go quickly to this, because my time is limited. One thing that affects my district specifically is the Impact Aid payment for federal poverty programs. You eliminate that. And what that does—

Secretary DUNCAN. Sorry, I can't hear you. Say again.

Mr. ROE. I am sorry, it is the Impact Aid payments for federal property programs, in other words, in lieu of taxes.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. ROE. I have a county that has 55 percent or 60 percent of that county is owned by the federal government. I grew up in a county where Fort Campbell, Kentucky, was and took the best farmland and best agriculture land we had.

Those schools are hit severely with this. One of my schools, it is $188,000. That is not a lot of money for here. But it is a small, rural county.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. ROE. We have to—you cannot do that. This puts them at a great disadvantage in rural America. There are 250-something school systems that this affects.

Secretary DUNCAN. So don't know the details of that specific situation, but happy to follow up with you and find out—

Mr. ROE. Okay, and one other thing I want to ask you that—can you tell us what the graduation rate is for Pell Grants? And I want to finish by saying our state—I want to brag on Tennessee—our governor just produced a program, was passed by the legislature, to provide free community college and technical college for everyone in our state.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Courtney?

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, the last time we spoke was one of the few brief shining moments of the 113th Congress where one of the 88 bills that has been enacted was about to be signed by the President last August. I was with Mr. Kline for the legislation that protected the Stafford loan program from going to 6.8 percent.

And as you know, it is at 3.8 percent for this academic year.

Secretary DUNCAN. That was a shining moment of bipartisan work.

Mr. COURTNEY. It was. And the President at the time—and there was a lot of head-nodding going on, was saying that our work is not finished. And that is why, when I look at the Ryan budget, in terms of its impact on higher ed programs, I mean, it just takes your breath away—$260 billion in cuts to Pell, $145 billion, $41 billion on Stafford, which I will talk about in a second, wipes out the income-based repayment program, and incredibly gets rid of the American opportunity tax credit, which allows middle-class families to get a tax credit to pay for college.

About 11 million families lost $1,100 under the Ryan budget. I always thought Republicans were for cutting taxes. But you know, nothing seems to surprise me, I guess, in terms of the way their priorities play out.

But on the Stafford program, which, again, everybody was kind of patting themselves on the back for the fact that we protected the rate increase from going into effect—effective last July 1, what their measure does is it eliminates the in-school interest protection, which is there for subsidized Stafford loan students.

That is about seven million students who, again, don't have interest accumulate while they are actually in college. The estimate from the CBO is that it adds about 3,000 to the interest level of students at time of graduation, who use Stafford.

So the $1 trillion price tag of student loan debt, which is, you know, stifling our economy, hindering people's advancement, they just added another 41 billion. And this is a program which, by the way, doesn't cost the taxpayers money.

Stafford is an interest-bearing program that the federal government actually nets out with a positive cash flow according to CBO. So they basically raised revenue through this measure of in-school interests by eliminating that protection for students.

And again, I think the record has to be crystal clear here. They are taking us backwards in terms of the issue of higher education affordability. Now, your budget came out with a number of proposals, which again, addressed the other side of this, which I hear about all the time at home, which is, you know, when are we going to do something about rising tuition costs?

Well, again, eliminating this help for students doesn't do a thing as far as that is concerned. But again, your proposal is to try and change incentives to colleges so that affordability is going to be one of the criteria that they have to demonstrate.

And I was wondering if you could talk about that a little bit this morning.

Secretary DUNCAN. I just think again there is a lot of room for honest debate and disagreement, discussion. I just—right now, we are 12th in the world in college graduation rates. One generation ago, we were first.

It is not that we have dropped. We have stagnated. We have flatlined, and 11 countries have passed us by. In a flat economy, flat world, where jobs going toward where the most educated workers are, I think we can all agree that being 12th in the world is not a badge of honor.

It is not something we can be proud of. It is not acceptable. And we have to figure out how we go from 12th in the world to first as fast as we can. And anything that reduces access to college, that makes it harder to go, more expensive, takes us in the wrong direction.

So we have to get better faster. We have high school graduation rates going up, which is huge. We have to make sure those high school graduates are truly college and career ready.

And there is some very significant work going on around the country there. But that has to translate to higher college completion rates.

So let's find ways to work together to get there, but reducing access, reducing affordability, making it more expensive rather than less. I just think we are hurting our country.

We are cutting off our noses to spite our face. And jobs are going to go to countries that take this responsibility and this opportunity more seriously than us.

And if we want to keep high-wage, high-skilled jobs here, if we want to build the middle class, the only way to do that is to increase access to some form of higher education.

Mr. COURTNEY. Great. And I think the rating system, which again, is to help families and students make smart choices and not end up into that default bucket that Mr. Petri had talked about, I think, is a definitely a good path.

And for the record, Mr. Chairman, I just want you to know that the president of the University of Connecticut, the Hungry Huskies, has embraced the administration's plan and is willing to go along with the rating system that the Department of Education—

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentleman for not talking about basketball.

Mr. COURTNEY. I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. Mr. Walberg?

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for being here, Mr. Secretary. I would concur with what my colleague from Tennessee indicated about the ideas brought about in "I Got Schooled." All of those ideas, as I read, from an individual, certainly doesn't come from my perspective on a lot of issues, but on education, made sense.

And all of that went more to the power of the local district, the power of the local administrator, especially the building principal, being able to do a mentoring process, developing great teachers, and promoting great teachers, and even suggesting to teachers who have certainly plenty of well meaning, aspirations, yet aren't going to make it in the world that we have right now to bring kids through the education process. And that certainly says to me the top-down central planning that goes on from Washington, from Congress, from the Department of Education, yourself, and the responsibilities you have, may not be the best direction.

And if we want to give, as you indicated already, about my governor, making some significant statements and attempts and strides at growing education in our state, dealing with early education, having a no-wait plan in place, a K–20 process, all sorts of good ideas that are being developed at the local and state levels,

where they actually know what is happening in the schools, or at least have the ability to do that. We ought to be encouraging it.

Mr. Secretary, the Chairman already asked you about what appears to be the inconsistent application of waiver. You indicated the waiver isn't your first plan. It is getting ESEA passed. But nonetheless, that is where we are at right now.

I understand that Michigan is one of those states whose waiver has been flagged as potentially problematic largely for the same issue Washington faced. Michigan has enacted a teacher evaluation law that gives school districts more flexibility and incorporating student achievement into the evaluation than you would prefer, as I understand that.

So are you planning to rescind Michigan's waiver?

Secretary DUNCAN. I don't know the details of that situation. That hasn't come to me. I have great working relationship with both of your governor and with your state superintendent. So happy to continue to talk, but not one I have been focused on recently.

And let me just—your first statement, I think you presumed that we somehow disagree. I want to be clear there may be more common ground than you realize.

Part of the reason I have been so angry about No Child Left Behind is it was very, very loose on goals; so 50 different goalposts, 50 different standards, but very tight, very prescriptive from Washington in terms of how to meet those goals. Now, I remember when I was running the Chicago public schools, I had to beg our Department of Education to allow me to try and tutor about 20,000 of my kids after school who Washington was telling me I couldn't do it.

It was absolutely crazy. We won that argument. So what we are trying to do, hopefully in a bipartisan way, in terms of reauthorization at some point, I think the right tradeoff is to be tight on goals, have a high bar, make sure all of our students—Michigan, Mississippi, Massachusetts, it doesn't matter—are actually graduating, and graduating college and career-ready, not having to take remedial classes, will be much looser, but less prescriptive and let locals—

Mr. WALBERG. On how you make it—how you make it happen, correct?

Secretary DUNCAN. What is that?

Mr. WALBERG. On how you make it happen.

Secretary DUNCAN. On how you make it happen. So tight on goals, loose on means, that is where I think No Child Left Behind got fundamentally wrong, and in any kind of reauthorization, those are the values that we think would be absolutely essential.

Mr. WALBERG. And I certainly think that is the direction that our Chairman and this committee would like to go, in making sure that we provide the opportunity for those local school districts and our states to meet high goals, yes, but to have a great deal of latitude. Yesterday, I was, met with a class in the largest land space area of a school system in the state of Michigan.

It is a rural school system, a lot of land space, smaller in size of students. A week before, I met with the largest school system in Michigan. And that wasn't Detroit.

That was Saline school system, doing a great job, but a large population that have to deal with there. And so we have a great amount of variety. And for a top-down management system to work in this nation, move us back to a setting where we are number one in college graduations as opposed to number 12 and the like, is something we ought to be moving toward.

Let me ask one final question here. You have listened to higher ed institutions give you some feedback on the rating system that is being proposed. What have you heard?

Secretary DUNCAN. Heard lots of things. And I will be very clear. This is very difficult intellectually. This is complex. I am very aware that some of the disincentives, the preferred incentives, there were in No Child Left Behind.

Last thing we want to do is replicate those in the higher ed space. So you want to make sure that universities that are working with a more challenging population aren't compared to Harvard or Yale or Stanford or whatever. That makes a lot of sense.

You want to make sure you are maximizing choice and transparency. You want to make sure that young people who want to go into teaching, orgoing to the Peace Corps, or work in a nonprofit. Somehow, if you are looking at earnings at the back end not creating incentives that take individuals or hurt universities for encouraging folks to do public service, you know, to do good.

So those are the types of feedback that we have heard. And there is trepidation on any kind of change. There is also some significant support out there. But we are taking this very, very seriously, and again going into it with a real sense of humility. Last thing—

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman's time has expired.

I am sorry, Mr. Secretary.

Ms. Fudge?

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. Certainly, I do want to say before I ask my question, with all due respect to our Chairman, the Ryan budget is not fiscally or morally sound. It fails the test of even a budget.

If you can't determine where your revenue is really coming from in any reasonable, real way, or where your cuts are coming from, it is not a budget.

Mr. Secretary, I just want to talk to you a bit about Pell Grants. We know that right now, Pell Grants are aiding more than nine million low-income Americans in this country.

And in the President's budget, there is a provision that would provide Pell Grant eligibility to students who are co-enrolled in adult and post-secondary education as part of a career path. I am working with some of my colleagues across the aisle on a bipartisan bill which would expand eligibility for the Pell Grant program to early college and dually enrolled high school students.

What are your thoughts on that?

Secretary DUNCAN. First of all, I just want to appreciate your leadership in so many issues that you and I have worked together on. And you—I think you are passionate on these education issues in extraordinarily thoughtful ways; want to thank you for your leadership.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN. So we haven't talked enough about this today. But all this dual enrollment, whether it is taking A.P. classes, whether it is actually taking college classes on universities, 2-year, 4-year, those are huge, huge programs. I am a big, big fan.

And to be very clear, this is not just for the high fliers. I actually think these are good dropout prevention programs.

Ms. FUDGE. Yes.

Secretary DUNCAN. And students that might be on the margin, start to take those classes and think maybe I can belong in a college. Maybe I can be successful.

I went to an amazing early college that is actually located on a college campus in El Paso, Texas, all low-income students, virtually all immigrants, a ninth-grade biology class. These ninth graders were getting college credit for that class.

Think about what that does in terms of not just academically, but psychologically how empowering that is. So how we create more opportunities, I am very interested in Pell Grant being an interesting, you know, possibility there.

We would love to play and talk about some experimental sites. But if we had more students—let me just be clear—high school diploma, for me, is a starting point, not an ending point.

If every high school student was graduating either with college credits in their back pocket or industry certification, then I would feel much better about where they are going to be able to—what they are going to be able to do long-term. So would love to partner with you to think this through.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, because what happens now is that those high schools that we are so excited about that have these programs are bearing the cost of this program, or these kids are. And it really is, I think, unfair if we are going to promote them, to not assist them so—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Ms. FUDGE.—we will continue to talk about it.

Secretary DUNCAN. In some places—I don't know who is here from Iowa, but Iowa has about like 25 percent of their high school students taking college-level classes. They have worked out at the state level some pretty interesting partnerships where the K to 12 is not bearing all the costs.

Ms. FUDGE. Right. Thank you. Secondly, I have heard you mentioned all of our students a number of times today in your testimony. And I am greatly concerned with the rising number of competitive grant programs coming out of the Department of Education.

How do you plan on ensuring equal funding and opportunity for all students and not just the limited number of students in school districts that have the infrastructure in place to write good grants?

Secretary DUNCAN. So again, just to be clear, there is not a rising number—the percent of our budget, roughly 88, 89 percent of our budget is formula-based and 10, 11, 12 percent of our budget is competitive funding. So that has been pretty consistent.

So there hasn't been a big swing there. And—

Ms. FUDGE. But it is a swing since you came in, where there are more competitive grants now than there were prior to this administration.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, and we feel proud about that. But that is a long—

Ms. FUDGE. Now, that is the point I am making.

Secretary DUNCAN. Just year-to-year budget has been about the same percent. Two quick answers, and again further conversations, one is we have tried to make sure that as we do these type of competitions that we have a very diverse slate. And there are lots of concerns that rural communities somehow couldn't compete.

And we have—I think we have improved, frankly, and rural communities are absolutely getting their fair share. And so we are looking not for the fancy PowerPoint for people that have a real sincere commitment.

And we could go sort of grant program by grant program, and show you who the recipients have been. And we think it has been pretty representative. And we always go where the greatest need is.

So we are not going to high fliers. We are going to the most disadvantaged communities, promise neighborhoods, you know, other things like that. The other thing that is so important is that when we have done these types of things, we have seen very significant changes in behavior.

So it is not just those receiving the money that benefit. But we are seeing other districts start to move in more profound ways. So, promise neighborhood is a prime example.

There are dozens and dozens of great applicants I wish we could fund, but we just don't have the dollars available. But many of those communities have come together, have a blueprint now, have a vision, and are working together with or without our money.

Now, I wish we could fund them. But there have been lots of residual benefits from putting these kinds of programs in place.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. Thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Guthrie?

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you. I just want to point out, the budget review and today, I know was just said that the Ryan budget is not moral and fiscal, but I would just overall comment on the budget we are reviewing today. It does raise taxes.

It does close loopholes. And still adds trillions of dollars for the debt to our—the very kids we are talking about today will be paying this back for generations. So I just want to—you know, as we are going to just be honest about it.

The waivers and I actually—you read through the bill, you do have broad discretion on waivers. And the application of that—and I was hoping when I first got on this committee, we would reauthorize and change No Child Left Behind, because that was a well-intentioned bill that has a lot of issues that need to be fixed.

You know, one or two ways, comment or let's let the Congressional leadership do it. Well, we have passed a bill to the Senate. And I wouldn't expect the Senate to pass our bill.

They can. But that is the process for them to send the bill back and let's conference on it. We are doing it on the Workforce Investment Act, which a vote went out of here.

I think it got—I think it was a partisan vote. And we are hopefully close to having a final bill through the Senate. So it is not impossible to do. Just has to have the will to do it. So it comes—so our leadership has taken a stance on fixing No Child Left Behind.

Secretary DUNCAN. It is not impossible. I just think it is not the most strategic or the most successful way of doing it.

Mr. GUTHRIE. To do a bill—let the Senate amend our bill in conference?

Secretary DUNCAN. No, no, to do it in a partisan way.

Mr. GUTHRIE. No, it is not. But I am saying that the bill is in the Senate, that has happened. And it has happened with the Workforce Investment Act. The other way you do it is the President grab the attention of the country, which George Bush did.

And now, we are all pointing out the flaws of the bill, but was able to do a bipartisan—it was a very bipartisan bill that passed. And the thing with the waivers, I think, and is my issue with it, because I think there is some broad discretion there, I sure agree with everyone.

But I think there is broad discretion. You can argue is that—it just takes the pressure off the Senate to fix anything. And if there is an issue that is before us, and we need to fix it, we know, and you can waive, and the Senate can say, well, we don't like this bill.

But we are getting what we want by waivers, then why would they ever come to the table to negotiate? And that is the problem I have with the waiver system.

Secretary DUNCAN. So again, I just fundamentally disagree with that. You should absolutely be feeling the pressure every single day, because I am feeling the pressure every single day.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Well, this—

Secretary DUNCAN. Waivers are a poor, second choice to fixing it. And for us to do nothing would have been educationally and morally irresponsible. You look at what states have done in the waiver process, moving away from a focus on a single test score, looking at high school graduation rates, looking at reducing dropout rates, looking at college-going rates, looking at college-going, not needing remedial classes.

Many states have brought in hundreds of thousands of kids who were invisible under No Child Left Behind. This gets a little technical, because—and sizes were so high, they were not part of any accountability system.

And states are stepping up and saying, we want to better serve poor children and homeless children—

Mr. GUTHRIE. Well, I am not disagreeing with what they are doing. I am saying that the pressure on the Senate to act seems to not be there for whatever reason it seems to not be there.

Secretary DUNCAN. I fundamentally and absolutely disagree with that. You should feel huge pressure—

Mr. GUTHRIE. Well, we did. And when there is a bill sitting in the Senate so they can act on—

Secretary DUNCAN. This bill is continually 6 years overdue for reauthorization.

Mr. GUTHRIE. But there is a bill in the Senate.

Secretary DUNCAN. So let's—okay, let's not all point fingers.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Oh no, I am just saying, that is—

Secretary DUNCAN. Hold me accountable, I am happy to help in any way that would be constructive to moving forward in a bipartisan way.

Mr. GUTHRIE. And I am willing to do so as well. The one question I do have on the blueprint for career and technical education—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes?

Mr. GUTHRIE. I have had some of my—Carl Perkins is from Kentucky. So it is a really used program there. The concern going from a state formula to a state competitive grant, and you are trying to focus on consortia between secondary and post-secondary, which I absolutely agree with, because you know, getting out of secondary with just these skills and not going to post-secondary is not the best way to—so you are trying to incentivize that, which is absolutely right. But the concern that my—some of my more rural and smaller—if it is in my town of Bowling Green, Kentucky, it is easy for our schools and Western Kentucky to have a consortia.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. GUTHRIE. We have a swath of land. Geographically, they are just not covered by some of our higher ed institutions. And there is some concern so I will just answer the concern of rural smaller schools that may not be able to form a consortia, or not be closer or—how will they be able to prosper under this situation?

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, so happy to work it through, and all we are trying to do is getting cut through silos that have—

Mr. GUTHRIE. I agree with that.

Secretary DUNCAN.—high schools talking to community colleges, to have both talking to the private sector and just making sure we are preparing students for real jobs that exist, not the jobs of 30 years ago. So anything we can do better in that blueprint, you will get 2 years out of date now.

So we are happy to update. So give us your best thoughts—

Mr. GUTHRIE. Yes, there is—that if it goes in a competitive nature, it is going to go to more cities and bigger cities, and programs. And they are concerned about that.

Secretary DUNCAN. So just to be very clear on that one, what we have done in other things, we have done in absolute priority or separate slate. And again, we can go through sort of, you know, our i3 stuff, other things we have done where we have had very significant rural population.

So that part then being left to decide, I am less worried about that. But the consortia idea is one I would like to continue to think through.

Mr. GUTHRIE. And I agree with that. That is just a way to get there. We need to work—I look forward to working with you on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. Thank the gentleman.

Mr. Polis.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us today to discuss the Department of Education's priorities. I want to thank you under your leadership, we truly are witnessing the transformational power of an innovative and disruptive federal role in our schools.

Your signature program Race to the Top for which I introduced the standalone bill earlier this year, has spurred and continues to spur a wave of policy changes that help states raise the bar for students and teachers, promotes innovation and accountability for school districts, for school leaders, and for educators. Thanks to Race to the Top, states and school districts, including my own home state of Colorado have built systems to evaluate and support teachers and principals, invest in our youngest learners by expanding high-quality preschool, and turning around our nation's persistently failing schools.

Your administration has shown strength and courage despite this body's inability to act to reauthorize a long overdue and antiquated No Child Left Behind law. Many of your budget requests will bring us closer, but only a full reauthorization of NCLB will truly move the needle.

I was also encouraged to hear your complimentary words about this committee's work on the charter school reauthorization. We hope that we will have the opportunity to pass that bill on the floor of the house. It truly is a bipartisan approach that improves the quality of the limited federal resources that are available to go to charter school start-ups.

And I hope that you convey your support for these efforts to the Senate. We believe this bill is a realistic way to focus on what we agree on rather than what we disagree on. And I look forward to working with you and the administration to move forward on the full overhaul of NCLB or whatever, if we can find to agree on.

A few months ago, I led a bipartisan letter with 25 of my colleagues in support of the administration's ConnectED initiative, which you mentioned in your remarks, which aims to connect 99 percent of schools with broadband in 5 years. How will the administration's ConnectEDucators initiative give teachers the tools and resources to take advantage of the bandwidth?

Secretary DUNCAN. Okay, just quickly, it is fascinating—fascinating to me that education always moves so slow. So technology has changed how all of you guys do business.

It has changed how you guys interact socially. It has led to democratic revolutions around the globe. And technology has changed education like 2 percent. It is on the margins.

And when I look at what other countries are doing for their children, I worry for our kids. When I see South Korea being at 100 percent access and our schools at 20 percent high-speed broadband; our kids are at a competitive disadvantage.

I don't understand that. So what we are looking to do is to dramatically increase access to high-speed broadband, which I think can drive both equity and whether it is inner city communities or rural or remote communities, or native American reservations, having access to AP classes and foreign language, we think is really important. And it can drive excellence.

Students can move much faster, move ahead. So we just think there is a huge play here. We need to increase schools' capacity there. But then we have to train teachers as well so the budget request there, $200 million, is to give teachers the skills they need to customize learning, to individualize it.

Teachers can support each other not in their buildings but across the country and across the globe in new ways. And so we think this can have a transformative impact over time.

We want to make sure teachers have the skills to be fully equipped to take advantage.

Mr. POLIS. I also want to follow up on one of my colleague, Ms. Fudge's questions. She talked about the grant base programs. In addition to allowing the administration to have the highest and best possible impact on student learning with limited resources by directing them through grants, including many of your signature initiatives, Race to the Top, Investing in Education, SEED, expansive replication for charter schools, how do these grants help raise the bar across the country for policy changes and develop a base of best practices that everybody could benefit from?

Secretary DUNCAN. So it has been interesting that in—for all the, you know, noise or whatever, every single time we do a grant competition, we have way more great, great applicants than we have dollars available. So clearly, there is an unmet need there.

And at the end of the day, while the money is significant, it is really not about the money. It is really about unleashing innovation. And we have played at the state level.

We have played at the district level. We have played at the community level with promised neighborhoods. So you are trying to impact all of them. As I said before, you have seen a level of courage.

You have seen a level of creativity. You have seen a level of collaboration and innovation that simply didn't exist before those opportunities were created.

So I just want to, you know, thank you, again, for your courage, your leadership. You have lived this work in a way that many of your colleagues frankly haven't.

I think you understand both our strengths. But I think you share our sense of urgency of how far as a nation how far we have to go. We have to get better faster.

We have to do it in a time of scarce resources. And more of the same, more of just the incremental change, isn't going to get us where we need to go.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you for your time. And in my home state of Colorado, while we didn't win the first or second run of Race to the Top, we are winners because of the policy changes, including educator evaluation and high standards that, in part, were in response to Race to the Top.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Gowdy?

Mr. GOWDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to congratulate you on your MVP award, NBA celebrity all-star game. I thought your assisted turnover ratio could have been a little bit better but—

Secretary DUNCAN. I will work on that one.

Mr. GOWDY.—you were in the arena and the rest of us were not. And when I listen to criticism of our colleague, Paul Ryan, I can't help but think, Mr. Secretary, his budget, his budget passed.

The President's budget, which by the way, none of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, had the courage to introduce, it had

to be done by a Republican, got zero votes last year and two votes this year. So when we want to talk about moral courage and we want to bang on Paul Ryan while he is not here, keep in mind, your boss's budget got a whopping two votes in the last two times it was offered.

So let me ask you this. Do you think government can engage in intentional racial discrimination to further a compelling governmental interest?

Secretary DUNCAN. I am not quite sure I understand the question.

Mr. GOWDY. Well, this letter that you wrote with respect to school discipline talks about important state goals. I want to ratchet it up from an important state goal to a compelling state goal. Can government intentionally discriminate, de jure discrimination to further a compelling governmental interest?

Secretary DUNCAN. Again, I don't know the details your question. What guidance are you referring to?

Mr. GOWDY. The letter with respect to discipline from education and DOJ.

Secretary DUNCAN. So happy to talk about that. So I won't answer your question directly. I don't know the details. But I was—you learn something new everyday in this job and it is part of the reason I love it.

But I was stunned when the civil rights data collection process data came out, that as a nation, we were suspending pre-school students and expelling them from school. I had no idea.

It was mind-boggling to me that we would be kicking 3 and 4-year-olds out of school and not serving them. And when we—

Mr. GOWDY. Well, let me stop you right there because in a former life, I was a prosecutor and it sounds great to say not serving them. You also have kids in preschool and first grade who are following the rules, which leads to the question of are you serving them by putting them in an environment that is not conducive with learning because of disruption.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, so—

Mr. GOWDY. And the question then becomes is Washington better able to make that decision or the local school boards? But your letter with—I say your letter—you didn't write it but you and the attorney general had a press conference on it.

And what I am trying to get at is I don't know how you would have voted on the affirmative action case last week in Michigan. But there was a dissent that was lauded by some of my friends on the other side of the aisle where government can engage in intentional—not de facto—intentional racial discrimination to further a compelling governmental interest.

My question is because you used the phrase "important governmental interest," which school safety and discipline would be, but yet you are not looking at intentional discrimination. You are focused on de facto discrimination if they just have a disparate impact—

Secretary DUNCAN. So you are a prosecutor, I am not.

Mr. GOWDY. I am a former prosecutor.

Secretary DUNCAN. Former prosecutor. Just to go back to the data around the preschool stuff, which I am familiar with, what we

found was that black students represented 18 percent of preschool enrollment but 48 percent of the students suspended more than once. So 18 percent of enrollment, almost half the kids suspended more than once.

Mr. GOWDY. All right, well, Mr. Secretary, I am telling you—

Secretary DUNCAN.—and let me finish. Let me finish.

Mr. GOWDY. All right, you—

Secretary DUNCAN. And in many places, you saw children doing similar behaviors, similar—

Mr. GOWDY. That is what I want to get at because that is—first statistic means nothing to me because 95 percent of the people I prosecuted for child pornography were white. So that is a disparate racial impact.

But I never stopped to think, well, gosh, I wonder if we ought to reconsider our prosecution on child pornography. But you use several examples in this letter. One of which was a Hispanic student fighting with a non-Hispanic student.

One got a 2-day suspension, one got a 3-day. Who was the primary aggressor? Who started the fight? And would that matter? Would you give less time to the person who started the fight?

Secretary DUNCAN. Of course, it would matter. But at the end of the day, so you—I take that first statement which you sort of blew—blow through—I take it very seriously, the fact that 18 percent of children are receiving virtually half of the out-of-school suspensions. And these children are 3 and 4 years old.

I want to be very clear. That is deeply, deeply troubling to me. And I am going to go to your other point.

Mr. GOWDY. Troubling from the standpoint that they are engaging in conduct that would warrant being disciplined or troubling from the standpoint that they are being kicked out of school?

Secretary DUNCAN. Troubling that they are being, 3 and 4-year-olds, are being kicked out of school. Where there is disruptive behavior, you need to deal with it.

You need to deal with it aggressively.

Mr. GOWDY. Well, Mr. Secretary, how do you deal with it? And who is best able to deal with it?

Secretary DUNCAN. Let me explain. So I worked in very challenging communities all my life. I worked with kids coming with huge challenges. And the easy thing to do would be to kick them out of a program I ran and put them back on the streets.

And what we found was ways to work with them, to work with their families, to get to the root of issues. If I had a child who is acting up in my after-school program and they witnessed horrific domestic violence last night at home, makes you think differently about how you handle that child.

That is the kind of thoughtfulness that has been missing and that we want to put that in place. I have been to high schools that have had huge discipline problems.

And the adults have actually stepped back and created peer juries and challenged students to own the behavior and to own the expectations.

Mr. GOWDY. I get that.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Bonamici?

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. I am pleased to see that the President's budget invests in education and begins to address some of the gaps and opportunities for American students. And this is, as we have discussed, in stark contrast to the Ryan budget with its cuts.

I am particularly concerned about Pell Grants and IDEA as I have been visiting schools in the 25 school districts in my Congressional district, I hear repeated concerns about the Title I and IDEA funding. Before I ask a question, I just wanted to make a couple of remarks in response to some of the things we have discussed regarding the achievement gap.

I want to point out the importance of the 21st century community learning funding and the importance of extended learning opportunities. Some of these programs I visited have shown a tremendous opportunity to help, especially kids at risk.

And with regard to the student debt that was discussed earlier, Portland Community College in Oregon is doing some great work on financial literacy, getting financial plans in effect with the student before the academic term. And they have been able to cut the number of accounts assessed with late fees by 70 percent and reduce the number of accounts sent to collection by more than half just with that increase in financial literacy.

So there is some great working being done out there.

So Mr. Secretary, my first question is about the President's request for the 170 million for a new STEM innovation initiative that would use competitive grants to recruit educators and get more students ready for STEM careers. And in the budget, it says scientists and engineers are innovators.

And we must ensure that our nation's capacity to innovate and compete is never limited by a shortage of talent in STEM fields. And I couldn't agree with you more about innovation and its importance.

I have had a lot of conversations with a lot of the tech communities in my district and also with companies like Boeing, Intel, Lockheed Martin, about the importance of developing a workforce capable of thinking creatively and driving innovation. So as the co-chair of the Congressional STEAM caucus, it talks about the importance of integrating arts and design into STEM curriculum to help students educate both halves of their brain and ultimately produce innovation, can you talk about whether the competitive awards under the STEM innovation initiative will be available to schools and educators that are pioneering the STEAM model, the Hillsborough School District in Oregon, for example, which integrates arts education into STEM.

Secretary DUNCAN. First of all, thank you so much for your leadership. STEM, STEAM, I am for it all. We need to, again, all these false battles, false dichotomies—we need to bring this together.

And if you want to improve math results, try a little music, you know—

Ms. BONAMICI. Exactly.

Secretary DUNCAN.—yes, so you know all this stuff. So what we want to do is we think there are far too many children who have

great aptitude and interest in the STEM fields and just don't have access to great teachers and great courses. And we lose that.

And we know so many of the jobs of the future, again, the high-wage, high skilled jobs, hugely disproportionate number are going to require some passion and expertise and love of the STEM areas. So we are trying to do a couple of things.

We want to create a STEM master teacher core where great STEM teachers can make some more money and mentor those younger teachers so we don't lose them. We want to make sure we have great STEM teachers, not just for AP, calculus and physics, but in third, and fourth and fifth grade, when so many children start to turn off because—

Ms. BONAMICI. Right, Mr. Secretary, I appreciate the value of the program. My question is will that funding be available to STEAM schools as well.

Secretary DUNCAN. Again, I don't see a conflict between STEAM and STEM. So—

Ms. BONAMICI. Terrific.

Secretary DUNCAN. I would look at it.

Ms. BONAMICI. Great.

Secretary DUNCAN. But at the top of my head—

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN. I have no reason to think they would not be able to apply—

Ms. BONAMICI. And—on a related note, I am concerned about the consolidation of the arts and education program into the well-rounded education program, especially since the budget proposal requests only 25 million for the consolidated program, which would supports arts, health education, foreign languages, civics, government, history, geography, environmental education, economics and financial literacy—all important. Now, this request is actually less than last year's request and represents the amount that arts in education had received independently.

So I am very concerned, as we are looking for ways to make sure we are educating the whole child about that change. So are there other programs in the budget that could support students' creativity?

Secretary DUNCAN. Just one quick. With the first, just to be clear, what we are trying to do and all this stuff is hard, is not have lots of one-out small programs and sort of be able to better manage it. So that is the goal there.

But just one quick example, we have put a huge emphasis on turning around chronically underperforming schools. And part of the reason high school graduation rates are going up, because drop-out rates are going down. And we are trying to challenge the status quo in pretty significant ways, one of the strategies is still early but it looks very promising is we have had a series of schools that have been turned around using the arts-based curriculum.

So we are putting additional resources from a separate pot from the school turnaround money behind that. And there are eight schools around the nation. I have visited a couple of them.

It is pretty amazing to see and so that is another place where significant resources are going to enhance an arts curriculum in

disadvantaged communities that is showing some pretty significant results.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. I see my time has expired.

I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Salmon?

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

Secretary Duncan, as you know, the Department of Education recently proposed a cut to financial aid to career-oriented programs whose graduates have high debt-to-income ratios. The court spoke on this and blocked the measure in 2012.

We recently convened a field hearing in Arizona where this issue came up. I asked the question of two of our public universities, President Michael Crow of ASU and the president of the University of Arizona.

The president of NAU was not there but one of their representatives was. I asked the question, if this rule were proposed for for-profit universities, would you support the same rule for not for profit universities, and public universities, every one of them said yes.

They said all three said that if such a rule comes out, that all should be held to the same standard. Secretary Duncan, when you released the gainful employment regulation, you said protecting students is at the core of the rule.

And if that is truly the case, have you examined how nonprofit programs like expensive law degrees or culinary arts degrees fare if the proposal is applied to everyone? If the bill was introduced to apply such a regulation to all of higher education, would you support it?

Why or why not?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, just to be clear, we are trying to get this part right now and happy to have that further conversation as you come out to speak at Arizona State's graduation a couple of weeks and looking forward to that. President Crow is a remarkable, remarkable leader and—

Mr. SALMON. He is the best.

Secretary DUNCAN.—yes, he—pretty amazing what he has done there. And honestly, many of the values, not just on the gainful stuff but many of the values around the college rating system are values that I have learned from him and others.

So let us try and get this part right first. But your basic point about greater accountability, that is what the college rating system is about. It is about trying to make sure again that $150 billion in grants and loans of taxpayer money is being used more wisely than it is today.

Mr. SALMON. So it should be applied across the board and you would support legislation to apply it equally to all higher education?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, again, we are doing two different things. I just want to be clear. We are working on the gainful regs. And we are also trying to develop a college rating system.

Mr. SALMON. Right. But what I am saying specifically is on the idea of gainful employment. Wouldn't it stand—why should the stu-

dents that go to public universities, why are they any less important? Shouldn't we put forth legislation—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, the question, again, we are not there yet. And we are just trying to get these two complicated pieces right first.

Mr. SALMON. No, I understand that. But wouldn't you agree that—that all these students are equally important?

Secretary DUNCAN. Every student is important, yes, sir.

Mr. SALMON. Absolutely. Well, we may be introducing legislation along the lines to make sure that public universities would be under the same provisions you are proposing on the gainful employment. I think that all students ought to be equally protected.

Thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN. Happy to have that conversation.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back.

Mr. Hinojosa?

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Duncan, thank you for joining us this morning to share President Obama's fiscal year 2015 budget for the U.S. Department of Education. I applaud you for continuing to support increased investments in education for all.

As you know, federal higher education like Europe and HEP/CAMP and TRIO as well as Hispanic-serving institutions and HBCUs and MSIs, which are vitally important to educating students of color and preparing them for college. Since fiscal year 2011, however, funding levels for these programs have decreased due largely to sequestration.

I am concerned those cuts have never been fully restored.

Mr. Secretary, why are you recommending that Congress invest in a host of new higher education programs instead of increasing the funding levels for those that I enumerated? Those programs are working for disadvantaged students.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, so obviously, we are big, big supporters of TRIO and GEARUP and I want to personally thank you for all your leadership in education. And you have worked as hard on these issues as anybody.

And that means a lot to me personally. So—

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN.—while we have to continue to increase access, I have to say the President and I have become extraordinarily concerned about the affordability of college. And it is one thing to get students ready if they can't afford to go where we have this mounting debt.

We worry about what that means to young people and ultimately, to the country.

So we are strategically making a choice to try and invest more not just on the access side in preparing students but in making sure they can afford to get through college and not have prohibitive costs, prevent them once they have gone through strong programs from completing their dreams.

Mr. HINOJOSA. I want to work with you on that. By 2018, two-thirds of the nation's jobs will require at least some postsecondary education, is what I have heard you say. Fortunately, the nation is making progress.

For example, the graduation rate among Latino students has increased more than 10 percentage points since the year 2006. However, our progress is uneven.

And we must do more to improve high school graduation rates and prepare those students for college and careers. Mr. Secretary, I and several other colleagues here will soon be introducing the Cap and Gown Act to help strengthen America's high schools and support President Obama's high school redesign efforts.

Can you tell us more about the President's vision for high school redesign program?

Secretary DUNCAN. Sure. We simply want to make sure that high schools are engaging students and are relevant. And I worry that many students drop out of high school, not because it is too hard but because it is too easy.

They are bored. And they don't know why they are coming to school every single day. And as everyone here knows, the economy has changed. If you drop out of high school today, you are basically condemned to poverty and social failure.

And that wasn't true 20 or 30 or 40 years ago. So the stakes have gotten much higher. So we talk about high school redesign. I will tell you about one high school that I went to a couple of months ago and the President is going to go give the commencement there; it was Worcester Tech in Worcester, Massachusetts.

A couple of years ago, it was a failing school, huge issues, huge dropout rates. They now have done many, many things to engage students in their own learning. So they have a full-fledged veterinary clinic, where young people are taking care of animals.

They have an auto body shop. They have a culinary program. They have a fully functioning credit union, where students are working there and getting paid to do that. And basically, the school has become this amazing community asset.

And not surprisingly, dropout rates that were a huge issue have almost disappeared. And graduation rates have soared. We want to see more high schools thinking about how they link what students are learning during the school day to the real world.

Those students at Worcester Tech and other similar schools—they know why they are coming to school every day. They are excited. They know the relevance. We want more schools to learn from those examples.

Mr. HINOJOSA. The Republican or the Ryan budget cuts Pell Grants by 145 billion by eliminating all mandatory money and reducing funding to the nondefense discretionary funding. The experts believe that this would potentially cut millions of such students from the programs, leaving them to borrow more in loans, or they may just drop out of college.

How would this cut impact our ability to reach President Obama's goal to lead the world in college attainment by 2020? And how would these cuts impact students of color?

Secretary DUNCAN. Anything that reduces access to higher education hurts young people, hurts families, hurts communities, and hurts our country. Our goal together, bipartisan, should be to lead the world in college graduation rates again as soon as we can.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Lastly, we have worked together to expand the Pell Grant program and make student loans more affordable. But

college costs continue to increase as the states disinvest in higher education.

How is the Department of Education creating incentives for colleges to control costs?

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman's time has expired. We will take that for the record.

Mr. Rokita?

Mr. ROKITA. I thank the Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us again, several questions to go through with you. In my role as a subcommittee chairman here, I visited some tribal communities recently.

And a lot of the jurisdiction there belongs of course to the Department of the Interior. But in terms of school structures and some other things, I think there are some small pieces that you, in fact, have.

One concern that I saw was that one tribe, in particular, was afraid, quite literally to invest in new school buildings and even T1 lines, you talk about technology and accessibility for fear that the government would then come back and say, oh, I see you got that done however you got it done, bonding or whatever. And therefore, we don't need to do it.

And of course, promises have been made under the—a very long time and promises need to be kept. Can you quickly comment on that and would you join me in an effort to either write your boss or write the Department of Interior to help solve this?

Secretary DUNCAN. Absolutely. And I am going to be very, very clear that as we talk about inequities and disparities, no one has been more poorly served than our native children. Any measure of gaps—achievement gaps, opportunity gaps, the worst of the worst in terms of outcomes are in the native communities. So—

Mr. ROKITA. I appreciate it. Could you help me solve this—

Secretary DUNCAN.—let me—so I will help on that one to be clear, while the Department of Interior has much of this, I want you to know I have put one of my top deputies there full-time to try and help them figure out a better way to educate children. So we are not—

Mr. ROKITA. Thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN.—we are all working on this together.

Mr. ROKITA. Thank you for that. That is not the same guy that is supposed to be responding to our letters, is it?

Secretary DUNCAN. No comment.

Mr. ROKITA. I used to run five agencies as well. I am just—if I have time, I will get back to that.

Secretary DUNCAN. That was on me. That was on me. That is my fault.

Mr. ROKITA. No, no, and you know what, that is a strong mark of character, quite frankly. I want to say that for the record. I was in a meeting earlier this morning where an apology could have been made and an apology wasn't given.

And I think goes to character, I think goes to leadership and I appreciate you saying that. More specifically, I like work with you to make sure that you say the responses will be more timely.

I would like to know what that is, what you are going to do to correct it, whatever situation you clearly have going on inside your

office so that we can have on both sides, a reasonable expectation about what reasonable response means.

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, I will do very quickly just come back to the Chairman and give him a time frame and he will not be shy about holding me accountable to stick to the time.

Mr. ROKITA. Okay, thank you. Moving onto Washington state, noting that no one from that state is represented here on this committee and, again, in my role as a subcommittee chairman, I will—and the Chairman talked a little bit about this as well—I am concerned about the waiver being revoked. I get it.

I understand accountability. You and I agree on that. However, if evaluations of these teachers were performed, what would the specific measurable outcome be? What should we expect as federal policymakers from this?

Secretary DUNCAN. And again, we are trying to leave tremendous discretion. Every other state so far has figured this out.

So there is no one way to do this. And we are trying to provide maximum flexibility. At the end of the day, what I believe and what I think you believe is that the goal of teaching is not to teach.

The goal of teaching is to have children learn. And a piece—not the whole thing—but a piece of teacher evaluation should be based upon student learning. That is the simple request.

That is the commitment that Washington state gave. And unfortunately, to date, they haven't fulfilled that. Again, they can come back tomorrow and fulfill that.

But all we are saying is that we think teaching is hugely important.

Mr. ROKITA. Yes, of course.

Secretary DUNCAN. We think great teachers make a huge difference in students' lives.

Mr. ROKITA. And having been there like you have been there and talking to parents and teachers and community leaders, surely, they care. Surely, they understand the frustration and issues.

And I agree that schools must exist for the students. They don't exist for the adults. And I think what you are trying to do serves that purpose.

Would you also, though, acknowledge that no person, no staffer, no bureaucrat in your department knows the children of Washington state better than the parents and teachers and taxpayers of Washington state?

Secretary DUNCAN. Of course. This is a big country. A hundred thousand schools, 15,000 school districts.

Mr. ROKITA. So on gainful employment, you believe that the public education system should be subject to that same rule?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, again, I want to be clear. We are working on gainful employment regs. We are also working on a college rating system. And those are the two pieces of work that we are engaged on now.

Mr. ROKITA. But Purdue and IU should be subject to both those, just like ITT and—

Secretary DUNCAN. I don't know all the details there so let me come back to you on that one.

Mr. ROKITA. Okay. By when?

Secretary DUNCAN. I will talk to the Chairman about it.

Mr. ROKITA. Well, I am asking the question. The Chairman is not. By when? Can you give me an answer, how you feel about this?

Secretary DUNCAN. I will work relatively as quickly as I can.

Mr. ROKITA. What does that mean?

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Takano?

Secretary DUNCAN. Thanks for saving me.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, Secretary Duncan, I would like to thank you and the administration for proposing a budget that makes real investments in our education system from pre-k to post-secondary education. I can't tell you how disheartening it is to see the Ryan budget with all its cuts to education pass the House.

And I would note that it didn't pass by a huge margin. The clock was kept open. And it barely passed. I think it was like 219 votes, from what I recall. I am pleased to see that this budget includes an investment in high school redesign through a competitive grant program.

I was excited to hear the President mention it in his State of the Union address. However, the contours and details are kind of mystifying to me. Can you tell us what are some of the key elements of a successful grant proposal, what they would be?

And what are you really looking to do with high school redesign?

Secretary DUNCAN. So we talked about it a little bit earlier. But what we want to make sure is that we continue—we are thrilled high school graduation rates hit an all-time high. We announced yesterday, 80 percent graduation rates. But I worry a lot about that 20 percent that don't graduate and what their lives are going to be like once they get on the streets.

And we know there is not anything out there for them. So what we want to do is to make sure that high schools continue to be very relevant for young people, that they understand what the jobs are in their communities, why they are going to school, what that leads to.

We want to make sure they are rigorous, more access to high-level classes and dual enrollment opportunities and industry certification. And we want to make sure that high schools are building relationships with young people who might be struggling and might have a real challenge at home or at school in the community.

And so high schools that are serious about making sure a hundred percent of their students graduate and graduate college and career-ready, we need more schools that look like that. That is what these resources are for.

Mr. TAKANO. So do you—so early college and concurrent enrollment programs are part of the redesign?

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, absolutely. We talked earlier. I don't know if you were here, but I am a huge fan of dual enrollment and early college programs, just nothing but upside there.

I would like to do a lot more of that so these resources can be used there. We did recently with the Department of Labor a $100 million dollars, high school redesign through youth career connect.

That is a possible use of funds, and finding ways to expand opportunity there. I think we should all be working hard on that.

Mr. TAKANO. You know, as a teacher before I came to Congress and as a community college trustee, I have been involved with some of these concurrent enrollment programs. I have visited Barton, the college high school in lower Manhattan, have had actually students come to my classrooms in Texas and California who told me about their experience with some of these early college programs.

Do you see early college also being applied to career and technical education?

Secretary DUNCAN. Oh, it absolutely is. It absolutely is. Again, many places doing that well. But I think our collective challenge is always how do we take to scale what works.

And again, you have lived this in a way that many folks haven't. So we think we have done some pretty good work to increase these opportunities, but I know there are many more children out there who could benefit, than have the opportunity today. So we would love to work with you to figure out how we expand these best practices.

Mr. TAKANO. Do you believe that the concurrent enrollment and the early college and the middle college strategies could have an impact on lowering the cost of education of middle-class families? Well, higher education, I am talking about.

Secretary DUNCAN. To be clear, we now have some high schools where high school students are graduating with an associate's degree. So by definition, they are reducing 50 percent of their higher ed costs.

So it absolutely reduces costs, which is very important. What I said earlier is I am as excited about the fact not just the cost savings, cost reductions to families. But I think this is a really important dropout prevention strategy, I think creates these opportunities for kids who haven't had it is a really big deal.

Mr. TAKANO. As you know, a lot of these strategies require a counterintuitive approach, which is actually we have got to reduce class sizes at the secondary level in order to enable the seminar-style teaching that some of the pedagogy requires. I was interested in your conversation with Congresswoman Fudge about somehow, Pell Grants got mixed into that conversation.

And you and I had a conversation about the justification of the federal role in some of the early college models since we are actually offering college-level instruction. So could you elaborate on that some more?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, I think she asked the question, if I am recalling it correctly, of whether we should be looking at Pell Grants as a potential use of funds to help expand access to early college opportunities. And that is the kind of creative thinking that I think we should all be engaged in.

So if we want to take to scale something that we know is good, we should leave no stone unturned in thinking about doing that and would love to have that conversation. Actually, we have staff working pretty hard on these issues as we speak.

Mr. TAKANO. What is your—

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. TAKANO. Oh—

Chairman KLINE. Mr. Thompson?

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Duncan, good to see you. I think the last time we talked, we were breaking bread and talking about how to best serve the needs of this nation's youngest learners. I always appreciate those opportunities for conversations and love it when we can see eye to eye.

Wanted to—you know, the department's budget request focuses heavily on equipping the need to fill the jobs in the 21st century economy. And I think that is very appropriate.

However, you do not propose any additional resources for the Perkins funding. Last month, over 91 members of the House through the advocacy of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus requested the Appropriations Committee return career and technical education programming to pre-sequester levels.

And we talk a lot about the unemployed, the underemployed and the—and probably not enough but some about the dwindling workforce participation, which is I think incredibly important to the strategic success on the future of this country. Now, the solutions to address some of those problems is CTE programming through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Now, there are not too many social ills, I believe, that can't be addressed, or a good family sustaining wage job. Career and technical education programming enables individuals to have the skills necessary to be truly career and college ready. Now, I have concerns with the department's proposal to move $100 million from CTE state grants for a new, competitive innovation fund.

And it is just—my two—my first two questions kind of go together. You know, why does the department continue to prioritize spending on untested and often duplicative education initiatives when we have a tried and true solution in Perkins?

And why move money, funding away from a full commitment to fund the program?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, first, appreciate your sincere interest and commitment on the early childhood space and appreciate you taking the time to have that conversation and also really appreciate your interest in the CTE funding. And that is a hugely important way. Again, we talked about 4-year, 2-year technical, vocational training, just some form of education beyond high school has to be the goal.

So I am a huge fan of this. We have the blueprint out for reauthorization. Happy to get any feedback you have on that. That is a year or 2 old now.

But what we are simply trying to do is make sure that those programs are training students for the jobs of tomorrow and not of 20 or 30 years ago. So quite candidly, again, I go to, you know, hundreds and hundreds of schools.

I see some CTE programs that are cutting-edge and world-class. I see others that are a little bit outdated. And so what we are trying to do, not to invest in unproven programs, we want to take to scale what is working and to make sure that these scarce resources are being used wisely, being used well to prepare students for the jobs and for the skills they need going forward.

Quite candidly, that is not always the case with Perkins funding. In many cases it is. In some places, it is not being used as thoughtfully as we would like. And so we are just trying to challenge that status quo.

Mr. THOMPSON. Well, I share Mr. Guthrie's concerns with this—significant concerns. Moving money away from a program what really is consistently proven and I think it puts at a disadvantage, what is 32,000 school districts that are rural in this country, that, you know, approximately 30 percent of all schools fall in that category and many of them obviously don't have their resources to be at—

Secretary DUNCAN. So—

Mr. THOMPSON.—as competitive.

Secretary DUNCAN. So let me just check it, then get, hold us accountable, what we have done in other competitions again is whether it is a competitive priority or separate slate. We have made absolutely certain that rural schools and communities are well-represented.

I think we have gotten better over time in doing that. We can show you what we have done in other competitions. But I think we can address that specific concern pretty well.

Mr. THOMPSON. Well, the shifting of $100 million dollars, I think is just a significant concern, moving that away from Perkins. It is not—just—

Secretary DUNCAN.—it is not moving away from Perkins, to try to make sure that those dollars are really needed—

Mr. THOMPSON. We are moving away from—

Secretary DUNCAN.—to great programs.

Mr. THOMPSON.—away from formula money. So it has some occurrences. Just real quickly, following from Dr. Roe, do we know what the graduation rate is for all Pell Grant recipients?

Secretary DUNCAN. Sorry, I couldn't hear you.

Mr. THOMPSON. Do we know the graduation rate of individuals who utilize the Pell Grant program?

Secretary DUNCAN. I don't know that and actually have struggled to get that data.

Mr. THOMPSON. Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back.

Mr. Pocan?

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your commitment and the President's commitment, not just in good words but in, actually resources in the budget to hopefully have good deeds when it comes to education. I am trying to hit three different areas if I can.

I have about 75,000 higher education students in my district, a very large number. One of the issues that has come up is student debt, and not necessarily from the perspective Representative Petri brought up but the fact that we are at $1.2 trillion, second only to home mortgages. A decade ago, we were less than a quarter of that.

Now, one of the things that doesn't get attention is the ability to refinance student loans. You know, we can refinance our homes, our cars. Definitely, that will reduce the cost of their debt and free

up income for purchases and cause ripple effects throughout the economy.

Rutgers has put out a study showing 40 percent of the graduates with college loans delayed in making major purchases such as cars because of college debt, 25 percent put off continuing their education or moved in with their parents. So I have been working on a bill with Representative Bishop to introduce the House companion to Senator Gillibrand's bill to allow you to refinance at a lower rate.

I was just wondering if the department has looked into any research regarding that and the ability to put more money into the economy and what your thoughts are on that.

Secretary DUNCAN. Again, just really appreciate your leadership. You know, my mantra is that should be an issue in a bipartisan way we should be working on together when you have that much debt out there. Young people trying to buy a home, buy a car, start a family, start a business—it is a huge impediment.

It is a huge challenge. And so thinking this through together, thinking through in a bipartisan way, I know Senator Durbin is also interested in this stuff. We have staff who are experts in this, happy to sit down anytime, sort of walk through what makes sense and what doesn't.

But the status quo needs to be challenged. And we need to do that together.

Mr. POCAN. And you are open to a conversation about refinancing of debt?

Secretary DUNCAN. More than open to any conversations that increase access to college and increase affordability.

Mr. POCAN. Great. If I can shift to K to 12, I am from Wisconsin and I served 14 years in our legislature. In 2013, Governor Walker proposed increasing taxpayer funding to private and religious voucher schools by 9 percent and increased many times larger in percentage terms than he did to our public school system.

And in the past, I know some people on the other side of the aisle supported that here in the District of Columbia. We recently had a study, the NEKC Foundation report that determined that children of color face enormous barriers to educational achievement in Wisconsin.

We ranked dead last in disparity between white children and their non-white peers, and encouraging policies which only help a very few children at the expense of others will only exacerbate the achievement rates for at-risk students, many of whom are minorities. I was just wondering, if the department has looked at all into research about how vouchers could further cause divides between the achievement gap with students of color?

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, well, your state is not too dissimilar to where Minnesota was with sort of relatively high-performing in aggregate, but the— disaggregate the data, devastating inequities there. And so I just appreciate your the candid conversation, how do we improve access for all?

So I fundamentally think our role in government should be to prepare, to create great schools for the vast majority of students, the 90 percent who always have and always will attend public

schools. And if the private sector wants to do some scholarships, do whatever, they absolutely have the right to do that.

But we need to—what worries me on the vouchers, I think, so often we, you know, think we are saving three kids and then leave 500 to drown. And I can't sleep well at night knowing that.

If you look at the data from Milwaukee just had a voucher program for a while, that data is mixed at best. That might be being generous. So anyway, so I think our collective focus should be in making every single public school in this country a great public school so that we serve the overwhelming majority of children in this country better than we are today.

Mr. POCAN. And I just want to add, we just had listening sessions just last week in my district. And this issue specifically came up. I visited a number of schools in Milwaukee.

They are not in my district but it was in the legislature. South Division High School has a 50 percent high school graduation rate and a big problem is when these kids come in from taxpayer-funded voucher schools, they don't have records.

They don't have anything. We are really at a loss. And you know, I think it is my third area. But I will just put it in writing.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Chairman KLINE. Thank the gentleman.

Mr. Messer?

Mr. MESSER. Thank you.

It is great to have you here, Mr. Secretary. We agree on many topics, disagree on some. But I admire your work, admire your courage. Just to—I didn't intend to talk about this, but just given the last comments, I think we all want to just be very clear.

We want to make sure that every kid in America has a great opportunity. We can't let any kids drown. And while we are working to improve the challenges we do have within our public school system, we need to be mindful of who we are leaving behind along the way.

I think you agree with me on that. And there are a set of options to do that. Frankly, to me, I believe vouchers ought to be one of them. But I think more than that, I think, let's leave it—I think we are all trying to make sure everybody has a chance to succeed.

I want to congratulate you on the graduation rate improvement. As you may recall, I was an author of legislation in Indiana that worked on that issue.

We are excited in Indiana to see our graduation rate go from the 70 percent range up to almost 90 percent, so exceeding a little bit the national performance now. I think we have talked about this before. Just would call to your attention for the record again, I think one of the most important reforms we put forward was changing our dropout age from 16 to 18.

I am not sure that a federal mandate is the appropriate way to handle that but at least encouraging states to look at that as an option. But it is not a silver bullet, but particularly for kids that are trying to meet minimum expectations when those expectations include going to school until you are 18, we found in Indiana, it has made a big difference.

Secretary DUNCAN. Now, I appreciate the leadership. And obviously, the nation only moves if states move and to see Indiana

going absolutely in the right direction is a huge credit to you and others. The other thing you guys have done that I have been very interested in, that former Governor Mitch Daniels did, was we talked a lot about early college enrollment, if you know if young people graduate from high school in 3 years, he basically took that fourth year, that senior year of high school money and put that all to a college scholarship.

I thought that was an unbelievably creative, innovative idea.

Mr. MESSER. Yes.

Secretary DUNCAN. And where we could incentivize more students graduating early from high school and then go to college with I don't know what—you know, $8,000, $10,000, $12,000 in scholarship money, no additional cost to the taxpayer. That was some great thinking.

So that kind of program we should be looking at in other places.

Mr. MESSER. Well, it is great for the state. It is great for the individual family. And as you know, many kids struggle in school because they are bored.

Secretary DUNCAN. Right.

Mr. MESSER. Because they are not being challenged. They don't see what is relevant. And so it is out there to—

Secretary DUNCAN. Do you have date how that is—I don't know how that has gone.

Mr. MESSER.—they are successful. We can share the date with you.

Secretary DUNCAN. Okay, yes.

Mr. MESSER. So we will work on getting that to you. The one issue I wanted to raise with that bill was I think one of the most important national reforms we have brought forward was the way we calculate dropout rates. And as you know, you are well familiar with this.

You know, we used to, as a country, only used to count you as a dropout if you showed up in your senior year.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. MESSER. When we got more accurate data, frankly, we had a national call to improve. I think at least in Indiana it has maybe been the most important reform of all. I think it has contributed to the national effort.

But I think there is some information—I mean, there is a lesson in that for some of this dialogue we have had about Pell Grants and Perkins grants. I think it would serve us well in that policy area if we had the reporting of those graduation rates. Would you agree with that?

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, no, I absolutely and again, not hiding things, not masking things, talking about the truth. And sometimes, it is a brutal truth, quite frankly. It is so important.

Children don't drop out in the 12th grade. Very few do. They just drop out in eighth and ninth, in tenth grade. So I am a big believer in not just in transparency and honestly, the back end, but we have more and more schools and districts looking at what I call freshmen on track rates. And all the data shows a freshman on track—they are much more likely to graduate.

If freshmen aren't on track, it is pretty tough to catch up. So early indicators, not just backend stuff, but early warning systems,

and then not just warning systems but interventions with those children, I think will help to drive this to a 90 percent national goal which is where we need to get to as quick as we can.

Mr. MESSER. And I think we have talked about this. But a quick plugin for my bill 1949, which is the Improving Post-Secondary Education Data for Students Act—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. MESSER.—it is basically designed to task the Department of Education to help lead an effort to determine what are the things that should be reported and what shouldn't. I have only got a little bit of time left so I do want to raise an issue regarding the impact of the Affordable Care Act on schools.

And we have talked about that before. Many school systems across the country and I won't list them given my time, are seeing this impact. The employer mandate has been delayed.

But has the department looked at what the impact of the Affordable Care Act is on cash-strapped schools?

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, I don't know all the details there. If you could share those school systems with us, happy to reach out to superintendents, have our staff do that directly and figure out what we can do to be helpful.

Mr. MESSER. And you have done that with me before. I will send you the letter and we would ask for a timely response on that topic. Thank you.

Secretary DUNCAN. We will work on the timely response.

Mr. MESSER. I yield back. Thanks.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back. We will all be looking for the timely response.

Mr. Tierney?

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us today. I want to just amplify comments made by Mr. Courtney with respect to what the Ryan budget would do to some of the higher education funds on that.

I think, two points, most appalling are that on Pell Grants, it would eliminate some $90 billion of the mandatory funding that we have already paid for going forward and then when you talk about student loan repayment benefits, it would eliminate $9 billion again, which we have already paid for. So glad to see that the President's budget didn't take that tack and moved in a different direction.

Also want to reiterate Mr. Pocan, Mr. Bishop's idea of trying to find some way to refinance high-interest loans at a lower interest and an extra point on that, students are out with private loans.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. TIERNEY. It would be interesting, we wouldn't need legislation. But the administration might contemplate going to some of our Wall Street financial institutions that people see as having at least helped create some of the problems that we had in the late 2000s on that and convincing them that maybe a good idea is to form some sort of a pool into which people could refinance and put another $16 billion back into our economy.

So I am at—but let me ask you about maintenance of effort. In the last Higher Education Opportunity Act, we have put in a provi-

sion that states would no longer be able to retreat and take federal money and use that instead. They have to maintain their effort and their commitment to it.

What does your budget do with respect to continuing that? And what are the teeth involved in making sure that they do?

Secretary DUNCAN. No, we are absolutely committed and continue to be. And it is interesting, I have talked to a number of college presidents in states that have seen significant cuts and have seen states cut right to the MOU point and not beyond.

And so it has been a—it is not enough but it has been a critically important backstop to a number of college presidents that are trying to do the right thing. So again, push us if you have ideas on how to do it better.

Happy to hear them. But we have tried to be clear and unequivocal. And as bad as things have been, frankly, would have been a heck of a lot worse had we not had those MOUs in place.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, King Alexander who is now the president at LSU was very instrumental in putting that—helping us get the ideas for that and showed—I think his research showed that it had been effective. I think what we need to help with some ideas and what are we going to do, the enforcement provision that we put in was weak. It got watered down in the conference committee on that.

But we need to find a way to make schools know that we are serious about it, and states know we are serious about it on that.

Secretary DUNCAN. He is an extraordinary college president. Again, we listen very closely when he speaks.

Mr. TIERNEY. Yes, good guy. Let me ask you to expand a little bit on the upper ed program,—upper ed research program—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. TIERNEY.—for technology on that because I think it is a good idea.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mr. TIERNEY. It has worked in energy and it has worked in the defense area and maybe you can share with us the direction you are taking on that.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, and I really appreciate the question. And it is just fascinating. I don't have all the details right here. But basically, what they have done in the defense side is they have done things in terms of training young people who didn't come from a great background on some very technical skills and in a short amount of time, a matter of, you know, 3, 4 months, 16 weeks of training have those young people outperforming folks who are much more traditionally trained and had been on the job for a long time.

And if we are trying to challenge unemployment rates, if we are trying to help the young people be successful, can we try and take those kinds of innovations to scale using technology and give people real time, real skills? Ask them what they did. They said their goal was interesting, it was not to train to the middle, which is what many programs do.

Their goal was to train to the best of the best. And that became the new standard, the new norm. And so if we could give more young people those kinds of opportunities and start to scale that

kind of technical training using technology, I think it would be extraordinary.

So we want to start to learn some of the lessons on the defense side and move them into the education arena.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Lastly, just a general point on this. You have a long list of ideas, of things that we could do to improve school performance. And I think they ought to be providing strong leadership, ensuring teachers are effective, and able to prove, and so on down the line.

I think that is one of the problems we have is scaling up those ideas that we find that do work. When we get into the charter school realm, I think one of the constant irritations of everybody, those that are supporters of the charter schools, those that are skeptical is we don't seem to be using it really as a tool—

Mr. TIERNEY.—to find out things we could do better than scaling it up. What measures do you contemplate would move that ball forward?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, again, just so—I talk about all the time about the wrong fights in education, whether it is Republican or Democrat. The other one is, you know, charters versus traditional.

And it just shouldn't matter. To be clear, it is not just the charters that have something to teach. Great traditional schools have something tremendous that charters could learn from.

So just cutting through that noise, cutting through that conflict, trying to just think about when is right for kids, which is sharing the best practices, there are some places, and I can give you some information, but they are really starting to break through and think about this as a system of schools, not as warring parties and warring factions. And it has got to go in both directions.

And we want to do everything we can to facilitate that and move forward.

Mr. TIERNEY. I think that is a plan. Well, glad to hear you say you want to facilitate that. But I don't see it happening and that sort of allows us to keep squandering around in that argument about one or the other.

Secretary DUNCAN. It is just when adults fight, kids lose. It is as simple as that.

Mr. TIERNEY. All right, thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mrs. Davis?

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Great to see you. And appreciate your patience through the hearing this morning and really, your commitment, I think, to making sure that this robust education system that we must have for this country is for the 21st century.

It is for the new work environment that young people are finding themselves in and that is our whole focus. And I think that is why we are concerned that the Ryan budget, because it doesn't seem to respect the need to invest in this country and to grow the economy in that way, really cuts off the opportunities, the very opportunities that businesses are asking us, that they want education to do, to be able to bring these young people into the system.

And so, you know, one of the concerns that has been expressed is Perkins. I think you identified that you want to be focusing on new areas, certainly in terms of the Center for International Business Education and Research, that is one area, what we call cyber—a different way of—

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS.—saying cyber, that the Ryan budget is cutting that particular budget in Title VI by about 43 percent. So, I mean, what businesses are telling us is exactly the kind of investment that programs like this do.

This may not be the only one, but it does that. What within the area that we are talking about right now, how do you see that we are really going to strengthen and grow those kind of programs? Because they are focusing on foreign language, their focus on the ability of young people to work in an international setting that is so critical today.

Secretary DUNCAN. So not just the—across the board. Again, we have to think about this cradle to career. Do we want more children to have access to high-quality early learning or less?

Do we want more children to have access to rigorous high school coursework that prepares them for college or less? Do we want more young people to have access to college and to be able to afford? Or do you want to see college going rates decrease, diminish?

And again, I think we have to, as a country, commit to having the best educated workforce in the world. So we have to stop cutting off our nose to spite our face and think about this cradle to career, and to be clear and get them such a champion here, no one is proposing just investing the status quo, investing in business as usual.

We are always pushing innovation. We are always pushing challenging the status quo, going to the next level. It has to be about high quality. And so at every level, whether you are talking specifically or whether it is Pell Grants or whether it is access to pre-k, what are we trying to do here and how are we going to get there and how are we going to strengthen families and ultimately strengthen our country's economy?

Mrs. DAVIS. Well, I think that having—you know, really looking at the total package and that is what I think you are trying to do and what we would like to do and I think, unfortunately, we haven't necessarily seen that because when we have some cuts in major areas, which deal primarily with investment, that is not going to happen.

I wanted to just quickly go back to the sort of social and emotional learning, that the discussion earlier hit on. And there has been certainly considerable research that kind of opportunity for young people to interact in a safe environment, which is the big priority that I know that you have, that the President has, what are we doing in that area as well to promote that idea?

Because it is not to say that kids just need what sometimes are considered soft skills. I mean, these are the critical skills. And they bring success for all of our children in school. How can we talk about that in a way that really makes sense to everybody and certainly to the country as a whole?

Secretary DUNCAN. So I really appreciate the question. We are actually looking to put some new resources, $10 to 15 million behind an effort to really understand this in a profound way. And I hate soft skills. I hate—We need new names.

Help me get a new name; not cognitive, executive functioning, those names sort of ring, but grit, resilience, tenacity, perseverance—it is fascinating. We look at Dr. Heckman's longitudinal work on the benefits of high-quality early childhood learning, obviously, some of those benefits are academic.

He would argue or has told me that half to more than half of the benefit he thinks are to learning those skills that some children are lucky enough to learn in, you know, in church or around the dining room table. But too many of our kids don't have those opportunities.

So how we start to think of these as important as reading and math and social studies and science and if our children have all the academic skills but no ability to persevere through adversity, to work through tough situations, we are not helping them.

So it is an area—

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes.

Secretary DUNCAN.—where I am personally fascinated, spent a lot of time trying to work on this in a, you know, a previous life. John Easton who runs our Institute of Education Sciences—he has a thing about devoting the rest of this life to this work, wants to put some money behind it.

So we want to better understand it and better understand how to teach it in a systemic way throughout a child's—

Mrs. DAVIS. And do you see this does not take away from a parent's responsibility and their desire to teach these skills also to their children?

Secretary DUNCAN. This is all about strengthening families, and again, where you have high-quality programs, you are doing it for children in conjunction with their parents.

Mrs. DAVIS. Right. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman KLINE. Gentlelady's time has expired.

I am going to recognize Mr. Scott for 5 minutes for his question. And then I will recognize him for a few further minutes for closing comments.

Mr. Secretary, we are getting close.

Mr. Scott, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your perseverance. Could you just say a brief word about what the Ryan budget would do to early childhood education and the future of our next generation?

Secretary DUNCAN. So again—relative—we showed it earlier—relative to other nations, today, we are about 25th in providing access to early learning opportunities. And that is not a badge of honor.

And we want to do everything we can to increase that, the average child coming from a poor, from a disadvantaged community starts kindergarten a year to 14 months behind. And we have a budget that has 15 percent cuts.

That will mean not more children obviously, but less children having access. And when we send children to kindergarten underprepared, that is not that child's fault.

But we often don't catch them up. And we think about long-term dropout rates, incarceration rates, I wonder how many of those young people we could have saved by giving them access to high-quality early learning opportunities. I mean, clearly, it has to be a continuum, a seamless continuum from birth through age 5.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. And a lot has been said about school discipline. And one suggestion is more school resource officers. A lot of people have suggested that their major contribution is actually promoting the school-to-prison pipeline because they end up arresting the children rather than protecting the children.

What is the evidence that you have seen, say, about school resource officers?

Secretary DUNCAN. So we think whether it is school resource officers or more counselors or more social workers or better-trained school resource officers, that is the key. And we are doing everything we can to fight the school-to-prison pipeline.

As you know, we have been explicit in putting out the data around that. I think some school resource officers do a fantastic job. And others are frankly part of the problem.

And so making sure that when we are trying to create a safe environment and a safe climate and a safe culture, which we are all trying to do, that we are not—the first instinct is not to call 911 when there is a challenge.

Mr. SCOTT. Do you have studies that followed this?

Secretary DUNCAN. I will have to check on that and get back to you.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. On student loans, how much money does the government make on student loans a year?

Secretary DUNCAN. Well, I think there are all kinds of projections in what folks think we may or may not make. And if you look at the GAO study, the title of the study basically says it is impossible to predict this.

Just to be clear, we have no interest in making money on student loans.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, one estimate was about—to-around $10 billion a year. Does that sound about right?

Secretary DUNCAN. I don't know. There are lots of different estimates out there. Again, Congress controls those rates. Congress worked together to prevent rates from doubling. And if Congress is interested in taking this up, we would be happy to have that conversation.

Mr. SCOTT. Do you know how much it would cost to get the interest rate down close to zero?

Secretary DUNCAN. I don't know.

Mr. SCOTT. Have you studied the effect of the summer Pell Grant that was eliminated, the elimination of the summer Pell Grant a couple of years ago?

Secretary DUNCAN. I don't know the details there. Obviously, we worked really hard to see a $40 billion increase in Pell Grants, without going back to taxpayers for a nickel. And we have gone from about 6 million Pell recipients to almost 9 million.

It is about a 50 percent increase. That is one of the things that I am most proud of. We weren't able to keep the summer Pell, which was disappointing. But the big picture, the fact that we are serving almost three million more young people, as you know, many first-generation college goers feel very, very good about that.

Mr. SCOTT. So no one has looked at the effect of the elimination of the summer Pell Grant? Because a lot of people were going to school right through—now, just kind of skip the summer and it kind of lengthens out the time they are out of work.

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, no, I am sure folks are doing some analysis there.

Mr. SCOTT. One problem we had in our area a couple of years ago was on upward-bound competition where we had five—the area of the state had five upward-bound programs, all performing adequately. When the dust settled on the competition, none of them got refunded.

And none of the children in the area had access to an upward-bound program. In these competitions, do you do anything to make sure that at least in each area, somebody gets funded so that the children in that area are served?

Secretary DUNCAN. Yes, it—we try and make sure we have geographic diversity. Obviously, given the limited amount of funds, I wish we could ensure that across the nation, we were funding in every community. But the reality is, frankly, far, far from that.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I—

Chairman KLINE. Okay, the gentleman yields back his questioning time. He is now recognized for his closing comments.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I thank the Secretary for his perseverance and for his very enthusiastic support of our next generation. We need to make sure we have the appropriate investments in education.

We are falling behind, as the Secretary has mentioned, in a lot of measures where we were leading, we are way back in the pack. Our competitive advantage in a global economy is a well-educated workforce. And if we lose that, we are not going to be able to compete on wages.

We are not going to be able to compete on anything else. That is our main focus of competition. And we have a lot of work to do to restore ourselves to number one in the world.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record a letter from the Committee for Education Funding, which points out a lot of problems with the Ryan budget, particularly pointing out that it is billions below even the post-sequester caps established by the Bipartisan Budget Act and cuts a lot of important programs.

[The information follows:]

[Additional Submissions by Mr. Scott follows:]

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Joel Packer, Executive Director
Committee for Education Funding

April 8, 2014

Dear Representative:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 114 national education associations and institutions representing early learning to postgraduate education, writes to express our **strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 96, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Budget Resolution as reported by the Budget Committee.**

This budget would devastate funding for education and make college less affordable by more than doubling the level of cuts required by the sequester starting in FY 2016, freezing the maximum Pell grant for ten years, eliminating over $90 billion in mandatory funding for Pell grants (which will almost certainly result in a substantial cut to the maximum award), increasing student indebtedness by $47 billion by eliminating the in-school interest subsidy for subsidized student loans and restricting income-based repayment, and narrowing eligibility for need-based student aid. It also eliminates all funding for public and school libraries, museums and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Ryan budget will cause irreparable harm to children, students, schools, libraries, museums and colleges and will undermine job creation, economic growth and global competitiveness by:

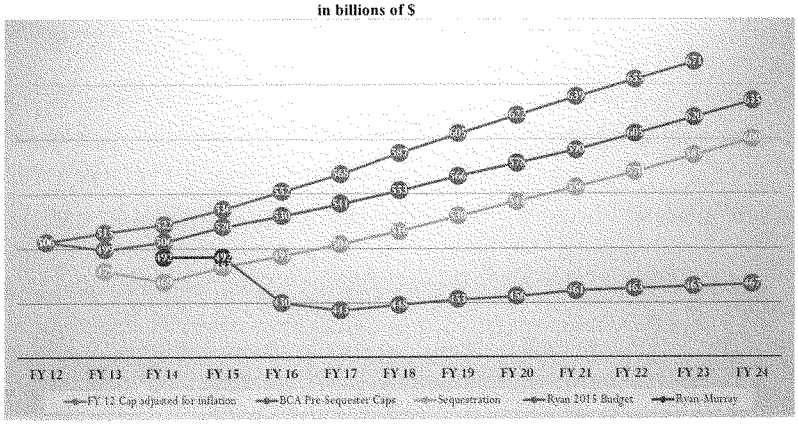
- moving our nation backward in efforts to close achievement gaps, improve overall student achievement, and increase high school graduation, college access and college completion rates;
- making postsecondary education more expensive for low- and middle-income families; and,
- stifling innovation by its cuts to scientific research.

Rather than a path to prosperity the proposed budget represents a road to ruin.

Overall, the Budget Resolution would cut nondefense discretionary (NDD) spending over ten years by $791 billion below the post-sequester caps levels established in the Budget Control Act. While it adheres to the NDD cap for FY 2015 set by the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA), in FY 2016 alone it cuts NDD spending by $43 billion (-8.7%) below the sequester level. It then locks in these cuts for the succeeding eight years. Indeed, the level of funding in FY 2016 would be below the FY 2013 sequester level, completely reversing the benefits of the BBA.

1640 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Ste. 600, Washington, DC 20036
Phone (202) 383-0083 Fax (202) 463-4803
www.cef.org; www.twitter.com/edfunding

NDD Cap Levels
in billions of $



If these discretionary cuts were applied equally to all agencies, the Department of Education would be cut by $5.87 billion in FY 2016 and Head Start by an additional $750 million. The cuts would increase in FY 2017 to a $6.8 billion cut to Education programs and an $872 million cut to Head Start.

The cuts to NDD programs will actually be even worse, since the budget assumes the shift of $7 billion in Pell grant mandatory funding in FY 2016 to this drastically reduced NDD pool of funds.

This budget will result in substantial cuts to critical programs including Title I aid to high-poverty schools; IDEA funds for students with disabilities; Impact Aid; teacher quality grants; after-school grants; charter and magnet school aid; English Language Acquisition grants; career, technical and adult education; campus-based student aid; aid to minority-serving institutions; TRIO and GEAR UP.

The need to increase the federal investment in education has never been greater. Jobs and the economy are directly linked to such investments. Both unemployment rates and lifetime earnings are based on levels of education attainment.

We support the following substitutes that restore these cuts and invest in education including:

- The Van Hollen Substitute
- The Congressional Black Caucus Substitute
- The Congressional Progressive Caucus Substitute

Solving our nation's fiscal situation and reducing the debt can't and won't happen simply by slashing education and other nondefense discretionary spending. **We urge you to reject H. Con. Res 96 and instead adopt a Budget Resolution that invests in education and our nation's future.**

Sincerely,

Kimberly Jones
President

Joel Packer
Executive Director

Chairman KLINE. Without objection.

Mr. SCOTT. Yield back.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back. The Chair will yield himself some time here for closing remarks. I want to thank the Secretary for being with us.

Mr. Secretary, I think it is safe to say that we all—you and I and everybody on the panel shares a goal to see that our kids and not kids—I mean, in higher education now, the nontraditional student is the tradition. That is, older students.

We want them all to learn and to prosper and have the chance to achieve their goals. We have some differences in how we go about doing that. We are comparing budgets here today, a lot of discussion about the Ryan budget and what it does and doesn't do and the President's budget.

And frankly, Mr. Secretary, if you have a budget like you are defending part of, that never, ever balances, adds to the debt every year forever, well, you can fund some programs and some new programs. But the real world that you have been talking about says, probably we shouldn't do that forever.

And forever, we should have a budget that eventually balances. And we need to set some priorities. On special ed, we had some back and forth about who—is it Republicans, is it Democrats. Who is funding special ed? And as I said in my comments, I am disappointed in both parties—in the administrations in both parties and the Congress in both parties.

But I will say that when Republicans held the majority here from 1995 to 2007, we took special ed funding, which is supposed to be, as you know, 40 percent of the excess required, we took it from the single digits it had been at for a couple of decades, from 8 percent to 18 percent. It is now back down to 16 percent.

And with your $100 million of competitive grants to special ed, that is in the words of one of my colleagues a few years ago, kind of budget dust, because to get it just to the 18 percent, which was the high point, that it would take about $1.5 billion. And so, I reiterate my request, I am going to work on it here.

I am going to talk to my colleagues. I am going to talk to appropriators. I am going to talk to everybody I can about increasing that funding, because no matter how popular a new program might be, or even an old program, I haven't talked to a superintendent, a principal, teachers, or parents who won't say that the most important thing that the federal government can do is to start to meet that commitment.

So we are going to continue to work on that. A lot of discussion about pre-k, preschool education, you have got in your budget a pretty big program. As you know, the federal government already spends close to $13 billion a year on pre-k programs.

And over $8 billion of that is on the Head Start. Seems to me we need to look at that program with gusto to make sure that it is doing what it is supposed to be doing. A lot of things—a lot of things going. I appreciate your comments about the charter school bill.

We feel pretty good about that. I wish we hadn't had to pull it out of the ESEA reauthorization. But I just think there are too many kids who are being denied an opportunity to achieve success.

And parents, I think the charter school bill is important—is very, very bipartisan, and I hope that we can count on you to help us move that through. It will pass next week.

It will pass on the floor of the House—huge, huge number. We would like the Senate to take it up and see if we can't address the needs of those kids and those families.

So thank you very much for your patience. We went a little bit longer than I know you would like and that some of us would like. We appreciate you staying and hanging in here.

Even though you tempted me with holding another hearing so you could have a hearing with Mr. Miller, that may not happen. So again, thank you very much for being here today.

There being no further business before the committee, we are adjourned.

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

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June 25, 2014

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

Thank you for testifying at the committee's recent hearing entitled, "*Reviewing the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Proposal for the U.S. Department of Education.*" I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by committee members following the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than Thursday, July 17, 2014 for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Mandy Schaumburg of the committee staff.

Thank you again for your contribution to the work of the committee.

Sincerely,

JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

Enclosures

Rep. John Kline (R-MN)

1. The Preschool for All Program "would also establish a common definition of quality for all preschool programs that includes:" - among other highly specific requirements - "high staff qualifications, including a bachelor of arts degree for teachers." However, an increasing body of work highlights the lack of evidence correlating teacher and staff degree attainment with child outcomes. For example, in an article published by the Association for Psychological Science in 2009, Dr. Robert Pianta (a nationally-recognized expert in early childhood education) wrote, "No consistent pattern of association was found between any index of teacher education and either observed classroom quality…or child outcomes." Why would you require states to adopt such a specific benchmark when the evidence suggests that there is no evidence this type of requirement would have a positive impact on the quality of a child's preschool experience?

2. Currently, 40+ states and the District of Columbia have some type of preschool program. If a significant majority of states already have pre-k programs, why would the federal government require them to reinvent the wheel and meet the specific benchmarks proposed under "Preschool for All" by requiring things like small class sizes and a plan to implement assessment systems?

3. Does the administration's "Preschool for All" proposal anticipate the federal government will be involved in states' preschool systems indefinitely?

4. In a time of data breaches and suggested inappropriate use of data, what are you doing currently to protect the privacy of students and to secure the information housed in data systems funded in part by the federal government, particularly concerns about data shared with third-party vendors?

5. The administration requests a significant amount of funding for new and existing teacher and school leader programs, yet the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports the federal government already administers 82 teacher quality programs costing taxpayers more than $4 billion. We all agree excellent teachers and leaders are needed to help students succeed, but how are these programs coordinated with existing programs? In addition, GAO found many of the current programs shared similar goals and had limited benefit. Why are you requesting more money for new programs on top of existing programs, and how are you ensuring coordination?

6. A few weeks ago, you publicly stated you plan to roll out draft teacher preparation regulations this summer and a final rule within the year. We know in the past you have pushed for reforms around teacher preparation to require each state to evaluate its programs on several key metrics, including whether graduates raise their students' achievement. Additionally, you've mentioned the need to have Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grants, federal assistance to those

who commit to teach in high-need schools in high-need subject areas, only available in programs that are rated the highest. There have been a lot of criticisms surrounding these two ideas in particular. How do you plan to address concerns that are raised? How will you incorporate feedback from the field? When will a draft regulation come out? And lastly, how do you plan to work with Congress to reauthorize Title II of the *Higher Education Act* (HEA) rather than issue new requirements by executive action?

7. The Department of Education (department) continues to ignore the concerns from Congress and institutions of higher education regarding troubling and burdensome regulations and plans to continue to develop its regulatory agenda over the next year. Aside from the negotiated rulemakings currently underway, what other regulatory plans are the department developing and how will the department ensure these regulations will not be unduly burdensome or unfairly target certain sectors or delivery models of higher education?

8. Studies suggest that the gainful employment rule, if enacted, could shut down a significant number of programs in proprietary schools, displacing potentially hundreds of thousands of students around the country. How does targeting these schools, and denying students the opportunity to attend the college of their choice, help meet the president's challenge of increasing college enrollment? In addition, why is the department pursuing a policy that could potentially place greater burdens on the already-strained resources of community colleges?

9. Mr. Secretary, I understand there is an initial transition period built into the gainful employment regulation intended to allow institutions the ability to improve before the new regulations go into effect. Can you explain how the transition period allows schools to actually improve their performance? Because the regulation is based on cohorts of students moving through academic programs, the improvement mechanism misses its point and only benefits one-year certificate programs. If we could prove this point in a separate meeting, would the department consider withdrawing the regulation or, at the very least, alter the rule so that the transition period is actually effective?

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC)

1. I remain concerned about the current state authorization regulation and the proposed regulations that came out of the failed negotiated rulemaking session. It's one thing to say states must authorize institutions that operate within their states. It is entirely another thing to dictate precisely how those states are to do it – and, then, if you don't agree with it, punish the students who are attending the institutions within the state. Aren't you using the federal regulatory process to push states into regulating institutions according to a federal ideal rather than what may work best for students and the institution within the state?

Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN)

1. The Pell Grant program increases college access for nearly nine million low-income students, but at a significant cost. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), total program costs will rise from $31.4 billion in FY2014 to $40.1 billion in FY 2024. Despite this significant commitment of taxpayer dollars, there is little significant data on the educational outcomes of Pell Grant recipients. Before we spend billions of dollars on the administration's proposal for new programs such as the College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus to improve outcomes, would it not be prudent for us to know about the current outcomes in order to better focus our efforts?

2. Your goal of providing opportunity for all students is admirable and one that I share. But most of the initiatives you presented are competitive grants. I represent a rural district in East Tennessee with many small school systems. It is often very difficult for them to apply for competitive grants, and therefore, they would have limited opportunity to benefit from the programs. The *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act*, which provides grants to states for career and technical education programs, is a perfect example. Your budget proposal level funds Perkins at $1.1 billion but with $100 million siphoned off for competitive grants. As a result, the funding available for the formula-based grants is approximately 10 percent smaller. Schools not receiving competitive grants would receive a significant cut in funding even though the program is level funded. How do you propose that we keep competitive grants from creating an opportunity for some rather than all?

3. For the third consecutive year, the administration's FY 2015 budget proposal eliminates funding for the Impact Aid Payments for Federal Property program. For many school districts—including Unicoi County in East Tennessee—this money accounts for a significant portion of their budget, and zeroing it out would be devastating. Similar to other school districts across the country, approximately half of Unicoi County's land is federally owned, which significantly lowers the property revenue available to operate the county's schools. How can you justify eliminating critical funding to compensate school districts for the loss of property tax revenue due to the presence of federal lands? Have you done an analysis of the impact this would have on school districts?

Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA)

1. The department is managing the sunset of the Federal Family Education Loan Program, which still has over $250 billion outstanding in federally guaranteed loans. This portfolio is managed by 30 remaining student loan guaranty agencies. As the size of this portfolio decreases, the guaranty agencies will undoubtedly see challenges as their revenues diminish. Would you please describe the steps the department is taking to prepare for the inevitable reduction in the number of guaranty agencies and their potential merger with other agencies?

Please include in your response a description of the department's preparation for circumstances where a guarantor's assets must be transferred with little prior notice as well as those that may be accomplished in a more orderly fashion. Additionally, please describe the actions taken by the department to ensure that personally identifiable information of student loan borrows will be adequately protected during loan transfers along with the steps taken by the department to ensure there will not be any loss of data, potentially harming the borrower. Has the department developed a common transfer protocol to be adopted by all guarantee agencies?

Rep. Matt Salmon (R-AZ)

1. Recently, there has been a lot of activity around preventing and reporting sexual assault on college campuses, including the recent negotiated rulemaking around regulations to the *Clery Act* as amended by the *Violence Against Women Act* reauthorization. Additionally, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault recently released recommendations, and there is new guidance out of the department's Office of Civil Rights on the subject. Can you give me an update on the Office of Civil Rights' (OCR) plan regarding sexual assault on campus moving forward? How do you intend to coordinate all of these efforts to ensure that they are not duplicative and provide helpful information to students and schools?

Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)

1. We currently require some similar performance metrics and reporting requirements in federal education laws such as the *CTE Act*, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, the *Workforce Investment Act* (WIA), and HEA. Since all are now up for reauthorization, what elements of these laws can you envision aligning to prevent duplication in our nation's education and workforce investment system?

Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN)

1. In a recent visit to Arizona, I heard about the poor physical state of Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools. How do you plan to work with the Department of Interior to support BIE schools to increase student achievement?

2. In February, Chairman Kline and I sent you a letter asking for more details on what you've been calling a "50-state strategy" on teacher equity. You have not shared details about your plans. Do you have any information on when this plan will be public, or how it will be rolled out? How will you address concerns that have been raised, including how this plan will interact with local hiring policies, current contracts, and collective bargaining; how you will define "successful" equitable distribution of teachers; and how OCR will be involved in the enforcement of this plan? How will you balance these new requirements with all the requirements that states are struggling to meet right now, and are having trouble implementing, such as teacher evaluation systems? I'd also like to

formally ask your staff to meet with us to fully brief us on your plans before the 50-state strategy is released.

3. If the proposed Race to the Top – Equity program is funded, what conditions will states and districts have to meet to compete for this money? Will this competition be linked to the "50 state strategy" on teacher distribution? When will other details about the proposed program be disclosed?

Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN)

1. I know from personal experience and also frequently hear from my constituents the FAFSA is too complicated and often acts as a barrier to a postsecondary education. I believe if we could simplify the financial aid application process that would encourage more students to enroll in and complete college. What reforms would you support to simplify the process for applying for federal student aid? Do you have any data to demonstrate what the impact on college access would be if we allowed students to fill out the form with prior-prior year data, which would allow them to more easily access their information from the IRS rather than having to fill out the form themselves?

Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA)

1. The committee is already discussing the reauthorization of important education and workforce programs such as the *CTE Act*. While the president's budget proposes to reauthorize Perkins, does it also address linking CTE to industry and sector recognized credentials, which are increasingly important to the success of both our students and businesses?

2. The Pell Grant program is the foundation of our nation's commitment to help low-income students access higher education. However, the program remains on an unsustainable path. CBO expects the program to face a $2.5 billion funding gap in FY 2017, and the Office of Management and Budget expects the funding gap to be even larger at $3.5 billion. Rather than continuing to apply band-aid approach fixes to the funding issues for the Pell Grant program, what long-term solutions is the department developing to put the program on a sustainable path for future generations of college-goers?

3. The committee is committed to strengthening important workforce and education programs like Adult Education in WIA and Perkins CTE. Why are you proposing to create new, duplicative federal grant programs, such as the Skills Challenge Grants and the CTE Innovation Fund?

Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV)

1. I recently had the privilege of hosting Chairman Kline and other members of the committee at a field hearing on Career and Technical Education at Southwest Career and

Technical Academy in Las Vegas. Southwest is just one of a number of highly successful career and technical academies in the Clark County School District. Students enrolled in CTE have demonstrated themselves to be high-performing, highly-motivated individuals who, according to information we received from Clark County School District, graduate at a higher rate than their traditional high school peers.

However, in the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2015, there is a request to cut approximately $100 million from guaranteed formula funding to states for CTE programs and instead spend that money on a new competitive grant program for CTE. Schools in my district have expressed concern with this request because, as a result of the current hold harmless provision, Nevada's guaranteed allocation of federal funding for CTE would be reduced by nearly 50%.

Secretary Duncan, while I don't support the administration's proposal to pay for a new competitive grant program by cutting from funds typically reserved for the states, of greater concern is the current hold harmless provision. In order to address this issue I, along with my Democratic colleague from Arizona, Mr. Grijalva, introduced H.R. 3028, the *Career and Technical Education Equity Act*. This bill prevents states like Nevada and Arizona from facing disproportionate cuts to CTE funding.

Can you elaborate on any proposals by the administration to address the hold harmless provision, and is the department willing to work with the committee on a bipartisan solution to this critical issue?

Rep. Susan Brooks (R-IN)

1. What role is the department playing to consolidate and streamline the number of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs, as proposed by the White House and as urged by the GAO, and use taxpayer dollars more efficiently to improve STEM education?

Rep. Luke Messer (R-IN)

1. The amount of information postsecondary institutions must disclose to potential students and report to the department has grown exponentially over the last decade, with limited evidence of its value. I believe we must determine which reporting and disclosure requirements are necessary and useful while eliminating those that are obsolete or unduly burdensome. Rather than piling additional burdens on institutions and requiring the release of information that may or may not be helpful to students, my bill, the *Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act,* requires the department to convene an advisory committee to study what students are interested in seeing as they search for the right college or university. Have you taken any steps at the department to assess what information is actually helpful to students and what is just burdensome to institutions? Would you be supportive of such a study?

Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)

1. Mr. Secretary, during your April 29 appearance before the Education and Workforce Committee, I expressed concern regarding the Administration's request to level-fund the GEAR UP, HEP/CAMP and TRIO programs despite the fact that they remain below sequestration funding levels. In my congressional district alone, these programs enable thousands of low-income and minority students to achieve their dreams of achieving a higher education.

2. In response to my inquiry, you indicated that the Administration is more focused on steering monies towards efforts that reduce college costs. Yet, both financial aid and financial literacy are vital components to all of these programs. The authorizing legislation governing each of these programs explicitly requires them to educate students and families about resources to help finance postsecondary education, assist students and families in pursuing such resources, provide financial literacy training, and, in certain instances, provide financial aid in the form of scholarships, grant aid, stipends, and so on. (See 20 U.S.C. §§ 1070a-12(b)(4), (6) [Talent Search], 1070a-13(b)(4), (f) [Upward Bound], 1070a-14(b)(3)-(6), (d) [Student Support Services], 1070a-15(b)(6),(f) [Postbaccalaureate Achievement], 1070a-16(a)(1), (3) [Educational Opportunity Centers]; §§ 1070a-24(a)(1), 1070a-25(a) [GEAR UP]; §1070d-2(c)(1)(A)-(G) [HEP/CAMP].)

3. Given the fact that each of these programs explicitly addresses the needs of low-income, first-generation, and minority students and families in financing postsecondary education, I ask, how the Administration can better leverage these existing programs to achieve its goal of tackling college costs?

Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ)

1. Given that ED's International Strategy has as one objective, "[increasing] global competency" among American students of all backgrounds, how would you propose to address the continuing lack of support for language learning and global competency in K-12, like the elimination of FLAP funding, especially considering the growing body of research on cognitive and educational advantages from early language learning?

2. Although policy makers often cite Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman's research indicating that high quality early education programs save about $7 for each dollar invested, less discussed is Dr. Heckman's analysis that the highest return on investment is in the first three years. Currently fewer than 5 percent of infants and toddlers have access to Early Head Start (which I know is administered by Dept. of HHS). Can you provide a detailed picture of how, under the President's proposal/ Mr. Miller's Stronger Start for America's Children Act, HHS and Dept. of Ed would work with states to expand early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers? Do you think the 15 percent infant-toddler set aside in the Stronger Start for America's children is adequate?

3. The budget provides $7 billion for new College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus program which would reward colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time. How can we ensure that these bonuses went to reward schools that serve these students well, not just graduate them with degrees they cannot use and debts they cannot repay?

Rep. David Loebsack (D-IA)

1. I am pleased to see that the Department continues to make school safety a priority. Can you provide an update on what is being done at the federal level to make sure that school districts and communities have the resources and best practices necessary to protect our schools in a safe and effective manner?

2. I think a critical component of making our schools safe and helping students to succeed is effectively addressing any mental health difficulties students are having in a timely manner. What is being done to make sure that teachers, administrators and school support staff have the resources they need to address the mental health needs of all students, particularly those that are in crisis?

3. Technology in the classrooms can enrich learning and improve outcomes for students in an increasingly digital world. However, rural schools cannot benefit from programs intended to support digital learning if they are not connected to the internet. How is the Department of Education working with the FCC to ensure that rural schools are not passed over when it comes to programs to improve digital learning?

4. Recent research results have shown that the School Improvement Grant initiative has not had a significant positive impact on student achievement in many schools - indeed 1/3 of SIG schools have performed worse after the intervention. This seems to be a strong indictment of the four models supported under SIG. I am pleased that language included during the most recent appropriations process allows for additional models, but given the tight fiscal climate, wouldn't it make sense to use these funds to bring formal grant programs, that help all students, back to pre-sequestration levels?

[Secretary Duncan's response to questions submitted for the record follows:]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF LEGISLATION AND CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

July 17, 2014

The Honorable John Kline
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

Attached are the Department's responses to the questions for the record submitted by Members of the Committee, following the Secretary's April 29, 2014 testimony, at the hearing "Reviewing the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget proposal for the U.S. Department of Education."

If you have additional questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact this office at (202) 401-0020.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Horwich
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

United States Department of Education

Responses to Questions Submitted to be Answered for the Record of the April 29, 2014, Hearing Before the Committee on Education and the Workforce on Reviewing the President's FY 2015 Budget Proposal for the U.S. Department of Education

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. JOHN KLINE

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL PROGRAM-TEACHER QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

Question. The Preschool for All Program "would also establish a common definition of quality for all preschool programs that includes:" - among other highly specific requirements - "high staff qualifications, including a Bachelor of Arts degree for teachers." However, an increasing body of work highlights the lack of evidence correlating teacher and staff degree attainment with child outcomes. For example, in an article published by the Association for Psychological Science in 2009, Dr. Robert Pianta (a nationally recognized expert in early childhood education) wrote, "No consistent pattern of association was found between any index of teacher education and either observed classroom quality ... or child outcomes." Why would you require States to adopt such a specific benchmark when the evidence suggests that there is no evidence this type of requirement would have a positive impact on the quality of a child's preschool experience?

Answer. We believe that high staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternate pathway to early childhood, along with ongoing professional development, are important components of a high-quality preschool program. Research has shown that early childhood teachers' education and training have been linked to global measures of program quality, language and social interaction between teachers and children, and improved student outcomes. Based on a review of the evidence, a committee of the National Research Council recommended that preschool teachers have a Bachelor of Arts degree with specialization in early childhood education.

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Question. Currently, 40+ States and the District of Columbia have some type of preschool program. If a significant majority of States already have pre-K programs, why would the Federal Government require them to reinvent the wheel and meet the specific benchmarks proposed under "Preschool for All" by requiring things like small class sizes and a plan to implement assessment systems?

Answer. While 40 States and the District of Columbia have at least one publicly-funded State preschool program in place, the Department estimates that more than one-third of 4-year-olds from low-income families are not enrolled in any preschool program,

and the cost of private preschool and lack of public programs may also narrow options for middle-class families. Moreover, access to publicly funded programs varies significantly across States and localities, ranging from no children served in some areas to near universal coverage in others.

Preschool for All would not require States to reinvent the wheel, but would help ensure that all 4-year-olds in States that choose to participate have access to a high-quality preschool program. Research demonstrates that only high-quality preschool delivers real benefits for children, which is why the Administration's Preschool for All proposal includes requirements for quality, based on nationally recognized standards that research shows can lead to closing the opportunity gap between children from lower-income families and their peers from higher-income families.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Question. Does the Administration's "Preschool for All" proposal anticipate the Federal Government will be involved in States' preschool systems indefinitely?

Answer. The Administration's proposed Preschool for All funds would be awarded through a cost-sharing model under which the Federal Government would assume a significant share of the program costs in the first years of the program, with States that choose to participate gradually assuming more responsibility over time.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY IN FEDERAL DATA SYSTEMS

Question. In a time of data breaches and suggested inappropriate use of data, what are you doing currently to protect the privacy of students and to secure the information housed in data systems funded in part by the Federal Government, particularly in light of concerns about data shared with third-party vendors?

Answer. The U. S. Department of Education (Department or ED) is committed to ensuring the security of data housed in systems funded in part by the Federal Government, such as those funded by the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program. As education data are digitized and the use of these data to improve education has grown, the need to exercise care in the handling of personal information also has intensified. ED continues to take many actions to improve privacy protections for students, including establishing an executive-level Chief Privacy Officer position, launching a Privacy Technical Assistance Center, and issuing numerous guidance documents, including one that deals specifically with third-party vendors of online educational services. In addition, the National Center for Education Statistics has hosted annual Best Practice Conferences for SLDS grantees to allow for both ED and individual grantees to exchange information on topics such as information security. Additional details on several complementary and coordinated activities of ED designed to help ensure data confidentiality across the Nation are outlined below.

Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

The Department's FPCO is responsible for implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which protects the privacy of student education records and applies to all educational agencies and institutions (schools, school districts, and

postsecondary institutions) that receive funds from any program administered by the Department. FERPA prohibits the improper disclosure of personally identifiable information derived from education records and authorizes the Department to take enforcement actions against any educational agency or institution that has a policy or practice of improperly permitting the release of education records. FPCO (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html), which is led by the Chief Privacy Officer, provides executive-level guidance and direction to help the Department's customers understand their rights and responsibilities.

Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)

The Department established the Privacy Technical Assistance Center (http://ptac.ed.gov/), which is funded by the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems program, as a "one-stop" resource for information on privacy, confidentiality, and security practices related to student-level data. PTAC provides timely information and updated guidance on privacy, confidentiality, and security practices through a variety of resources, including training materials and opportunities to receive direct assistance with privacy, security, and confidentiality of student data systems. Examples of guidance provided on data security includes:

- Identity Authentication Best Practices (July 2012): http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/authentication.pdf
- Data Security and Management Training: Best Practice Considerations (Dec. 2011): http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/issue-brief-security-training.pdf
- Top Threats to Data Protection (Dec. 2011): http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/issue-brief-threats-to-your-data.pdf

An example of guidance provided about sharing data with third party vendors includes:

- Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Educational Services: Requirements and Best Practices (Feb. 2014): http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Student%20Privacy%20and%20Online%20Educational%20Services%20%28February%202014%29.pdf

NUMBER OF FEDERAL TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAMS

Question. The Administration requests a significant amount of funding for new and existing teacher and school leader programs, yet the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports the Federal Government already administers 82 teacher quality programs costing taxpayers more than $4 billion. We all agree excellent teachers and leaders are needed to help students succeed, but how are these programs coordinated with existing programs?

Answer. Our 2015 Budget request for programs to strengthen support for teachers and school leaders is fully consistent with our longstanding ESEA reauthorization proposal, which, as noted by GAO, would partly address concerns about duplicative, uncoordinated programs by combining 38 program authorities -- many of which support teacher preparation and support -- into 11 streamlined, coordinated programs. Newly proposed activities in 2015 would address needs not currently met through existing programs. For example, the $200 million ConnectEDucators proposal is specifically

coordinated with the Administration's ConnectED initiative to ensure that teachers and leaders with access to high-speed Internet and devices for students are well prepared to use these resources in a way that improves classroom instruction and student learning. The RESPECT initiative is a one-time mandatory proposal designed to help States and school districts support the transition to college- and career-ready standards and related assessments, in part by helping to build more supportive work environments based on collaborative efforts to improve instruction and meet student needs.

COORDINATION OF FEDERAL TEACHER QUALTIY PROGRAMS

Question. In addition, GAO found many of the current programs shared similar goals and had limited benefit. Why are you requesting more money for new programs on top of existing programs, and how are you ensuring coordination?

Answer. The Department's 2015 Budget Request for teacher and school leader programs is based on our proposal to reauthorize the ESEA, which was specifically designed to address longstanding concerns about duplication and fragmentation in Department of Education programs. Similarly, our fiscal year 2014 and 2015 budget requests included a Governmentwide proposal to better coordinate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs administered across the Departments of Education, Defense, and Energy, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the National Science Foundation. We would be pleased to work with Congress toward these goals.

TEACHER PREPARATION REGULATIONS

Question. A few weeks ago, you publicly stated you plan to roll out draft teacher preparation regulations this summer and a final rule within the year. We know in the past you have pushed for reforms around teacher preparation to require each State to evaluate its programs on several key metrics, including whether graduates raise their students' achievement. Additionally, you've mentioned the need to have Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grants -- Federal assistance to those who commit to teach in high-need schools in high-need subject areas -- only available in programs that are rated the highest. There have been a lot of criticisms surrounding these two ideas in particular. How do you plan to address concerns that are raised? How will you incorporate feedback from the field? When will a draft regulation come out?

Answer. In 2011, the Department conducted three public hearings, each of which was followed by a roundtable discussion, to inform its policy in the areas of teacher preparation and college completion. These public events offered opportunities to all interested parties to attend and provide public comment. For those unable to attend, we also accepted written comments and suggestions. These events were then followed by three in-person negotiated rulemaking sessions as well as a fourth telephonic session, during which draft regulatory language was presented and considered by negotiators. As with all negotiated rulemaking sessions, these sessions were open to the public and the Department received extensive feedback, including numerous concerns and suggestions, all of which the Department is taking into consideration in the development of the proposed regulations. Once the proposed regulations are published in the Federal Register

as part of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), there will be a public comment period during which we anticipate significant feedback from interested parties and the public. In drafting final regulations, the Department will review and carefully consider all the additional input it receives during the public comment period. Our goal is to publish the NPRM this summer.

REAUTHORIZATION OF TITLE II OF HEA

Question. And lastly, how do you plan to work with Congress to reauthorize Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) rather than issue new requirements by executive action?

Answer. The Department appreciates Congress' work toward reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and looks forward to working with Congress as it continues that work, including on Title II.

REGULATION DEVELOPMENT

Question. The Department of Education continues to ignore the concerns from Congress and institutions of higher education regarding troubling and burdensome regulations and plans to continue to develop its regulatory agenda over the next year. Aside from the negotiated rulemakings currently underway, what other regulatory plans is the Department developing and how will the Department ensure these regulations will not be unduly burdensome or unfairly target certain sectors or delivery models of higher education?

Answer. The Department plans to commence rulemaking later this year pursuant to the President's June 9, 2014, Memorandum to the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Education. In that memorandum, the President directed the Department of Education to propose, within 1 year, regulations that will allow additional students who borrowed Federal Direct Loans to cap their Federal student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. These regulations will be promulgated through the negotiated rulemaking process under the Higher Education Act. The Department carefully considers all comments it receives and seeks to balance the statutory requirements with the administrative impact on institutions of higher education.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AND INCREASING COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Question. Studies suggest that the gainful employment rule, if enacted, could shut down a significant number of programs in proprietary schools, displacing potentially hundreds of thousands of students around the country. How does targeting these schools, and denying students the opportunity to attend the college of their choice, help meet the President's challenge of increasing college enrollment?

Answer. While the proposed rule applies equally to gainful employment programs offered at public, private non-profit, and for-profit institutions, student outcomes at for-profit colleges are particularly concerning. Of the students who are in the lowest-performing programs under our proposed metrics, all except for a small percentage are in programs at for-profit institutions. The Department's estimates show that of the total number of gainful employment programs, nearly 8,000 programs would meet the

minimum requirements to be measured by the accountability metrics of the proposed rule. We estimate that the substantial majority of programs, both in for-profit and in other sectors, will meet the rule's requirements. About 2,000 programs would either fail or fall into the zone for improvement under the proposed regulations. It is important to note that these estimates are just a 1-year snapshot based on past data we have collected. This does not mean that all of these programs will lose access to Federal student aid, because the rule will allow all of these programs time and opportunity to improve.

Protecting all students is the core value of this proposed rule. Ultimately, students are not being served well by programs that have consistently poor outcomes. The proposed rule is designed to shine a light on the career programs that are doing good work while making sure students and consumers are aware of those that are not. Further, by bringing accountability and transparency to career training programs and giving institutions time and the ability to make improvements, we intend for the rule to create more and better opportunities for students.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT RULE AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Question. In addition, why is the Department pursuing a policy that could potentially place greater burdens on the already-strained resources of community colleges?

Answer. The proposed gainful employment rule attempts to balance ensuring that the accountability and disclosure provisions of the metrics can be properly implemented against resulting administrative requirements for institutions. We will continue to consider ways in which administrative burden can be minimized while still achieving the objectives of the rule.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT REGULATION TRANSITION PERIOD

Question. Mr. Secretary, I understand there is an initial transition period built into the gainful employment regulation intended to allow institutions the ability to improve before the new regulations go into effect. Can you explain how the transition period allows schools to actually improve their performance?

Answer. The proposed regulations provide for an alternative calculation of a gainful employment (GE) program's debt to earnings (D/E) rates during a transition period for the first 4 years of the rule. Typically, a GE program's D/E rates would be calculated using the debt and earnings outcomes of students who completed a GE program 3 and 4 title IV award years prior to the year for which the rates are being calculated. (ex: D/E rates for 2014-2015 would assess the outcomes of students who completed in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012). During the transition period, however, if a GE program's debt to earnings rates are not passing, transitional D/E rates would be calculated using the debt outcomes of the students who completed the program during the most recently completed year. Because the transitional calculation would apply the loan debt of students completing a program after the regulations would go into effect, any adjustments made by an institution would be reflected in the results of a program's transitional D/E rates.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT-MEASURING IMPROVEMENT

Question. Because the regulation is based on cohorts of students moving through academic programs, the improvement mechanism misses its point and only benefits 1-year certificate programs. If we could prove this point in a separate meeting, would the Department consider withdrawing the regulation or, at the very least, alter the rule so that the transition period is actually effective?

Answer. The Department received over 100,000 public comments covering a wide range of topics related to the gainful employment proposed regulations, including the provisions designed to create opportunity for institutions to improve program outcomes. We will consider all comments as we craft a final rule.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. VIRGINIA FOXX

STATE AUTHORIZATION REGULATION

Question. I remain concerned about the current State authorization regulation and the proposed regulations that came out of the failed negotiated rulemaking session. It's one thing to say States must authorize institutions that operate within their States. It is entirely another thing to dictate precisely how those States are to do it - and, then, if you don't agree with it, punish the students who are attending the institutions within the State. Aren't you using the Federal regulatory process to push States into regulating institutions according to a Federal ideal rather than what may work best for students and the institution within the State?

Answer. Under the HEA, institutions must be legally authorized by the State as a condition of institutional eligibility for funding. The current State authorization regulations allow that, under certain circumstances, an institution may be legally authorized by the State based on methods such as State charters, State laws, State constitutional provisions, licenses, or articles of incorporation that authorize an entity to offer educational programs beyond secondary education in the State. If a State has an additional approval or licensure requirement, the institution must comply with those requirements. Institutions are also required to identify a student complaint process in the State. States can meet these requirements in many different ways, and may also establish additional standards for institutions. Although the State authorization regulations were generally effective, on July 1, 2011, the Department provided flexibility to institutions unable to obtain State authorization by permitting them to request a 1-year extension of the effective date of the regulations to July 1, 2012, and, if necessary, an additional 1-year extension to July 1, 2013. The Department then provided for a further extension until July 1, 2014, and most recently provided an additional 1-year extension until July 1, 2015, for institutions unable to obtain State authorization. For an institution to receive an extension until July 1, 2015, the institution must obtain from the State an explanation of how an additional 1-year extension will permit the State to finalize its procedures so the institution is in compliance with the State authorization regulatory requirements and provide the explanation to the Department upon request.

With respect to the proposed regulations on State authorization of distance education providers as a component of institutional eligibility discussed at the recent negotiated rulemaking session on program integrity and improvement issues, consensus

was not reached. As with all negotiated rulemaking sessions, the Department will take into consideration feedback received in its development of the proposed regulations. Following publication of the proposed regulations in the Federal Register, there will be a public comment period. In drafting final regulations, the Department will review and carefully consider all the additional input it receives during the public comment period.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. PHIL ROE

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS

Question. The Pell Grant program increases college access for nearly 9 million low-income students, but at a significant cost. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), total program costs will rise from $31.4 billion in fiscal year 2014 to $40.1 billion in fiscal year 2024. Despite this significant commitment of taxpayer dollars, there is little significant data on the educational outcomes of Pell Grant recipients. Before we spend billions of dollars on the Administration's proposal for new programs such as the College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus program to improve outcomes, would it not be prudent for us to know about the current outcomes in order to better focus our efforts?

Answer. The National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), beginning with the 2012-2013 award year, has begun to collect data on Pell Grant-only recipients. As a result, in a few years, when an appropriate data sample is available, the Department or other research organizations will be able to perform evaluations on certain Pell Grant recipient outcomes.

In the meantime, the Department believes the Pell Grant program has a demonstrated record of providing access to higher education for Pell recipients. The College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus proposal seeks to reward institutions that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time and encourage all institutions to improve their performance.

RURAL DISTRICTS AND COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS

Question. Your goal of providing opportunity for all students is admirable and one that I share. But most of the initiatives you presented are competitive grants. I represent a rural district in East Tennessee with many small school systems. It is often very difficult for them to apply for competitive grants, and therefore, they would have limited opportunity to benefit from the programs. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, which provides grants to States for career and technical education programs, is a perfect example. Your budget proposal level funds Perkins at $1.1 billion but with $100 million siphoned off for competitive grants. As a result, the funding available for the formula-based grants is approximately 10 percent smaller. Schools not receiving competitive grants would receive a significant cut in funding even though the program is level funded. How do you propose that we keep competitive grants from creating an opportunity for some rather than all?

Answer. We believe, based on our experience with various competitive programs, including Race to the Top, Promise Neighborhoods, and School Improvement Grants, that rural States and communities are able to successfully compete for such funds to support reform and innovation. As indicated by our 2015 Budget, we remain committed

both to foundational formula programs and competitive programs. For example, our Perkins CTE proposal would retain significant formula grants to States, while also creating incentives for high-quality, innovative reform proposals through a competitive grant set-aside.

IMPACT AID PAYMENTS FOR FEDERAL PROPERTY

Question. For the third consecutive year, the Administration's fiscal year 2015 budget proposal eliminates funding for the Impact Aid Payments for Federal Property program. For many school districts - including Unicoi County in East Tennessee - this money accounts for a significant portion of their budget, and zeroing it out would be devastating. Similar to other school districts across the country, approximately half of Unicoi County's land is federally owned, which significantly lowers the property revenue available to operate the county's schools. How can you justify eliminating critical funding to compensate school districts for the loss of property tax revenue due to the presence of Federal lands? Have you done an analysis of the impact this would have on school districts?

Answer. The policy of the Administration is to use available Impact Aid funds to help pay for the education of federally connected children, including children of members of the uniformed services, children of Federal employees who both live and work on Federal property, children of foreign military officers, children living on Indian lands, and children residing in federally assisted low-rent housing projects.

Unlike other Impact Aid programs, Payments for Federal Property are made to LEAs without regard to the presence of federally connected children and do not necessarily provide for educational services for such children. When the Payments for Federal property authority was first established in 1950, its purpose was to provide assistance to LEAs in which the Federal Government had imposed a substantial and continuing burden by acquiring a considerable portion of real property in the LEA. The law applied only to property acquired since 1938 because, in general, LEAs had been able to adjust to acquisitions that occurred before that time. Over 64 percent of districts that currently receive Payments for Federal Property first applied before 1970. We believe that the majority of LEAs receiving assistance under this program have now had sufficient time to adjust to the removal of the property from their tax rolls.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. GLENN THOMPSON

FFEL PROGRAM AND LOAN GUARANTY AGENCIES

Question. The Department of Education is managing the sunset of the Federal Family Education Loan Program, which still has over $250 billion outstanding in federally guaranteed loans. This portfolio is managed by 30 remaining student loan guaranty agencies. As the size of this portfolio decreases, the guaranty agencies will undoubtedly see challenges as their revenues diminish. Would you please describe the steps the Department is taking to prepare for the inevitable reduction in the number of guaranty agencies and their potential merger with other agencies? Please include in your response a description of the Department's preparation for circumstances where a

guarantor's assets must be transferred with little prior notice, as well as those that may be accomplished in a more orderly fashion.

Answer. As the FFEL program winds down, the Department continues to provide oversight of the outstanding FFEL portfolio of $410 billion, with approximately $258 billion in non-defaulted loans held by lenders and another $42 billion in defaulted loans held and serviced by the 31 guaranty agencies that remain in the program. Our Financial Institution Oversight Service unit within Program Compliance includes a staff of 33 professionals who conduct program reviews and resolve compliance audits of both FFEL lenders and guaranty agencies. Likewise, we have a staff of seven professionals in our Operations Performance Management Service who monitor the financial and operational viability and conduct risk analyses of the guaranty agencies. This staff is responsible for the implementation and close out of all guaranty agency transition processes and procedures.

As you may be aware, to ensure an orderly wind-down of the FFEL guaranty agency program, we published a notice in the Federal Register soliciting interest from our FFEL guaranty agency community for the establishment of Voluntary Flexible Agreements (VFAs) that would allow us to enter into agreements with a small number of agencies that would be on "stand-by" to assume the responsibility for loans under guarantee or held by any agency that chooses to leave the program.

Meanwhile, we have successfully transitioned two agencies in the past few years to Transitional Guaranty Agencies, PHEAA, and Great Lakes. We are prepared to find a Transitional Guaranty Agency for any other agency that wishes to exit the program, including agencies that give us little prior notice. A quick transfer could be accomplished by either working with previously successful transitional agencies, new transitional agencies that we deem ready, or through our stand-by capacity maintained by Education Credit Management Corporation (ECMC).

PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS

Question. Additionally, please describe the actions taken by the Department to ensure that personally identifiable information of student loan borrows will be adequately protected during loan transfers along with the steps taken by the Department to ensure there will not be any loss of data, potentially harming the borrower. Has the Department developed a common transfer protocol to be adopted by all guarantee agencies?

Answer. Federal Student Aid (FSA) takes the responsibility to protect highly sensitive data very seriously and has put in place many safeguards to prevent a data breach. We have made all Guaranty Agencies aware of Federal requirements to protect personally identifiable information of student loan borrowers and have visited with each of them to discuss their efforts to comply with Federal requirements. If data is compromised by a partner, FSA works to ensure all Federal reporting requirements are followed and anyone impacted is notified. FSA collects data on all breaches involving student information to quickly identify breach trends and then notify our partners of potential threats.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. MATT SALMON

OCR PLAN FOR CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND REPORTING

Question. Recently, there has been a lot of activity around preventing and reporting sexual assault on college campuses, including the recent negotiated rulemaking around regulations to the Clery Act, as amended by the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. Additionally, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault recently released recommendations, and there is new guidance out of the Department's Office of Civil Rights on the subject. Can you give me an update on the Office of Civil Rights' (OCR) plan regarding sexual assault on campus moving forward?

Answer. The Department's Office for Civil Rights will continue to enforce Title IX to ensure colleges and universities are properly addressing and preventing sexual violence and all forms of sexual harassment that creates hostile environments at schools. Currently, OCR is investigating 67 postsecondary institutions for issues related to Title IX sexual violence. In addition to issuing guidance of general applicability, OCR plans to continue to provide technical assistance to colleges and universities on this important topic through a variety of methods, including webinars and conferences. OCR's technical assistance, which can be tailored to an individual school's needs, provides another way for schools to understand what OCR expects a school to do to come into compliance with the law without the school inviting an enforcement action. OCR also plans to continue to work with the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to provide schools, faculty, and students with additional resources and recommendations for how to best address and prevent sexual assault on their campuses.

COORDINATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Question. How do you intend to coordinate all of these efforts to ensure that they are not duplicative and provide helpful information to students and schools?

Answer. The Department is working to coordinate all our educational and enforcement efforts around the issue of sexual violence. Most prominently in this area, the Department's Federal Student Aid (FSA) office is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Clery Act, and the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces Title IX. Although distinct statutes, sometimes the requirements and enforcement efforts overlap. For example, the Clery Act requires institutions of higher education to provide current and prospective students, employees, the public, and the Department of Education with crime statistics and information about campus crime prevention programs and policies, including crimes related to sexual violence. But the Clery Act requirements apply to many crimes other than those involving sexual violence that are addressed by Title IX.

For those areas in which the Clery Act and Title IX both apply, an institution must comply with both laws and the Department has worked hard to ensure there are no conflicting obligations. We will continue to do so as the Department promulgates regulations to implement the amendments to the Clery Act (which do not change schools' existing obligations under Title IX). To clarify roles and increase efficiency, FSA and OCR have formalized an agreement to ensure effective handling of complaints and to

facilitate information sharing, and have produced a joint document (currently posted on NotAlone.gov) demonstrating how the statutory requirements intersect.

In addition, OCR and the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division (CRT) can both enforce Title IX. The two offices have entered into an agreement to enhance collaboration and strengthen enforcement. This will enhance the Federal Government's ability to ensure that schools can and will comply with Title IX without imposing duplicative or inconsistent obligations on them.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. BRETT GUTHRIE

REAUTHORIZATION OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Question. We currently require some similar performance metrics and reporting requirements in Federal education laws such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and the Higher Education Act (HEA). Since all are now up for reauthorization, what elements of these laws can you envision aligning to prevent duplication in our Nation's education and workforce investment system?

Answer. In general, we believe these laws address distinct challenges in improving quality and outcomes in our education system, and are not inherently duplicative. However, there are at least two areas to consider in improving the alignment of these authorities as part of any reauthorization. First, it is important to align standards across these programs, building on the college- and career-ready standards that nearly all States currently are implementing. Second, we should look at transitions connecting the programs supported by these authorities, with the goal of helping students move seamlessly from one system or level of education to another, consistent with both their level of attainment and their educational goals.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. TODD ROKITA

INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN BIE SCHOOLS

Question. In a recent visit to Arizona, I heard about the poor physical state of Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools. How do you plan to work with the Department of Interior to support BIE schools to increase student achievement?

Answer. The Administration is firmly committed to taking action to improve both educational opportunities and outcomes for Native American students. As you may know, last fall the Departments of Education and of Interior convened an American Indian Education Study Group to identify the challenges facing the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and to propose a comprehensive plan for changes that will help ensure that all students attending BIE-funded schools receive a world-class education. The Study Group conducted listening sessions with tribal leaders, Indian educators, and others in Indian Country, meeting with roughly 400 individuals and obtaining other input that resulted in a Blueprint for Reform released on June 13, 2014. The Department of Education is now engaged in discussions with the Department of Interior to explore options for supporting the proposed transformation of BIE.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF 50-STATE STRATEGY ON EDUCATOR EQUITY

Question. In February, Chairman Kline and I sent you a letter asking for more details on what you've been calling a "50-State strategy" on teacher equity. You have not shared details about your plans. Do you have any information on when this plan will be public, or how it will be rolled out?

Answer. On July 7, 2014, we announced an Excellent Educators for All Initiative designed to help States and school districts support great educators for the students who need them most. The Initiative includes three components. First, the Department will ask States to create new, comprehensive educator equity plans that put in place locally-developed solutions to ensure every student has effective educators. States first created these plans in 2006 in response to a requirement in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; we will ask States to submit updated plans by April 2015. Second, the Department is investing $4.2 million to establish a new technical assistance network to support States and districts in developing and implementing their plans to ensure all students have access to great educators. And third, the Department will publish Educator Equity profiles in fall 2014 to help States identify gaps in access to quality teaching for low-income and minority students, as well as shine a spotlight on places where high-need schools are beating the odds and successfully recruiting and retaining effective educators.

COORDINATION WITH STATES ON 50-STATE STRATEGY

Question. How will you address concerns that have been raised, including how this plan will interact with local hiring policies, current contracts, and collective bargaining; how you will define "successful" equitable distribution of teachers; and how will OCR be involved in the enforcement of this plan? How will you balance these new requirements with all the requirements that States are struggling to meet right now, and are having trouble implementing, such as teacher evaluation systems? I'd also like to formally ask your staff to meet with us to fully brief us on your plans before the "50-State" strategy is released.

Answer. Our Excellent Educators for All initiative recognizes that there are many challenges that must be addressed at the State and local levels as part of a comprehensive effort to ensure equitable access to effective educators for all students. Our three-part strategy reflects a measured approach designed to partner with States and school districts and to take into account both the tools available today and the tools that will be available in the coming years when States and districts have implemented fully their new educator evaluation systems.

RACE TO THE TOP-EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Question. If the proposed Race to the Top-Equity program is funded, what conditions will States and districts have to meet to compete for this money?

Answer. We expect that applicants would need to submit plans that describe how grant funds would be used to develop, enhance, and integrate fiscal, human capital, and student achievement data systems and how they would use these data to identify the greatest disparities in opportunity and outcomes and direct resources based on need.

Applicants would need to include in their plans data-driven strategies for supporting their highest-need students, which could include attracting, retaining, and supporting high-quality teachers and leaders in high-need schools, increasing access to rigorous coursework, and providing additional student supports designed to help mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty. Additionally, States would have to publicly report expenditure data and develop an infrastructure for ensuring that districts have access to and use expenditure data in supporting high-need students, and districts would be required to implement a more meaningful comparability standard by the end of the grant period.

RTT-EQUITY AND 50-STATE STRATEGY FOR EDUCATOR EQUITY

Question. Will this Race to the Top-Equity program competition be linked to the "50-State strategy" on teacher distribution?

Answer. Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity (RTT-O) would help accomplish the goals of the recently announced Excellent Educators for All initiative. RTT-O would help States and districts integrate and analyze fiscal, achievement, and human capital data to identify the greatest opportunity and achievement gaps. Grantees would use these data to develop and implement strategies and specific interventions for addressing these gaps, including attracting, retaining, and supporting high-quality teachers and leaders in high-need schools.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RACE TO THE TOP-EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Question. When will other details about the proposed program be disclosed?

Answer. Specific details of any Race to the Top--Equity and Opportunity competition will depend in significant part on the fiscal year 2015 appropriation, which will affect the size and scope of the program.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. LARRY BUCSHON

SIMPLIFYING THE STUDENT AID APPLICATION PROCESS

Question. I know from personal experience and also frequently hear from my constituents the FAFSA is too complicated and often acts as a barrier to a postsecondary education. I believe if we could simplify the financial aid application process that would encourage more students to enroll in and complete college. What reforms would you support to simplify the process for applying for Federal student aid?

Answer. Applying for aid should not be a deterrent to a postsecondary education.

The Department has significantly simplified the FAFSA since 2009, eliminating questions and using skip logic in the electronic version to streamline the process; average completion time for applicants in the 2013-14 award year is 20 minutes, down from an hour in 2009. Ninety-nine percent of applications are now submitted online, and a significant portion of those applicants successfully used the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to quickly and automatically populate their tax information in the application. The Department has simultaneously engaged in more outreach activities and initiated a pilot

project to encourage and facilitate FAFSA completion. We believe that all of these efforts together support applicants in their completion of the FAFSA.

Moreover, the Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget includes funding in the GPRA data/HEA program evaluation account to support pilot and demonstration programs which would test approaches that promote postsecondary access, program completion, and high-quality, affordable education. For example, the Department may explore pilot and demonstration programs that support earlier awareness and notification of Federal financial aid for students; provide financial aid incentives to students to promote on-time completion; further simplify the application for Federal financial aid to increase participation; and support innovations that can improve student persistence and academic success, result in shorter time to degree, and reduce costs and student loan indebtedness.

FAFSA APPLICATION FORM

Question. Do you have any data to demonstrate what the impact on college access would be if we allowed students to fill out the form with prior year data, which would allow them to more easily access their information from the IRS rather than having to fill out the form themselves?

Answer. Data are not available on the use of prior-prior (2-year-old tax) data to complete the FAFSA form, as it has never been the standard for FAFSA completion.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. LOU BARLETTA

REAUTHORIZATION PROPOSALS FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Question. The committee is already discussing the reauthorization of important education and workforce programs such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act. While the President's budget proposes to reauthorize Perkins, does it also address linking CTE to industry and sector recognized credentials, which are increasingly important to the success of both our students and businesses?

Answer. Under our reauthorization proposal, CTE programs would be required to lead to industry-recognized credentials (in sectors where those credentials exist and are appropriate) and to a postsecondary certificate or degree. In addition, CTE programs would be required to provide students information about and support pathways to careers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

PELL GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING GAP

Question. The Pell Grant program is the foundation of our Nation's commitment to help low-income students access higher education. However, the program remains on an unsustainable path. CBO expects the program to face a $2.5 billion funding gap in fiscal year 2017, and the Office of Management and Budget expects the funding gap to be even larger, at $3.5 billion. Rather than continuing to apply band-aid approach fixes to the funding issues for the Pell Grant program, what long-term solutions is the Department developing to put the program on a sustainable path for future generations of college-goers?

Answer. Since taking office, the Administration has repeatedly sought higher Pell Grant funding, and Congress has increased the Pell maximum award, and provided grants to an additional 3 million students. The 2015 Budget provides sufficient resources to fully fund the $5,830 maximum Pell Grant award in the 2015-2016 award year. In addition, this Budget seeks to address the long-term Pell funding gap by expanding and modernizing the Perkins Loan program and converting it to a mandatory credit program. The savings associated with this proposal would offset corresponding increases in mandatory budget authority needed to maintain a fully funded Pell Grant program. This important reform to Perkins Loans will ensure the Pell Grant program has sufficient resources, while still safeguarding aid available to the neediest college students. While this Budget provides for significant contributions toward addressing future Pell funding needs, the Administration will work with Congress to ensure the long-term stability of this vital program.

NEW CAREER SKILLS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Question. The committee is committed to strengthening important workforce and education programs like Adult Education in WIA and Perkins CTE. Why are you proposing to create new, duplicative Federal grant programs, such as the Skills Challenge Grants and the CTE Innovation Fund?

Answer. We believe that the proposals for the Skills Challenge Grants and the CTE Innovation Fund address gaps in current funding streams rather than create duplicative programs. For example, a CTE Innovation Fund would be unique because it would allow for projects that focus on the alignment and articulation between secondary and postsecondary education as well as projects that incorporate employer involvement and linkages to workforce needs, labor market outcomes, and educational outcomes. In addition, the proposed CTE Innovation Fund would be designed to support our proposal for reauthorizing the Perkins Act, which seeks to improve both academic and career outcomes, in alignment with the Department's college- and career-readiness agenda.

Similarly, the Skills Challenge Grants would complement Adult Education State Grants by providing competitive grants for scaling up promising and evidence-based models that combine basic skills education with training. This improved alignment would help low-skilled individuals gain the education and credentials they need to obtain and keep employment. The Department does not currently have resources to support this kind of State and local innovation in adult education.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. JOE HECK

IMPACT OF CTE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM ON HOLD HARMLESS PROVISIONS

Question. I recently had the privilege of hosting Chairman Kline and other members of the committee at a field hearing on Career and Technical Education at Southwest Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas. Southwest is just one of a number of highly successful career and technical academies in the Clark County School District. Students enrolled in CTE have demonstrated themselves to be high-performing,

highly-motivated individuals who, according to information we received from Clark County School District, graduate at a higher rate than their traditional high school peers.

However, in the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2015, there is a request to cut approximately $100 million from guaranteed formula funding to States for CTE programs and instead spend that money on a new competitive grant program for CTE. Schools in my district have expressed concern with this request because, as a result of the current hold harmless provision, Nevada's guaranteed allocation of Federal funding for CTE would be reduced by nearly 50 percent.

Secretary Duncan, while I don't support the Administration's proposal to pay for a new competitive grant program by cutting from funds typically reserved for the States, of greater concern is the current hold harmless provision. In order to address this issue, I, along with my Democratic colleague from Arizona, Mr. Grijalva, introduced H.R. 3028, the Career and Technical Education Equity Act. This bill prevents States like Nevada and Arizona from facing disproportionate cuts to CTE funding.

Can you elaborate on any proposals by the Administration to address the hold harmless provision, and is the Department willing to work with the committee on a bipartisan solution to this critical issue?

Answer. The Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget request for Career and Technical Education State Grants assumes reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act. We envision that a reauthorized Perkins Act would include revisions to the State allocation formula so that allocations are based on current data, and we would be pleased to work with the committee on how to accomplish this, including if Congress authorizes the use of $100 million from Career and Technical Education State Grant funds for a competitive Innovation Fund without reauthorizing the Perkins Act.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. SUSAN BROOKS

STEM EDUCATION

Question. What role is the Department playing to consolidate and streamline the number of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs, as proposed by the White House and as urged by the GAO, and use taxpayer dollars more efficiently to improve STEM education?

Answer. The fiscal year 2014 President's Budget proposed a framework for delivering STEM education to more students and more teachers more effectively. The Administration has also published a Federal STEM Education Five-Year Strategic Plan to help align the framework with key goals and strategies. The major areas of priority for this plan include: improving pre-Kindergarten-through-grade-12 (P-12) STEM instruction; increasing and sustaining youth and public engagement in STEM; enhancing the STEM experience of undergraduate students; better serving groups historically underrepresented in STEM, and designing graduate education for tomorrow's STEM workforce. The Department of Education (Department) plays a leadership role in implementing the Strategic Plan's focus on improving P-12 STEM instruction.

The Administration has made considerable progress towards a stronger and more cohesive infrastructure for developing policies and delivering programs in STEM

education. In implementing the Strategic Plan, mission agencies have increased coordination with the lead agencies (the Department, the National Science Foundation, and the Smithsonian Institution) and are identifying ways to leverage existing resources to improve the reach of agency assets. For example, NASA and the Department successfully launched a pilot project combining content from NASA's Summer of Innovation project and the platform of the Department's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program to engage students in engineering design challenges at over 23 sites nationwide.

The Fiscal Year 2015 Budget builds on these efforts by proposing a modified reorganization plan with targeted adjustments to enable more strategic investment in STEM education that emphasize building and using evidence-based practices and developing new interagency models for leveraging assets and expertise. The Department's proposed STEM Innovation initiative is a central element of the reorganization and would help ensure that our Nation's children are prepared to succeed in a global economy increasingly reliant on STEM knowledge and skills by: (1) developing, validating, and scaling up effective practices in P-12 STEM instruction; (2) increasing student engagement in STEM subjects; and (3) recruiting, preparing, and further developing highly effective STEM educators.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. LUKE MESSER

INFORMATION HELPFUL TO STUDENTS WHEN APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Question. The amount of information postsecondary institutions must disclose to potential students and report to the Department has grown exponentially over the last decade, with limited evidence of its value. I believe we must determine which reporting and disclosure requirements are necessary and useful while eliminating those that are obsolete or unduly burdensome. Rather than piling additional burdens on institutions and requiring the release of information that may or may not be helpful to students, my bill, the Improving Postsecondary Education Data for Students Act, requires the Department to convene an advisory committee to study what students are interested in seeing as they search for the right college or university. Have you taken any steps at the Department to assess what information is actually helpful to students and what is just burdensome to institutions; and would you be supportive of such a study?

Answer. The Department regularly gathers feedback from the public related to the consumer information requirements when developing regulations to implement statutory changes or creating or modifying consumer tools. For example, when we implemented sunshine provisions included in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 related to peer-to-peer file sharing, academic improvements at the institution, and campus safety, we solicited public comment in our Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the best way to implement those provisions and the associated burden. Similarly, we have conducted focus groups and gathered public comment on several college affordability and value tools that we have developed, including the net price calculator, gainful employment disclosure template, college scorecard, and the financial aid shopping sheet. We have also used this valuable feedback to improve various consumer and professional tools.

Also, the GAO has conducted a study (http://www.gao.gov/products/gao-13-371) to identify which student financial aid requirements under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, are the most burdensome. While no single Title IV requirement was cited as burdensome by a majority of the experts interviewed, several cited the consumer disclosure requirements as burdensome, "primarily due to the time and difficulty needed to gather the information." However, as the GAO also noted, the Department has received a limited number of comments about burden in response to these announcements seeking feedback from institutions on regulatory burden.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. RUBEN HINOJOSA

REDUCING THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Question. Mr. Secretary, during your April 29 appearance before the Education and Workforce Committee, I expressed concern regarding the Administration's request to level-fund the GEAR UP, HEP/CAMP and TRIO programs despite the fact that they remain below sequestration funding levels. In my congressional district alone, these programs enable thousands of low-income and minority students to achieve their dreams of achieving a higher education.

In response to my inquiry, you indicated that the Administration is more focused on steering monies towards efforts that reduce college costs. Yet, both financial aid and financial literacy are vital components to all of these programs. The authorizing legislation governing each of these programs explicitly requires them to educate students and families about resources to help finance postsecondary education, assist students and families in pursuing such resources, provide financial literacy training, and, in certain instances, provide financial aid in the form of scholarships, grant aid, stipends, and so on. (See 20 U.S.C. 1070a-12(b)(4), (6) [Talent Search], 1070a-13(b)(4), (f) [Upward Bound], 1070a-l 4(b)(3)-(6), (d) [Student Support Services], 1070a-l 5(b)(6),(f) [Postbaccalaureate Achievement], 1070a-l6(a)(l), (3) [Educational Opportunity Centers]; 1070a-24(a)(l), 1070a-25(a) [GEAR UP]; 1070d-2(c)(l)(A)-(G) [HEP/CAMP].)

Given the fact that each of these programs explicitly addresses the needs of low-income, first-generation, and minority students and families in financing postsecondary education, I ask, how can the Administration better leverage these existing programs to achieve its goal of tackling college costs?

Answer. The TRIO, GEAR UP, and HEP/CAMP programs play a vital role in the Department's overall strategy to improve college access, completion, and affordability among low-income, first generation, and minority students. As you stated, these programs provide invaluable financial aid counseling designed to assist students in understanding and accessing the financial aid options available to them, financial literacy services designed to make prospective college students more informed consumers, and even direct financial aid to students, such as through Student Support Services grant aid or the GEAR UP scholarship component.

These services are absolutely essential, which is why the Department requested nearly $1.2 billion for these programs in fiscal year 2015. However, the Administration believes that tackling college costs requires a broader strategy that, in addition to making Federal investments through programs such as TRIO, GEAR UP, and HEP/CAMP, will

stimulate States and institutions of higher education to pursue their own innovative college access and completion strategies. To that end, the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request includes the following proposals:

- Encouraging States to support, reform, and improve the performance of their public higher education systems through the State Higher Education Performance Fund, which would generate an $8 billion new investment to make college more affordable and increase college access and success, especially for low-income students.
- Rewarding colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time and encourage all institutions to improve their performance through the new College Opportunity and Graduation bonus program;
- Reforming the campus-based programs to target those institutions with a demonstrated commitment to providing a high-quality education at a reasonable price that enroll and graduate higher numbers of Pell-eligible students and offer an affordable and quality education such that graduates can repay their educational debt;
- Reinstating the Ability to Benefit provision for students enrolled in eligible career pathways programs, which will allow adults without a high school diploma to gain the knowledge and skills they need to secure a good job; and,
- Helping borrowers manage their debt by extending Pay As You Earn to all student borrowers, ensuring the program is well-targeted, and simplifying borrowers' experience while reducing program complexity.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. RUSH HOLT

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND GLOBAL COMPETENCY

Question. Given that ED's International Strategy has as one objective, "[increasing] global competency" among American students of all backgrounds, how would you propose to address the continuing lack of support for language learning and global competency in K-12, like the elimination of the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) funding, especially considering the growing body of research on cognitive and educational advantages from early language learning?

Answer. Expanding and strengthening foreign language instruction is an important priority. Our 2015 Budget request includes funding for a new Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education authority, as part of the Administration's proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, that would provide competitive grants to SEAs, high-need LEAs, and institutions of higher education that could support projects to implement or expand foreign language instruction.

COORDINATING THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Question. Although policy makers often cite Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman's research indicating that high quality early education programs save about $7 for each dollar invested, less discussed is Dr. Heckman's analysis that the highest return on investment is in the first 3 years. Currently fewer than 5 percent of infants and toddlers have access to Early Head Start, which is administered by the Dept. of HHS. Can you provide a detailed picture of how, under the President's proposal, Mr. Miller's Stronger Start for America's Children Act, HHS and the Department of Education would work with States to expand early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers?

Answer. Under the Administration's comprehensive plan to invest in children's early learning and development from birth to age 5, the Federal Head Start program will continue to grow. The President's plan would build on current Head Start investments and expand home visiting programs, to support a greater share of infants, toddlers, and 3-year olds, while the Department of Education would partner with States to expand high-quality preschool for all 4-year olds.

STRONGER START FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN--INFANT-TODDLER SET ASIDE

Question. Do you think the 15 percent infant-toddler set aside in the Stronger Start for America's Children is adequate?

Answer. The Administration's comprehensive plan to invest in children's early learning and development from birth to age 5 includes proposals to increase access for infants and toddlers. We would be pleased to work with Congress toward that goal.

COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY AND GRADUATION BONUS PROGRAM

Question. The budget provides $7 billion for the new College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus program which would reward colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time. How can we ensure that these bonuses will reward schools that serve these students well, not just graduate them with degrees they cannot use and debts they cannot repay?

Answer. As you mention, the College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus program would reward eligible colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time. Eligibility would be based on Pell students comprising a significant share of an institution's graduating class, as well as on graduation and student loan default rates. The program would also encourage all institutions to improve their performance. Additionally, the grants made through this program would be used for service expansion to low-income students, or best practice activities, such as awarding additional need-based financial aid, enhancing academic and student support services, or improving student learning and other outcomes while reducing costs. Funds awarded will supplement and not supplant existing institutional resources.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY REP. DAVID LOEBSACK

SCHOOL SAFETY

Question. I am pleased to see that the Department continues to make school safety a priority. Can you provide an update on what is being done at the Federal level to make sure that school districts and communities have the resources and best practices necessary to protect our schools in a safe and effective manner?

Answer. The Department of Education is implementing key elements of the President's Now Is the Time strategy for reducing gun violence and making our schools safer. For example, we currently are reviewing applications from States and school districts under four separate grant competitions, including up to $30 million in Grants to States for School Emergency Management; $31 million in School Climate Transformation Grants to States and districts to support the development, implementation, and expansion of evidence-based, multi-tiered behavioral frameworks for improving behavioral outcomes and learning conditions for all students; and nearly $10 million in Project Prevent grants to LEAs to help schools in communities with pervasive violence break the cycle of violence by offering students school-based counseling services, social and emotional supports (such as enhancing coping skills) to help address the effects of violence, and conflict resolution and other school-based strategies to prevent future violence.

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Question. I think a critical component of making our schools safe and helping students to succeed is effectively addressing any mental health difficulties students are having in a timely manner. What is being done to make sure that teachers, administrators and school support staff have the resources they need to address the mental health needs of all students, particularly those that are in crisis?

Answer. Both the SEA and LEA School Climate Transformation Grants competitions are being implemented in close collaboration with related grant competitions in the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). SAMHSA's "Project AWARE" SEA competition will fund cooperative agreements to build the capacity of SEAs to increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth, provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school-aged youth to detect and respond to mental health issues, and connect youth and families who may have behavioral health issues with appropriate services. Similarly, SAMHSA's Project AWARE LEA competition will fund grants to LEAs to begin to support the training of school personnel and other adults who interact with youth in both school settings and communities to detect and respond to mental illness in children and youth, including how to encourage adolescents and their families experiencing these problems to seek treatment.

In addition, LEAs that receive a Project Prevent grant from the Department may use those funds to provide students access to school-based counseling services, or referrals to community-based counseling services, for trauma or anxiety (including post-traumatic stress disorder). Similarly, under Project SERV (School Emergency Response to Violence), the Department awards grants to LEAs to provide education-related

services (which may include counseling and referral to treatment for students) in LEAs in which the learning environment has been disrupted due to a violent or traumatic incident, such as a shooting. Finally, in fiscal year 2014 the Department will award nearly $50 million in Elementary and Secondary School Counseling grants to LEAs to establish or expand elementary and secondary school counseling programs.

COORDINATION WITH FCC ON RURAL DISTRICT ACCESS TO DIGITAL LEARNING

Question. Technology in the classrooms can enrich learning and improve outcomes for students in an increasingly digital world. However, rural schools cannot benefit from programs intended to support digital learning if they are not connected to the Internet. How is the Department of Education working with the FCC to ensure that rural schools are not passed over when it comes to programs to improve digital learning?

Answer. Ensuring access to broadband and wireless Internet is fundamental to improving the use of educational technology in the classroom. The Department strongly supports efforts to modernize the Federal Communication Commission's E-Rate program to deliver more high-speed Internet connectivity to our Nation's schools and to ensure full access to program benefits by schools in rural or geographically isolated areas or in communities with limited technology resources.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDING

Question. Recent research results have shown that the School Improvement Grant (SIG) initiative has not had a significant positive impact on student achievement in many schools - indeed 1/3 of SIG schools have performed worse after the intervention. This seems to be a strong indictment of the four models supported under SIG. I am pleased that language included during the most recent appropriations process allows for additional models, but given the tight fiscal climate, wouldn't it make sense to use these funds to bring formal grant programs, that help all students, back to pre-sequestration levels?

Answer. It is imperative that we continue to invest in efforts to improve achievement and attainment in our Nation's persistently lowest-performing schools. The School Improvement Grant program delivers formula grant funds to all States, providing crucial resources and incentives for States and school districts to make the difficult decisions needed to turn these schools around successfully. Results from initial program implementation show that significantly more schools receiving SIG funds have demonstrated gains in achievement than declines, and schools on average continued to improve over time. The Department's goal is for continued improvements in SIG schools as States and school districts, with Department support, begin to apply lessons learned during the program's initial years and replicate approaches to reform that have met with success.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]