

May 7, 2010

Senator Tom Harkin, Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Michael Enzi, Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

Thank you for providing the Forum for Youth Investment the opportunity to testify at the "ESEA Reauthorization: Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student" hearing and to submit recommendations on the best way to bring a whole student perspective into the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

A whole student perspective means we must broaden our definition of child and youth outcomes, in a way that *moves beyond narrow definitions of academic competence to broader definitions of what it means to be ready for college, work and life*. We all know that schools are overburdened; that they are already asked to do too much with too few resources. We cannot merely broaden the mandate hoisted on teachers and principals. In order to effectively support the whole student, *we must also broaden the range of institutions that are expected to assist teachers and principals*. This means not just departments of education, but a range of government agencies; not just schools, but also community based organizations; not just teachers and principals, but also parents, child care workers, youth workers¹ and nonprofit leaders. It also means shifting our perception of the role students can play – we must recognize that they have critical perspectives and abilities which must be deployed in shaping and implementing reforms.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 significantly increased the federal government's ability to encourage states and districts to demonstrate measurable improvements in student achievement. The upcoming reauthorization of ESEA is a momentous opportunity to expand the framework for tracking student achievement to measure the development of the whole student and to revisit any provisions that have been less effective or have created unintended obstacles in advancing student outcomes.

¹ As defined by the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition, a "youth worker" is an individual who works with or on behalf of children and youth to facilitate their personal, social, educational, physical and civic development. Youth workers are employed in a variety of programs, systems and settings.

Below, we have provided 11 concrete ways ESEA could be amended to better support the whole student including ways to achieve these results with modest changes to the existing legislation, focusing in particular on Title I and drawing heavily on the suggested amendments included in the WE CARE Act². We have also drawn upon several pieces of legislation (the Keeping PACE Act³, Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2009⁴, DIPLOMA Act⁵, RAISE UP Act⁶ and the Federal Youth Coordination Reauthorization Act of 2008⁷), which create funding streams explicitly geared to a whole student approach.

Broaden the Definition of Student Outcomes

Virtually all successful schools implicitly or explicitly support the breadth of student outcomes, above and beyond academic outcomes. Successful schools consider the *context* of learning and the full range of human development in addition to the content which is taught. Schools that consistently achieve high test scores have not only have an effective curriculum, they have also created a *school-wide* and *classroom-wide culture* that maintains high expectations for social-emotional and physical safety and engagement.

We offer the following recommendations to support schools in their efforts to effectively broaden the definition of student outcomes:

² H.R. 3762: WE CARE Act (110th Congress, 2007-2008). The WE CARE Act (Working to Encourage Community Action and Responsibility in Education Act) Amends title I of ESEA to broaden the outcome areas that states and local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to assess to include nonacademic measures that impact student achievement, such as parental engagement, the breadth of community involvement in schools and youth social, emotional, physical, civic and vocational outcomes. In addition, matching funds are provided by the Secretary to LEAs for the development and implementation of community involvement policies, that leverages resources, opportunities, and services across sectors.

³ S. 1411: Keeping PACE Act. The Keeping PACE Act (Keeping Parents And Communities Engaged Act) enables LEAs to receive subgrants from states on a competitive basis so that they may hire and maintain Parent and Community Outreach Coordinators, who are responsible for improving family and community involvement in schools eligible for funds under part A of title I.

⁴ H.R. 3545: Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2009. The Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2009 awards grants to: (1) consortia composed of LEAs and at least one outside entity to schools in a community-based efforts to coordinate educational, developmental, health and other services and to ensure that students, families, and the community have access to such services.

⁵ The DIPLOMA Act (Developing Innovative Partnerships and Learning Opportunities that Motivate Achievement Act) encourages results-focused partnerships to improve student outcomes, including academic, physical, social, emotional, health, mental health and the civic development of disadvantaged youth. Grants are provided to support partnerships between LEAs and communities, with priority given to partnerships that have demonstrated effectiveness. In addition, grants are provided to states for the purpose of developing a state strategy, which must include a results framework made up of comprehensive, research-based annual goals which shall include, among others: students are engaged and achieving in school; students are physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally healthy; and schools and neighborhoods are safe and provide a positive climate for learning.

⁶ S. 1608/H.R. 3982: RAISE UP Act. The RAISE UP Act (Reengaging Americans in Serious Education by Uniting Programs Act) culls together systems in communities that are designed to reengage youth who have dropped out of school. The Act provides federal funds to support local partnerships to coordinate and leverage the work of these systems, which exist across sectors including government agencies (e.g. LEAs, juvenile justice system, workforce system, housing agency), community-based organizations, parent groups, and young people themselves.

⁷ HR 7004: Federal Youth Coordination Reauthorization Act of 2008. Modeled after the Office of National Drug Control Policy, this bill establishes the White House Office of National Youth Policy (Office) to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of youth policy through improved coordination of federal youth programs. This legislation: establishes a cabinet-level Director to oversee the Office and maximize coordination among federal agencies serving children and youth, Calls for the development of a National Youth Strategy, including quantifiable goals and performance measures, to improve outcomes, and provides funds to support State Youth Service Coordinating Entities to improve coordination of state policies impacting children and youth. It also establishes the National Youth Advisory Board, composed of young people, to improve youth policy through direct youth engagement.

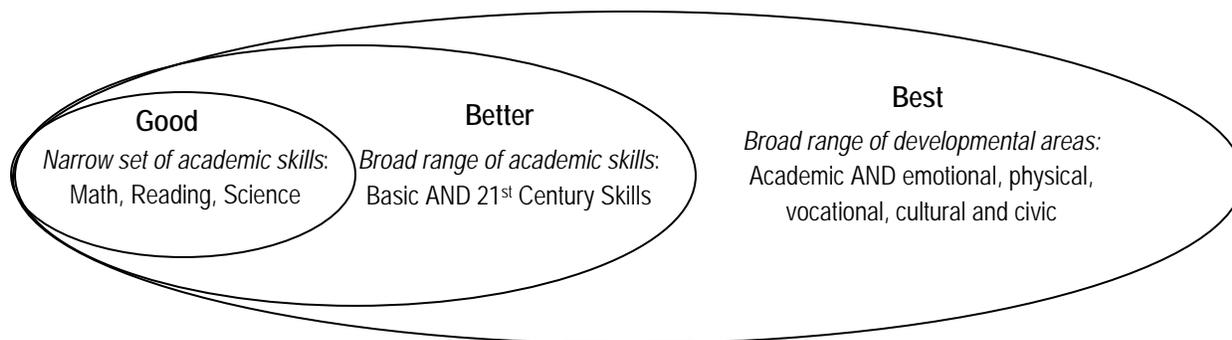
Recommendation #1: Everywhere the legislation lists outcomes to be achieved, add all developmental areas, including academic, social, emotional, physical, vocational, cultural and civic.⁸ In cases where the full set of developmental arenas is too broad, include, at a minimum, a full set of academic skills that incorporates 21st Century Skills⁹

Examples:

- In Title I, Section 1111, ESEA currently reads: "Each State plan shall demonstrate that the State has adopted challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards that will be used by the State, its local educational agencies, and its schools."
- Title I, Section 1111 (b)(1)(C) currently reads: "including at least mathematics, reading or language arts, and (beginning in the 2005-2006 school year) science."
- Title I, Section 1111 (b)(3)(A) calls for "a set of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments that include, at a minimum, academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science."

In these instances, as well as all other places in the legislation where desired outcomes are specified, we recommend broadening this language to include, to the greatest extent possible, academic, social, emotional, physical, vocational, cultural and civic development. In cases where the full set of developmental areas is too broad, we recommend including at a minimum a full set of academic skills including 21st Century Skills such as learning and innovation skills; information, media and technology skills; and life and career skills¹⁰.

Figure 1: Addressing "Whole Student" Outcomes



⁸ Similar broad definitions of whole student development have been advanced by the Search Institute, the Gallup Organization's Student Poll, and many others.

⁹ 21st Century Skills such as learning and innovation skills; information, media and technology skills; and life and career skills have been well documented by The College Board, the Search Institute, Harvard and MIT professors, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Gallup Organization, among others. For an in-depth review of efforts to document and define these skills, see the forthcoming publication "College and Career Readiness: Co-founder of the Ready by 21 National Partnership asks: Even if students graduate, are they really equipped for the next stage?" by Karen Pittman, which will appear in the June 2010 issue of the *School Administrator Magazine* published by the American Association for School Administrators.

¹⁰ This list comes from Karen Pittman's description of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in "College and Career Readiness: Co-founder of the Ready by 21 National Partnership asks: Even if students graduate, are they really equipped for the next stage?" which will appear in the June 2010 issue of the *School Administrator Magazine* published by the American Association for School Administrators.

Recommendation #2: Train teachers and principals to develop the whole student by considering both the content and context of student learning

Expanding the range of child and youth outcomes is particularly important in the context of teacher and principal training programs. Highly qualified teachers attend to the needs of the whole student and their efforts need to be supported. Everywhere the legislation addresses the need for better-qualified teachers and administrators, I urge the committee to define and measure not only their capacity to deliver content, but also their capacity to create classrooms, schools and communities where young people feel physically and emotionally safe, challenged and supported by peers and adults, and feel that they have opportunities to apply what they know.

Recommendation #3: Authorize the following bills that include broad definitions of student outcomes: Keeping PACE Act, Full Service Community Schools Act, WE CARE Act DIPLOMA Act, RAISE UP Act, and the Federal Youth Coordination Act

These pieces of legislation go a long way in promoting attention to the whole student, and their inclusion in ESEA would be a landmark achievement. They each contain legislative language reflecting a broad view of student outcomes – language we recommend the committee uses as examples of positive language to be incorporated throughout ESEA. For example:

- The DIPLOMA Act states that "The State strategy shall contain comprehensive, research-based annual goals and aligned quantifiable indicators demonstrating continuous improvement with respect to youth, particularly disadvantaged youth, that shall serve as targets for each year with respect to which the State strategy applies. The Goals shall include the following: (A) Children are ready for school. (B) Students are engaged and achieving in school. (C) Students are physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally healthy. (D) Schools and neighborhoods are safe and provide a positive climate for learning. (E) Families are supportive and engaged in their children's education. (F) Graduates are ready for postsecondary education and 21st Century careers. (G) Students are contributing to their communities."
- The RAISE UP Act is designed to prepare young people in disconnected situations for a competitive future, and awards grants to "support the educational, vocational, social, emotional, and civic needs of young people in disadvantaged situations."
- The Federal Youth Coordination Act calls for a National Youth Strategy and states, "The Strategy shall contain a report on and identify gaps in--(A) the educational, social, emotional, physical, vocational, and civic development of youth, disaggregated by age, race, gender, geographic distribution, population density, socioeconomic status, and other target populations determined necessary for inclusion by the Director."

Broadening the Range of Institutions that Help Schools Support the Whole Student

While supporting the full range of development leads to improved academic development, it would be ineffective and inappropriate to ask schools to shoulder the entire burden of child and youth development alone. Indeed, many successful schools have found ways to get help by deeply and productively engaging parents and family members, engaging a rich array of nonprofits and community based organizations to provide a well-coordinated web of supports for their student's developmental needs, and engaging a range of government agencies in partnership with the education department to align multiple programs serving the same population. And most of all, schools have found ways to authentically engage students themselves, not just as passive learners, but as active participants who can shape and implement school plans, policies and procedures.

Recommendation #4: Everywhere the legislation presents lists of stakeholders, the list should include a range of government agencies, community-based organizations, parents and students¹¹

We urge the committee to ensure that these critical institutions beyond schools and individuals beyond teachers and principals are invited to work in conjunction with one another to develop and implement quality improvement plans and accountability systems. Their commitment and expertise should earn them a seat at the planning table – not just a spot on the providers list.

Examples of places where ESEA presents a list of stakeholders which could be broadened include:

- Title I, Section 1111(c)(4) currently reads “the State educational agency will work with other agencies, including educational service agencies or other local consortia, and institutions to provide technical assistance to local education agencies and schools.”
- Part 1 Section 1111 subsection (a)(1) calls for “consultation with local educational agencies, teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators (including administrators of programs described in other parts of this title), other staff, and parents.”

We recommend adding a range of government agencies, community-based organizations, parents and students to the lists above, as well as in all other similar lists in the legislation. This is particularly true in cases where the legislation calls for plans and reports, such as:

- The Local Educational Agency Plans required in Title I, Section 1112(b). *We recommend requiring a description of how the local educational agency will coordinate and collaborate with the range of government agencies and community-based organizations¹²*
- Title I, Section 1111 (b)(9) currently reads “Each State plan shall include an assurance that the State educational agency will coordinate and collaborate, to the extent feasible and necessary as determined by the State educational agency, with agencies providing services to children, youth and families.” *We recommend that this language be strengthened to call for a specific plan for how efforts will be coordinated¹³*

Recommendation #5: Authorize the following bills that include well-crafted strategies for broadening the range of institutions that help schools support the whole student: Keeping PACE Act, Full Service Community Schools Act, WE CARE Act, DIPLOMA Act, RAISE UP Act, and the Federal Youth Coordination Act

Not only does each of these bills contain broad definitions of child and youth outcomes, they also contain specific measures to broaden the range of institutions to support schools, such as:

- The Full Service Community Schools Act defines a full-service community school as an institution that “participates in a community-based effort to coordinate educational, developmental, family, healthy, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships.”
- The Federal Youth Coordination Act calls for the creation of a National Youth Strategy prepared in coordination with the heads of all Federal departments and agencies that serve youth, existing Federal

¹¹ The WE CARE Act includes detailed line by line amendments to achieve this in Title I (some of which include students, others which do not – in the cases where students are omitted we recommend their inclusion).

¹² The WE CARE Act Section 3(d)(4) proposes specific legislative language to achieve this.

¹³ The WE CARE Act, Section 3(c)(2), includes legislative language to achieve this.

interagency efforts, a representative group of young people, particularly including disadvantaged youth, as well as nongovernment entities.

- The WE CARE Act adds language to Title I to increase a commitment to coordination at the local level to include local government, community-based service providers, other nonprofits, and business to address the academic and non-academic factors impacting student achievement.
- The Keeping PACE Act provides funds to support parent and community outreach and engagement to provide students with integrated services and comprehensive supports, while keeping schools at the center of communities. The act allows schools to hire and maintain Parent and Community Outreach Coordinators to support this work.
- The RAISE UP Act coordinates supports and services to build intentional dropout recovery systems at the local level. Grantees (including various government entities and leaders in the field of working with young people in disadvantaged situations) must develop a plan that maps out services of a range of providers, including: secondary schools and postsecondary institutions in constructing education programming; the local workforce system, including one-stop career centers and businesses, youth serving systems (e.g., the juvenile justice system) and other community-based organizations in providing outreach, support and direct service.

Recommendation #6: Everywhere the legislation puts in place supports for teachers and principals, insert language to include training on how to partner with a range of institutions and to support the whole student

Successfully engaging a range of institutions to help schools support the whole student is a distinct skill; one which is as valuable as knowing the math curriculum. Efforts to support the next generation of teachers and school leaders should include training them on how to effectively launch and sustain effective community partnerships.

Recommendation #7: Build the capacity of Community-Based Organizations and youth workers

It is not enough to merely partner with nonprofits and community-based organizations (CBOs); we must also build their capacity. We urge the committee to ensure that these important institutions beyond schools are adequately funded, and that a broader set of professionals such as after-school providers and youth workers is adequately supported. According to one survey, the median range for salaried youth workers is \$25,000 - \$25,999¹⁴. Job mobility in this workforce appears to be very high—4 in 10 surveyed have been in their job less than one year.¹⁵ Clearly much needs to be done to strengthen the capacity of this set of institutions and professionals. Please consider:

- Providing separate and enhanced funding streams (increased authorized funding and annual appropriations) for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC), Full Service Community Schools, and expanding the school day or year.
- Increasing flexibility of 21st CCLC and Supplemental Educational Services to (1) support the full range of whole student outcomes –academic, social, emotional, physical, vocational, cultural and civic; (2) encourage partnerships between schools and CBOs (such as by allowing funding programs access to school facilities); and (3) make funds more accessible to comprehensive afterschool programs.

¹⁴ See *Growing the Next Generation of Youth Work Professionals: Workforce Opportunities and Challenges*. A report of the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition by Nicole Yohalem, Karen Pittman, and David Moore, The Forum for Youth Investment. July 2006

¹⁵ Ibid.

- Including community schools in the ESEA statute as an allowable school intervention model.

At the committee's hearing on teachers and leaders, critical questions were raised about how to measure and support quality teachers and principals. There is a parallel conversation underway in the after-school field, with assessments and capacity building tools¹⁶ such the Youth Program Quality Intervention having passed rigorous research scrutiny¹⁷ on measuring and improving the quality of youth workers. We urge the committee to ensure that the reauthorization includes not only a plan to improve the quality of teachers and principals, but youth workers as well.

Recommendation #8: Everywhere the legislation calls for coordination, allow flexibility to build on existing coordinating bodies, rather than creating new ones

In many states and localities, there is not a dearth of coordinating bodies but rather an overabundance of them. Many of these bodies have been created to fulfill the requirements of a specific federal, state, local or private funding stream. The result is groups of individuals rushing around to attend multiple coordinating body meetings. We strongly recommend that any calls for coordination be accompanied by clear flexibility for states and localities to use *existing* coordinating bodies such as Children's Cabinets and Councils¹⁸ rather than forcing them to create new ones.

The DIPLOMA Act provides exemplary legislative language to allow such flexibility. This is a good model for legislative language to be used throughout ESEA: "The Governor may designate an existing agency, Children's Cabinet, P-20 Council, child and youth development partnership, or other organization as the coordinating body for student learning and development. . . if the agency, cabinet, council, partnership or organization – (A) performs duties similar to the duties described [earlier in the legislation]. . . (B) if the duties of the agency, cabinet, council, partnership, or organization can be modified to include the duties described [earlier in the legislation]"

Recommendation #9: Form a National Youth Advisory Board and Create a Competitive Grant Program to Support Youth Engagement

As a 17 year old named Jason once said: "If you had a problem in the Black community, and you brought in a group of White people to discuss how to solve it, almost nobody would take that panel seriously. In fact, there'd probably be a public outcry. It would be the same for women's issues or gay issues. But every day, in local arenas all the way to the White House, adults sit around and decide what problems youth have and what youth need, without ever consulting us." His point is particularly poignant when considering education issues. Young people's views and perspectives are too often absent in discussions on school reform, from individual school reforms to national education policy making. The Federal Youth Coordination Reauthorization Act of 2008 includes provisions to create a National Youth Advisory Board and funding for state youth advisory boards. We applaud these provisions and recommend their adoption. We also recommend creating a competitive grants programs to promote innovation at the

¹⁶ See Yohalem, N. and Wilson-Ahlstrom, A. with Fischer, S. and Shinn, M. (2009, January). *Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools, Second Edition*. Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment.

¹⁷ See the forthcoming report of technical findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention study to be published by the Weikart Center with support from the W.T. Grant Foundation.

¹⁸ Children's cabinets and councils are typically are made up of heads of government agencies with child and youth-serving programs, who meet on a regular basis with the collective goal of coordinating services, developing a common set of outcomes, and corroboratively deciding upon and implementing plans to foster the well-being of young people. For more information, see: Pittman, K., Gaines, E., Faigley, I. (2007, December). *State Children's Cabinets and Councils: Getting Results for Children and Youth*. Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment.

school and local levels to fully engage young people as active participants in shaping and implementing needed educational reforms.

Recommendation #10: Everywhere the legislation calls for education data systems, states and localities should be encouraged to connect them to other child and youth data systems created by other departments and agencies

In the last decade, states have made important strides in creating data systems to give decision makers valid, reliable and consistent information related to children and youth, and the federal government has stepped up its efforts to aid this critical work.¹⁹ While overall this progress has been positive, it has also be fragmented and siloed, with different agencies developing separate data systems related to children and youth that do not interconnect these. Data systems are implemented, by and large, in isolation from each other, even though in many cases they are collecting information about the same children. Instead of pooling resources to develop one effective, interconnected, interagency data system, many states and localities are developing parallel data systems – one for each federal, state, local and foundation-funded grant.

These parallel data systems make redundant technological expenditures, collect overlapping sets of information, and are built in ways which inhibit the flow and transfer of data among them. As a result, despite new resources devoted to data systems, most state and local policy makers and practitioners still do not have the information they need to be effective. It is critical, therefore, that the reauthorization of ESEA provides states the flexibility and incentives necessary to connect educational data systems with other agencies' data systems to create a seamless whole student data system.

- ESEA should authorize state longitudinal data systems to securely collect data from, share data with, and link data between multiple systems.
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should be amended to authorize disclosures of education records, consistent with state law, to other agencies serving children and youth as well to research organizations, for the purposes of evaluating and strengthening their services, evaluating their programs, enhancing collaboration among agencies, and conducting research, providing that adequate steps are taken to safeguard disclosed information.

Recommendation #11: Put increased emphasis on dropout recovery strategies, dropout prevention strategies, and multiple education pathways to secondary and post-secondary credentials, and ensure that these efforts reflect the broad range of child and youth outcomes and include the broad range of institutions

¹⁹ A small sampling of fragmented federal efforts underway to create data systems with child and youth information includes: Head Start allocates \$100M to State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care which must “develop recommendations for a unified data collection system for public early childhood programs and services”; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (\$70M) requires local education agencies to “collect and disseminate data and information regarding the number and location of homeless children and youth, the education and related services such children and youths receive, and the extent to which the needs of homeless children and youth are being met”; the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) will collect case-level information on youth in care including the services paid for or provided by the State agencies that administer the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), as well as the outcome information on youth who are in or who have aged out of foster care; the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (\$15M) will “provide competitive grants to support the development of longitudinal data systems that integrate education and workforce data,” and on and on and on. Even in the ARRA alone there were multiple funding streams created for disparate efforts to create data systems which contain information about children and youth. For example, the Department of Education is providing \$245M for “statewide, longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement,” while the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services was appropriated \$140 million a year for FY 2009 through 2015 (and \$65 million for FY2016) to accelerate the adoption of certified electronic health records (EHRs) by health professionals through the development of systems and incentives.

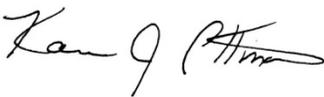
While strengthening supports for the whole student will benefit all youth, it is particularly important for young people most in need: older youth entangled in the foster care and juvenile justice systems and those facing poverty, unemployment and dead ends. The reauthorization must put increased emphasis on dropout recovery strategies, dropout prevention strategies and multiple education pathways to secondary and post-secondary credentials, by:

- Including recovery strategies, dropout prevention strategies, and multiple education pathways as required activities in state and LEA plans
- Designating a percentage of formula funds for recovery strategies, dropout prevention strategies, and multiple education pathways
- Incorporating four-, five- and six-year adjusted cohort graduation rates into accountability reporting requirements to capture progress made by all students
- Encouraging states to include in their longitudinal data systems the point at which students enter, exit, drop out, re-enroll, and complete high school or recognized equivalent, enrollment in post secondary education, remedial coursework needed in post secondary settings, and rates of post secondary completion.

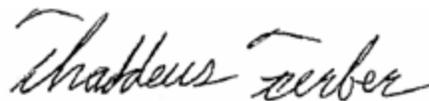
To be successful in meeting the needs of disadvantaged youth, education departments must collaborate with other departments that work to reengage disconnected youth (such as the Department of Labor's Youth Opportunity Program and Youthful Offender Reentry Program). They must also collaborate with the many effective community-based alternative schools or programs operated by nonprofit organizations. Only by working together, can we create a seamless insulated pipe of supports for older disadvantaged youth which addresses not only their academic development, but also their social, emotional, physical, vocational, cultural and civic development as well.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide our recommendations, and we look forward to working with you throughout the ESEA reauthorization process.

Sincerely,



Karen Pittman
President and Chief Executive Officer



Thaddeus Ferber
Vice President of Policy