

BUSINESS COALITION
FOR
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

May 7, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
835 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

We are writing on behalf of the Business Coalition for Student Achievement (BCSA), representing business leaders from every sector of the economy, to provide our recommendations for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The BCSA is organized around the principle that improving the K-12 education system in the United States is necessary to provide a strong foundation for both U.S. competitiveness and for individuals to succeed in our rapidly changing world. We are committed to working with all stakeholders on this essential task.

John Castellani, President of the Business Roundtable, recently had the opportunity to testify before your Committee on behalf of the BCSA on the need to reauthorize and improve ESEA. At that time we also included a more thorough listing of our key principles for reforming ESEA for the Committee's consideration. We are attaching this document that outlines the BCSA principles once again for your review.

BCSA believes that reauthorization of ESEA should be a top priority in the remaining months of this Congress. Federal law must be updated to recognize the key changes that have occurred since this law was last revamped including: the common standards movement; over \$100 billion in federal stimulus dollars for new and existing programs to support states, school districts, and schools; advances in technology and data systems to inform learning and to measure school, student and teacher performance; new Department of Education regulations; and additional research about what works in education – to name but a few.

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Co-Chairs: Craig Barrett, Intel; William D. Green, Accenture; and Edward B. Rust Jr., State Farm

Contacts: Susan Traiman, straiman@businessroundtable.org, 202-496-3267; Arthur Rothkopf, ajrothkopf@USChamber.com, 202-463-5938

As you reauthorize ESEA, we ask you to maintain your commitment to these key goals:

- State-driven, internationally-benchmarked standards and assessments to reflect readiness for college, workplace, and international competition;
- Holding all schools accountable while putting a laser-like focus on ending dropout factories;
- Measuring and rewarding teacher and administrator success based on student achievement;
- Fostering a “client centered approach” by districts and schools;
- Leveraging data systems to inform instruction, improvement, and interventions;
- Investing in school improvement and encouraging technology and other innovations to improve student achievement; and
- Improving “STEM” education.

In addition to these key principles, we would like to highlight two additional issues of significant importance to the business community: maintaining the strongest and clearest possible accountability provisions in a newly reauthorized ESEA and the ability of individual businesses to competitively provide their services to schools.

In our view, a strong accountability system is the cornerstone of ESEA. This means high-quality standards, measuring progress towards achieving those standards, and maintaining a clear and understandable system of holding all of the players in the process accountable for achieving results. We are concerned that some of the current plans for reauthorization are overly complex and raise serious questions about whether the bar is being lowered for some schools on the “middle of the achievement scale” to produce results. The BCSA believes schools that have gaps in the achievement levels of significant numbers of their students—even those that do not fall within an arbitrary percentage of low performing schools—must be held to accountable to take concrete steps to improve their performance.

We ask that you continue to recognize the crucial role business can play in promoting educational improvement at the federal, state, and local levels. We have worked side-by-side with the Administration, Members of Congress, Governors, state and local officials, and organizations of all types on a bipartisan basis on behalf of the principles listed above. We will continue to do so every chance we get.

Private companies are critical partners with schools and government in improving the educational experiences for our students. Their continued participation in the efforts to help students, teachers and schools achieve better results should be encouraged.

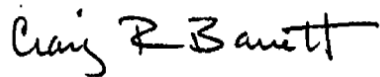
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Thank you for your consideration of BCSA's priorities for reauthorization. We strongly urge Congress to retain its commitment to education reforms that raise student achievement and close the achievement gap within the U.S. and between the U.S. and high-performing nations. We look forward to working with you to pass an effective bill this year.

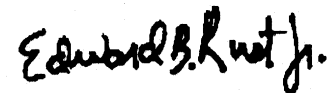
Sincerely,



Craig Barrett
Former Chairman, Intel
Co-Chair, BCSA



William D. Green
Chairman & CEO, Accenture
Co-Chair, BCSA



Edward B. Rust Jr.
Chairman & CEO, State Farm
Co-Chair, BCSA

The Business Coalition for Student Achievement – representing business leaders from every sector of the economy – is committed to supporting policies that improve the performance of the K-12 education system in the United States. The Coalition is co-chaired by Craig R. Barrett, Former Chairman of Intel; William D. Green, Chairman & CEO of Accenture; and Edward B. Rust Jr., Chairman and CEO of State Farm. The Coalition is coordinated by Business Roundtable and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Coalition Members as of May 7, 2010

48HourPrint.com	IBM
Accenture	Idaho Business Coalition for
ACT	Education Excellence
Air Conditioning Contractors of America	Illinois Business Roundtable
Arizona Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Iowa Business Council
Associated Industries of Massachusetts	Indiana Chamber of Commerce
Association of Washington Business	Intel
AT&T Inc.	Jacksonville Regional Chamber of
Automation Federation	Commerce
Business Council of Alabama	John Deere
Business Council of NYS	Johnson City/Jonesborough/Washington
Business-Higher Education Forum	County Chamber of Commerce
California Business for Education Excellence	Knowledge Universe Education
Chamber of Commerce of	Knoxville Chamber
Huntsville/Madison County	Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce	Lubbock Chamber of Commerce
Cisco Systems, Inc.	Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce
Connecticut Business and Industry	Massachusetts Business Alliance for
Association	Education
Corporate Voices for Working Families	Massachusetts Business Roundtable
CVS/Caremark	Minnesota Business Partnership
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce	Minority Business RoundTable
Eastman Chemical Company	Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of
Eaton Corporation	Commerce
EdisonLearning	Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
Education Industry Association	Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce
Education Management Corp.	Motorola
Educational Options/Orchard Learning	National Association of Manufacturers
Ennis Chamber of Commerce	National Defense Industrial Association
Georgia Partnership for	National Gypsum Company
Excellence in Education	Nevada Manufacturers Association
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce	New Mexico Business Roundtable
Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce	O2B Kids
Greater Irving-Las Colinas	Ohio Business Roundtable
Chamber of Commerce	Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber	Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
Greater Phoenix Leadership, Inc.	Quality Float Works, Inc.
Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce	Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce	Rockwell Automation

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Round Rock Chamber of Commerce
SAS
Shoals Chamber of Commerce
Siemens Corporation
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The Business Coalition for
Educational Excellence at the
New Jersey Chamber of Commerce
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