



PAA position paper on HR 5, the Student Success Act *(revised ESEA) February 2015*

While PAA supports a number of provisions of HR 5, we oppose some key aspects of the proposal as detailed below:

H. R. 5 provision

Why PAA opposes this provision

Provides less funding overall; ends “**Maintenance of Effort**” provision requiring states and districts to fund schools at least at current levels.

We are concerned that there are not enough checks in place to keep ESEA funds from being used as budget balancers rather than the supplemental funds needed to address the effects of poverty and discrimination. **Schools and teachers in the neediest communities must not be asked to do more with less.**

Expands funding for charter schools using the rhetoric of “parental choice;” 10% of states’ “flexible” grants must go to privatization.

The choice of most parents is a **high-quality neighborhood school**. HR5 admits that charter school quality is disappointing – we oppose using scarce education funds to open more charters, enrich charter management companies, and create new bureaucracies to approve charters over the objections of local school boards.

Provides Title I fund “**portability.**”

We support the fundamental purpose of Title I - **to provide extra resources to schools serving low-income students**. Title I “portability” - having funds “follow the child” - may pave the way for voucher programs, which show little evidence of success, or redirect funds away from schools in poor neighborhoods toward more affluent ones.

Maintains **annual testing schedule.**

No Child Left Behind started the current test mania by requiring annual testing - and a revised ESEA can help end it. We recommend that ESEA require **testing only once at each grade span**, end high stakes testing, and provide stronger support for real multiple measures using varied assessments, projects and performances over time.

Retains **95% testing participation** requirement.

PAA opposes this artificial requirement and supports a parent’s **right to opt their children out** of any standardized testing without consequence to the school or district.

Overemphasizes **test data** in annual school report card.

Parents want to know about the school’s **resources and programs** and what kind of experiences are offered to children. Artificial labels based on narrow test scores are not nearly as meaningful as teacher reports of student progress.

Removes the requirement that teachers be **highly qualified.**

Parents care about teacher qualifications, and research shows that, as with dentists or surgeons, teacher preparation and certification matter. Six-week “teacher camps” are not adequate substitutes for real teacher preparation.

PAA is a national network of parents actively supporting public schools.

Please see our full position paper on a new ESEA here: <http://tinyurl.com/mel9ceq>

Visit us at www.parentsacrossamerica.org