

July 11, 2011

Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: National School Boards Association (NSBA) support for the State and Local Funding Flexibility Act, H.R.2445.

Dear Representative:

The National School Boards Association (NSBA), representing over 90,000 local school board members across the nation, strongly supports passage of the State and Local Funding Flexibility Act, H.R. 2445. For many years local school boards have advocated for expanded flexibility in the delivery of educational services. We view H.R.2445 as an excellent step in that direction.

In order to ensure substantial academic progress, local school boards must have the necessary flexibility to use federal funds to strategically meet local needs. Under H.R. 2445, local school boards would now be able to re-direct certain federal funds in part or whole to support specific initiatives that best meet federal program purposes in their school district. Local school boards would also have the option to continue the distribution of the federal funds as received based on the predetermined formulas. It is important to note that educators will still be accountable for the achievement of students from low income families, English language learners and other subgroups. This legislation now provides school districts with the flexibility that is especially needed in times of tight budget constraints to meet those student achievement requirements.

Operationally, school districts would not be burdened with a lengthy, time-consuming application process, but rather would only need to notify the state of its intent to use the flexibility option. Such an approach would preclude the need to use administrative staff at the expense of instructional staff. Further, the bill provides school districts with the opportunity to make adjustments to their initial notification to re-direct funds (e.g. in the event of subsequent changes in state or local revenue or other conditions) that would then enable school districts to further rebalance their federal funding to more effectively support their student achievement goals.

It is also important to note that existing safeguard requirements will be retained such as maintenance of effort, restrictions on the use of federal funds to supplement, not supplant, comparability of services, and key provisions under the current law such as Sections 1111, 1116 and 3122. In our view, these requirements will continue to reinforce the focus and use of federal funding to meet the special purpose of the federal role to serve those students with the greatest needs.

As the legislative process moves forward, we recognize that H.R. 2445 is one of a series of House bills in the ESEA reauthorization package and that final language may need to be modified once other portions are acted upon in order to ensure clarification of any inconsistencies and/or conflicts. In this context,



Working with and Through our State Associations, NSBA Advocates for Equity and Excellence in Public Education through School Board Leadership

Office of Advocacy

- *Mary Broderick
President*
- *Anne L. Bryant
Executive Director*
- *Michael A. Resnick
Associate
Executive Director*

NSBA would be pleased to work closely with your staff in developing final language. Questions regarding our position and offer of assistance may be directed to Reginald M. Felton, Assistant Executive Director for Congressional Relations at 703-838-6782, or by e-mail, rfelton@nsba.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Resnick".

Michael A. Resnick
Associate Director