

July 11, 2011

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, Education and Workforce Committee
21181 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

Please accept this letter in support of your proposal to increase options for flexibility in the categorical programs associated with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As a Wisconsin school superintendent and incoming president of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), I commend you for charting a new direction in support of students and schools, and the leaders who support quality educational opportunities for all children. Your proposal will be seen as a breath of fresh air and an indicator of the trust you place in school professionals.

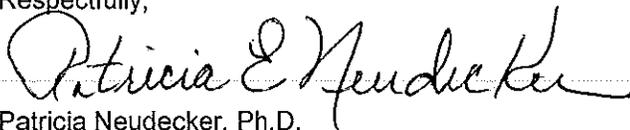
All sectors of our society have learned that doing business the same way we always have and maintaining the status quo is no longer the name of the game. Our county has always been known for innovation and it is my constant belief that creativity, flexibility and ingenuity are hallmarks for the 21st century. I propose to you that school environments are no different. While leaders do not disagree with the need to be held accountable for results, it is imperative that we be granted flexibility in using limited federal dollars to meet student needs effectively and efficiently.

Each school district across our country is a complex amalgam of needs, locations, resources, governance structures, staff and students. The needs of the schools in Wisconsin vary not only from district to district but also from school to school within districts. The idea that a one size fits all plan and resource allocation formula is the best way to meet the needs of our students, is simply an idea from the past. Even Albert Einstein once said that "doing the same thing the same way and expecting different results, is total insanity". Studies of successful innovations aimed at quality results are almost always accompanied by flexible, personalized strategies. Again, it is that flexibility that educational leaders with an eye on the future, desire. Your "State and Local Funding Flexibility Act" holds great promise for actualizing our goals while providing a catalyst for the changes needed in our schools.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed examples of what I believe to know intuitively. Simply stated, effective schools are measured by outcomes, not inputs. I therefore support your proposal to provide the flexibility needed for leaders to demonstrate results. Please continue to hold us accountable for results, as our local communities and school boards do, but grant the necessary options for professional decision making.

Thank you for your forward thinking, your courage on behalf of all children is to be commended. Please call on me if I can help support your proposal in any way.

Respectfully,



Patricia Neudecker, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

c. Dan Domenech
Bruce Hunter