

October 1, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kline  
Chairman, House Committee on Education and  
the Workforce  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Scott  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Education and the Workforce  
2101 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Kline, and Ranking Member Scott:

As you proceed with discussions to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to include in the final conference package several provisions of the Every Child Achieves Act (S. 1177) which support school-based mental health. Mental health support plays a critical role in improving student outcomes and allowing for the existence of a well-rounded educational environment. School counselors, social workers, and school psychologists address a range of pressing student needs each day—these can include dealing with the aftermath of traumatic events, bullying, helping with college and career advice, early identification and intervention, wellness promotion, family engagement, and pairing students with resources available in the community, among other issues.

Despite the benefits of these services, one in five American high schools does not have a school counselor<sup>1</sup> and many districts still report ratios of only one school psychologist to more than 2,000 students<sup>2</sup>. Especially given the lack of school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers in many schools and districts, we believe that the Senate-approved provisions noted below deserve strong consideration for inclusion in the final conference package. Each of the following provisions has passed the Senate on a broad, bipartisan basis and the first four were passed unanimously by the Senate HELP Committee. As such, we urge you to include each provision in legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act:

1. § 4301, authorizing the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program;
2. § 2103(b)(4)(K), allowing Local Education Agencies to use Title II funds to ensure that school personnel are able to identify and support children with trauma history and children at risk for mental illness;
3. § 1113(c)(2)(F)(ii)(III)(aa), allowing funds for school-wide programs in targeted assistance schools to be used for counseling, school based mental health programs, specialized instructional support services, and mentoring services;

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of Education, OCR, Civil Rights Data Collection (2011-2012)

<sup>2</sup> Charvat, Jeffrey L., Ph. D. *National Association of School Psychologists Member Surveys: Ratio of Students Per School Psychologist by State*

4. § 4103(c)(3)(B)(ii), allowing State Education Agencies to use Title IV funds to assist local education agencies to expand access to school based counseling and mental health resources;

5. § 4103(c)(3)(B)(ix), allowing State Education Agencies to use Title IV funds to design and implement evidence based mental health awareness training programs.

Tragically, too often, we have seen the consequences of not recognizing the early warning signs of students who are struggling with mental health issues. By continuing to provide mental health resources for students, we can both improve educational outcomes and intervene to assist students who may be in need of support. We hope you will agree that targeted, school-based mental health services are a worthy investment that ought to be prioritized in any reauthorization of ESEA.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

### **National Organizations**

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Counseling Association  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Federation of School Administrators  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Psychological Association  
American School Counselor Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association of Educational Services Agencies  
Association of Educational Therapists  
Coalition for Community Schools  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
Committee for Children  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Futures Without Violence  
GLSEN  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
NABCH  
NACBHDD  
NAMI - The National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for College Admission Counseling  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of Pupil Services Administrators  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
National Education Association  
NCLD  
School Social Work Association of America  
The Advocacy Institute

### **State Organizations**

Alaska School Psychologists Association (ASPA)  
Arizona School Counselor Association  
Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania (ASPP)  
Connecticut Association of School Psychologists  
Connecticut School Counselor Association  
Delaware Association of School Psychologists  
Delaware School Counselor Association  
Florida Association of School Psychologists  
Georgia Association of School Psychologists  
Idaho School Counselor Association  
Idaho School Psychologist Association  
Illinois School Counseling Association  
Indiana School Counselor Association  
Kentucky Association for Psychology in the Schools  
Louisiana School Psychological Association  
Maine Association of School Psychologists  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association  
Michigan Association of School Psychologists  
Michigan School Counselor Association  
Minnesota School Psychologists Association  
Missouri Association of School Psychologists  
Missouri School Counselor Association  
Nebraska School Counselor Association  
Nebraska School Psychology Association  
New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists  
New York State School Counselor Association  
North Carolina School Counselor Association  
North Dakota Association of School Psychologists  
NYASP-New York Association of School Psychologists  
Ohio School Psychologists Association  
Oklahoma School Psychological Association  
Palmetto State School Counselor Association  
Pennsylvania School Counselors Association  
Rhode Island School Counselors Association  
South Carolina Association of School Psychologists  
South Dakota Association of School Psychologists  
Tennessee Association of School Psychologists  
Texas Association of School Psychologists  
Texas School Counselor Association  
Vermont Association of School Psychologists

Virginia Academy of School Psychologists  
West Virginia School Psychologists Association  
WI-TASH  
Wisconsin School Counselor Association