



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS

June 24, 2013

The Honorable John Kline  
Chairman  
Education and the Workforce Committee  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

As you and your colleagues prepare to debate the Student Success Act and how to improve K-12 education policy, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) would like to share some concerns with your proposal.

The **National Council of Teachers of Mathematics** and its 80,000 members are the public voice of mathematics education, supporting teachers to ensure equitable mathematics learning of the highest quality for all students through vision, leadership, professional development, and research. A strong pre-K–12 mathematics education for all students is increasingly important to our nation’s economic stability, future national security, and workforce productivity. An economically competitive society recognizes the importance of mathematics learning and depends on citizens who are mathematically literate. NCTM believes that teachers and what they do in the classroom are at the heart of making this vision a reality.

NCTM supports investing in teachers at every stage of their development and is encouraged by a growing emphasis on early childhood education and the momentum behind the development and implementation of common standards and assessments. In addition, as the country struggles with a strained federal budget, NCTM believes federal decisions about investments in the teaching and learning of mathematics are more valuable than ever.

We offer the following comments on the Student Success Act:

1. The most troubling aspect of the bill is the proposal to eliminate the Math Science Partnership program. This program is so important to math teachers and addresses what education researchers know well—that teaching mathematics and other STEM subjects is fundamentally different from teaching other subjects, and the professionals who take on the challenge need specialized support. The conversations in federal policy circles about the importance of teaching and learning STEM disciplines in our K-12 schools are



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increasing and they stretch across many different stakeholders; eliminating the single STEM-focused program in federal K-12 education policy is short-sighted and senseless as STEM education is almost universally touted daily as important to the country's national goals.

2. The proposed elimination of the Teacher Quality Partnership—a program dedicated to supporting teacher preparation programs—is disappointing. NCTM believes that the preparation of teachers is vitally important and warrants its own program, versus a larger program serving many different goals and priorities.
3. We are relieved that the proposal eliminates what the education community agrees are unworkable accountability requirements and the “Adequate Yearly Progress” measure that has been so troublesome for schools and educators. The new system’s annual evaluation and identification of the academic performance of each public school in the state based on student academic achievement that takes into consideration achievement gaps between subgroups and overall performance of students is a more workable measure. NCTM also supports the proposed provisions regarding school improvement for low-performing schools that implement interventions designed to address schools’ weaknesses, implemented by the district.
4. NCTM is disappointed to see that the bill would authorize funding for Title I at \$16.6 billion for FY 2014-2019, which is the same amount appropriated by Congress for FY 2012. This amount is lower than just the Title I authorization for the last year it was authorized and does not recognize the growing challenges facing the schools and teachers that are serving Title I students.
5. States receiving Title II funds under the bill would be required to implement a teacher evaluation system that uses student achievement data derived from a variety of sources as a significant factor in determining a teacher’s evaluation. NCTM is encouraged that the factors vary, include multiple measures of evaluation and that states are required to provide training to school leaders in the evaluation systems. Of course, the uses for precious Title II professional development dollars are expanded, diluting their effectiveness in preparing math teachers to face the challenges of K-12 classrooms, and NCTM would like to see that investments in professional development are preserved.



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NCTM knows that modifying the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is a complicated undertaking. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to improve your reauthorization proposal for mathematics teachers and math teacher educators as the legislative process moves forward.

As this legislation proceeds, if we can provide you with any additional information please contact NCTM Associate Executive Director for Communications Ken Krehbiel at (703) 620-9840, ext.2102 or Della Cronin at (202) 349-2322.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda M. Gojak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda M. Gojak  
President