

*The following letter was sent via US mail on 3/16/15 to Senator Lamar Alexander and Senator Patty Murray on behalf of the WSSDA Executive Committee.*



Dear Senators Alexander and Murray,

We were pleased to learn that you are making progress on producing a bipartisan bill on ESEA reauthorization for HELP Committee consideration. We appreciate the enormous time and effort that you and your staffs have devoted to this project. Like you, we remain hopeful and optimistic that reauthorization, now eight years overdue, will be finalized during the beginning stages of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

As you know, in Washington State, we are in a unique position to understand just how important reauthorization is to the children and adult educators across the country. As the only state to have our ESEA waiver removed by the United States Department of Education, we have endured the pain of sending out “failure” notices to parents in over 1900 of our 2200 schools, many of which were presented with awards of excellence by the Washington State Board of Education and/or the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Needless to say, it is a challenge for school board members, administrators and teachers to explain to parents that a school can be cited for success one week and then tagged as a failing institution the next. Similarly, the \$40 million of Title I funds that districts must set aside for school choice or supplemental education services (normally private tutoring) is detrimental and often not a good use of taxpayer funds.

The purpose of this correspondence is to encourage you to complete work on a reauthorization bill, and then work with the President and membership of the House of Representatives on a compromise bill. In the end, the goal is to put an end to the onerous parts of No Child Left Behind, halt state reliance on waivers, and change the federal role in education to a more collaborative process—working with states and local districts to improve educational services for all students.

Again, thanks for your tireless work on reauthorization. Like you, we look forward to the week of April 13 when we see the product of your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Burke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Alan" and "Burke" being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. Alan Burke  
Committee:

On behalf of the WSSDA Executive

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