



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

May 10, 2010

Ms. Laura Kaloi
Co-chair
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
12523 Summer Place
Oak Hill, VA 20171

Dear Ms. Kaloi:

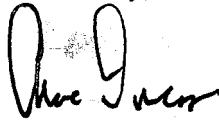
Thank you for your March 25 letter on behalf of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities. I enjoyed our meeting with Assistant Secretary Alexa Posny and found it extremely helpful. During our meeting, and in your letter, you expressed concern about using a child's individualized education program (IEP) as the primary accountability tool under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for students eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As I shared with you at the meeting, when we began developing our plans for reauthorizing the ESEA, our goal was to keep what is working and fix what is not. I credit the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the last reauthorization of the ESEA, for its important contributions to the education of students with disabilities. Most notably, NCLB requires each State to hold *all* students, including students with disabilities, to the same challenging academic content and achievement standards and to assess progress toward meeting those standards using aligned assessments that provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. NCLB also requires States to hold schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) accountable for *all* students reaching proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics, and to publish report cards with each school's and LEA's progress toward achieving this goal, disaggregated by various subgroups, including students with disabilities. Our proposal would continue to require schools, LEAs, and States to report disaggregated student outcome data and to hold schools, LEAs, and States accountable for the achievement of all subgroups of students. It would also require States to develop or adopt standards that build toward college- and career-readiness by the time students graduate from high school, and would recognize the work of teachers and schools to accelerate student growth.

Our ESEA reauthorization proposal is designed to support the needs of diverse learners. Specifically, schools must support all students and provide appropriate instruction and access to a challenging curriculum along with additional supports and attention where needed. For a child with a disability, we envision that the IEP, as required under the IDEA, will continue to identify the services and supports the child needs to be able to access, and progress in, the general curriculum. We are not proposing to use, and would not support using, the IEP as the primary accountability tool under ESEA for measuring whether schools, LEAs, and States are successfully educating students with disabilities.

Thank you for your continued interest in improving results for children with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arne Duncan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Arne Duncan