

# NATIONAL BOARD

for Professional Teaching Standards®

April 14, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Alexander and Murray:

We write today to thank you for your leadership in introducing a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*.

Since its founding in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (National Board) has sought to recognize and support accomplished teachers and teaching. [More than a decade of research](#) from across the country confirms that students taught by Board-certified teachers learn more than their peers, and more than 80% of Americans agreed that teachers should achieve board certification in addition to being licensed to practice, according to results from a [October 2014 poll by PDK International and Gallup](#). There are now more than 110,000 teachers who have achieved board certification in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with nearly half working in high-need schools.

If we are to ensure that all students receive an excellent education that prepares them to succeed in today's world, we must systematically increase the quality of our teaching workforce and make accomplished teaching the norm, not the exception. To achieve this transformation we must develop a coherent teaching continuum that includes a series of steps beginning with preparation, leading systematically through novice and expert phases, and leveraging this growing pool of expertise so that teachers are providing the bulk of leadership for their profession.

As such, we are pleased that the *Every Child Achieves Act* recognizes the importance of building a continuum of teaching excellence. Specifically, this legislation encourages states and districts to strengthen entry into the profession, including through the development of teaching residency programs and adoption of teacher performance assessments. It also encourages states and districts to support teachers through induction programs, professional learning and growth systems, and leadership opportunities. We appreciate that this bill incorporates many ideas from the *Better Educator Support and Training (BEST) Act* (S. 882), which the National Board supported, along with the more than 100 organizations that belong to the Coalition for Teaching Quality.

We also commend the *Every Child Achieves Act* for building on the successful Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) initiative by authorizing a program to provide teachers with evidence-based professional enhancement activities, including activities that lead to an advanced credential. This program is critical for increasing students' access to accomplished teachers.

As the reauthorization process moves forward we would like to work with you to strengthen these provisions so that the *Every Child Achieves Act* ensures that states and districts adopt a comprehensive strategy for developing and supporting excellent educators that results in improved student learning. Specifically, we look forward to working with you to expand the opportunity for prospective and new teachers to complete a teaching residency. Support in ESEA for mediated entry will give new teachers, like their counterparts in

medicine, an opportunity to anchor their skills and knowledge in practice before becoming the teacher of record.

Thank you for your leadership in developing a bipartisan ESEA reauthorization bill. We know the creation of a strong workforce has been a key lever in the success of other professions, for example in medicine where a comprehensive focus on physician training and development has led to improved patient outcomes. Similarly, it is critical that ESEA direct limited federal financial resources to investing in systemic, sustainable, and measurable strategies that will strengthen the teaching workforce and improve outcomes for students. The National Board looks forward to working with you to ensure that the *Every Child Achieves Act* accomplishes this purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Thorpe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Ronald Thorpe  
President & CEO