

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 3, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-1510

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As strong supporters of college in high school programs such as dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs, we write to urge the U.S. Department of Education to examine how school districts are using federal funding opportunities created by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support increasing student access to high quality programs that promote academic success. The Department recently announced plans to study district and school uses of federal education funds for ESSA (ED–2019–ICCD–0160). We strongly encourage you to examine utilization, outcomes, and best practices of college in high school programs as part of that initiative.

ESSA recognizes the important roles that these college in high school programs can play in preparing students—particularly those from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds—for success in college and career. Through these programs, high school students gain exposure to the academic challenges of college, earning transcribed, transferable college credit often at reduced or no tuition cost.

Numerous rigorous, multi-institution, and statewide quantitative research studies in more than a dozen states have proven that these programs increase high school graduation, college readiness, and college access, persistence, and completion, especially for students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Additionally, in 2017 the Institute of Education Sciences' What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reviewed dozens of studies against their strict criteria and found a medium-to-large evidence base that shows positive impacts on college enrollment and completion from participating in dual enrollment programs.

We encourage the Department to examine how states and districts are leveraging and coordinating federal resources across funding streams for which dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school are allowable uses to support a comprehensive network of high-quality programs. Namely, ESSA established a series of reporting requirements, state and local plan components, and allowable uses of funds all aimed at encouraging states and local education agencies to prioritize dual and concurrent enrollment as a key strategy for successfully preparing students for college and the workforce.

Since these provisions are all housed in portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that the Department intends to analyze as part of its Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds (i.e. Titles I, II, III, and IV) and many of the provisions impacting dual and concurrent enrollment programs were new to federal law with the passage of ESSA, an examination by the Department of school districts' use of funds to support college in high school programs would be timely and help inform future policymaking to ensure more low-income and underrepresented students have access to these successful models.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



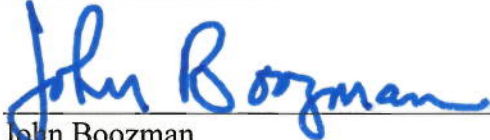
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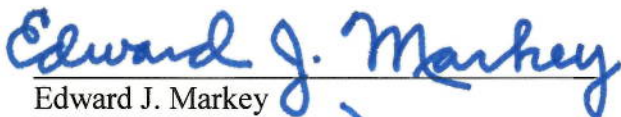
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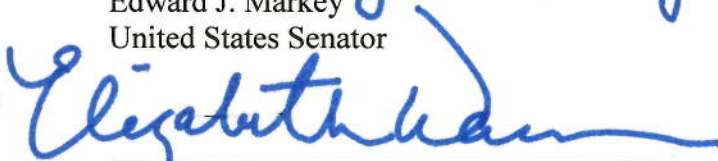
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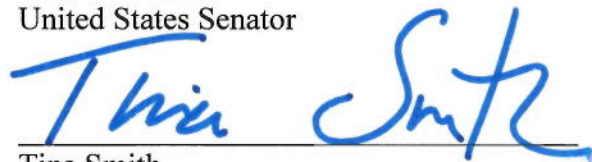
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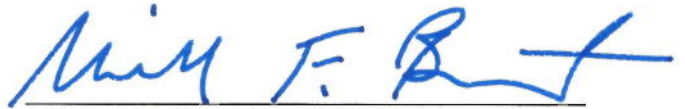
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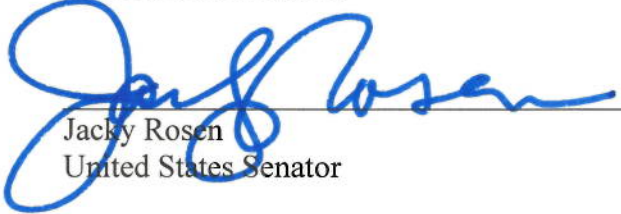
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