



PRESIDENT OBAMA’S PLAN TO ELIMINATE TUTORING DRAWS BROAD-BASED CRITICISM

WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 23 -- Broad-based and bipartisan opposition is growing in the wake of President Obama’s proposal to eliminate high-quality after-school tutoring for more than 500,000 low-income families as part of his blueprint for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Since the U.S. Department of Education issued the proposal on Saturday March 13th, a diverse group of civil rights leaders, news media and education analysts have expressed support for continuing to provide these critical supplemental educational services (SES) to low-income students, or questioned the wisdom of eliminating the requirement to offer free tutoring to low-income kids in underperforming schools. Below are some of the comments.

1. Civil Rights and Equity Advocates:

“Interventions and Incentives: Federal funds for reform-oriented instructional approaches such as supplemental tutoring, expanded learning time (including after-school, extended day and school year), teacher training, and charter school management should, to the greatest extent possible, be based on their quality and be awarded via competitive grants or sub-grants to public, non-profit, and other non-governmental entities with a proven record of success.” (Source: [Open Letter to the President, Secretary of Education, and Congress on ESEA Reauthorization](#), Education Equality Project & 17 Other Education and Civil Rights Groups, March 3, 2010)

2. Business and Education Advocates:

“ESEA should require the following ‘client centered’ provisions: High quality Supplemental Educational Services (SES) programs that require districts to provide students and parents with timely and easily understood information on their options to choose either free tutoring or the ability to move to higher performing public schools. ESEA must include support for high-quality research and proven reform initiatives by: Supporting academic-focused extended learning time initiatives (including afterschool and summer programs) for at-risk students. (Source: [Principles for Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#), Business Coalition for Student Achievement, January 12, 2010)

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3. Washington Post editorial:

“Moreover, we worry that the administration is rashly scrapping the requirement that parents in failing schools be offered school choice and free tutoring.” (Source: [The administration keeps the right principles in amending No Child Left Behind](#), Washington Post Editorial, March 17, 2010)

4. The Wall Street Journal editorial:

“The worst parts of the proposal diminish or eliminate NCLB's accountability and choice provisions. Poor kids in persistently failing schools would lose their access to free private tutoring and the option to transfer to another school. It's true these provisions were poorly enforced by the Bush Administration, but that's an argument for better enforcement, not axing the only part of the law that allows a role for private competition.” (Source: [Fixing No Child Left Behind](#), The Wall Street Journal editorial, March 23, 2010)

5. Education Week:

“So you want to get rid of mandated SES and choice, huh? Okay, but we've taken a look at your process for turning around low-performing schools. And no matter how you slice it, that's slow and difficult work. You're saying kids in those majorly underperforming schools can't have public school choice or tutoring in the meantime?” (Source: [Ten Questions About ESEA Reauthorization](#), Alyson Klein, Education Week's K12 Politics Blog)

6. Representative John Kline in BusinessWeek:

“This means few if any students would have access to the immediate lifeline that tutoring and transfers provide,” said Kline, the senior Republican on the education committee. (Source: [Obama's Education Plan Restricts Local Schools, Republicans Say](#), John Hechinger, BusinessWeek, March 18, 2010)

7. Representative John Kline in Education Week:

“It's disappointing to see [tutoring] and school choice removed from the parental toolbox, particularly because it appears the focus is shifting to the needs of schools rather than the needs of students,” said Alexa Marrero, a spokeswoman for Rep. John Kline of Minnesota, the top Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee. (Source: [Administration Unveils ESEA Renewal Blueprint](#), Alyson Klein, Education Week, March 13, 2010)

8. Former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings:

“Margaret Spellings, Duncan's predecessor as education secretary... said she disagrees with Obama's scrapping of provisions that provided free tutoring and the chance for families to switch their children out of low-performing schools.” (Source: [Obama, U.S. Governors Favor "College-Ready" School Standards](#), John Hechinger, Molly Peterson and Oliver Staley, Bloomberg, March 13, 2010)

9. Karl Rove in *The Wall Street Journal*:

“Mr. Obama is also proposing to weaken school choice provisions in NCLB. For example, under his plan students in failing schools lose important school choice options as well as tutoring and other supplementary services. Because their schools are failing to meet state standards today, six million students are eligible to transfer to other public schools and over four million can access free tutoring. Parents empowered with options are a powerful force for change and improvement, even if the amount of money for supplemental services is modest and parents can move their children only to another public school that will accept them.” (Source: [Obama Retreats on Education Reform](#), Karl Rove, WSJ, March 18, 2010)

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