

August 7, 2025

The Honorable Burgess Owens **(As an example)**
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Support for Utah's Transition to a Consolidated Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Block Grant and the K-12 Simplified Funding Program

Dear Representative Owens, **(As an example)**

We appreciate your recent assistance in securing the release of ESSA funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and State Fiscal Year 2026.

We also fully support the strategic shift toward a consolidated block grant model for all federal ESSA funds allocated to Utah beginning in Federal Fiscal Year 2026 and beyond. This approach will:

- Enhance local flexibility
- Streamline administrative processes
- Ensure continued services for students with learning differences and special needs
- Improve student outcomes
- Advance school choice

We encourage your continued support of the K-12 Simplified Funding Program (H.R.1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act) and urge you to ensure that any necessary changes to laws and regulations are made. Additionally, we ask that you support any future waiver requests from Utah related to this effort.

As you know, the current categorical distribution of ESSA funds places a significant administrative burden on both the Utah State Board of Education and local schools. Transitioning to the K-12 Simplified Funding Program will:

- Improve fund management efficiency
- Reduce reporting requirements
- Enable more targeted resource allocation
- Allow schools to address their unique needs and priorities
- Foster innovation and responsiveness
- Empower parents and students with more educational choices aligned with their values and goals

Furthermore, resources will be provided to ensure curriculum transparency for all participating schools. This will give parents access to detailed information about instructional content and pedagogy, including classical and religious curricula.

Additional resources will help parents understand the differences between educational models, enabling them to make informed decisions for their children.

Utah remains committed to parental choice in education and to preserving our sovereignty in meeting the educational needs of our students.

Thank you again for your support. We look forward to continuing our shared efforts to deliver excellence in K-12 education across Utah.

Respectfully,

DRAFT-Subject to Board Approval