

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 21, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Sebelius and Secretary Duncan:

More than 400,000 children and youth in the United States are in the care of child welfare agencies. These children often have experienced abuse, neglect, homelessness and other trauma.

Additionally, these children often face multiple school placements once in the child welfare system. They change schools far more frequently than peers not in care. Research has demonstrated that instability and multiple placements have a negative effect on academic achievement and are associated with high rates of children and youth dropping out of school.

The 2008 "Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act" (FCSIA) requires that a child or youth in foster care receive a plan for ensuring his or her educational stability.

We understand that the Administration is planning an event in November to address issues of educational stability for homeless and foster youth. We are hopeful that your agencies will be able to leverage the momentum the event generates to make progress relative to best practices for increasing educational stability.

However, we are aware that a number of states and localities have already developed innovative and successful approaches to implementing the educational stability provision from FCSIA. We believe it would be useful for all states to have access to these strategies.

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We request that the Administration provide guidance and disseminate examples of best practices to states in advance of the upcoming school year.

We also request that you brief our staff on your progress relative to our request by July 31, 2011.

Thank you in advance to your prompt attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus
United States Senator



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Tom Harkin
United States Senator



Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator