

March 29, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
835 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to ensure that authorizing language for Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) remains in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and to oppose consolidation under the Expanding Educational Options budget authority, as proposed under the President's FY11 Budget.

The PIRC program is the *sole* federal program dedicated to engaging families in their children's education. We cannot hope to achieve the President's goal of having the highest proportion of students in the world graduating from college by 2020 without partnering with families. Research demonstrates that family engagement improves student achievement, attendance, and behavior regardless of parents' education level, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background. Teachers have also identified parent involvement as one of the most critical and effective components for improving public education. Annually, PIRCs serve over 16 million parents in all 50 states; almost three quarters of these parents are low-income and over half are parents with children who are limited English proficient.

Schools, districts and states rely on PIRCs for technical assistance and capacity to implement research-based approaches to engage families, such as conducting parent leadership academies, leading professional development for educators on partnering with parents, and placing trained family engagement coordinators in schools. PIRCs set aside almost one third of their funds for evidence-based early education programs that support children and families. Consolidation and proposed elimination would direct funding away from proven and innovative strategies that engage parents and raise student achievement across a child's lifespan and in all learning settings.

Moreover, the consolidation of this program will prevent PIRCs from serving *all* families with children in public schools. The PIRCs do not share the same focus as charter schools and public school choice programs, the programs under which they are consolidated. In fact, 1 out of 5 states lack charter school legislation, which means that without PIRCs, public schools and districts will not have statewide support and capacity to engage parents. As of January 2010, charter school enrollment accounted for only 2.5% of all public school students. The impact of this consolidation would be particularly devastating in rural communities, where there are fewer options for charters and school choice. It is critical that *all* schools and communities have a vehicle for engaging parents to close the achievement gap and drive school reform.

We urge you to safeguard this critical program and support teachers and students through meaningful partnerships between parents and schools. Thank you for your commitment to our nation's children and families.

Sincerely,

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

The American School Counselor Association
Afterschool Alliance
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
ASPIRA Association, Inc.
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters USA (HIPPY USA)
Knowledge Alliance
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Mental Health America
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
National Alliance of Black School Educators
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Black Police Association
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
National Collaboration for Youth
National Council of La Raza
National Education Association
National Network of Partnership Schools
National Parent Teacher Association
National School Boards Association
National Staff Development Council (NSDC)
Parents as Teachers (PAT)
Parents for Public Schools
Parental Involvement Exchange
Phi Delta Kappa International
Prevent Child Abuse America
Public Education Network
The Dibble Institute
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Way Worldwide

Alabama

Alabama Network for Children with Disabilities
Alabama Parent Teacher Association
Alabama Parent Education Center
Alabama Parent Information and Resource Center

Alaska

Alaska Parent Teacher Association
Southeast Regional Resource Center
Yup'it School District

Arizona

Arizona Parent Teacher Association
Arizona State Parent Information and Resource Center

Chandler Education Foundation

Arkansas

Batesville School District- Parents as Teachers
Arkansas Parent Teacher Association
Arkansas Parents as Teachers
Jones Trust

California

California Association for Bilingual Education/CA PIRC-1
California Parent Teacher Association
Cambridge Academies
A World Fit For Kids!

Colorado

Clayton Early Learning
Colorado HIPPIY
Colorado Parent Teacher Association
Colorado Parent & Child Foundation
Colorado Parents as Teachers
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
Family Development Center, Steamboat Springs
Rocky Mountain Parents as Teachers

Connecticut

Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
CT State Education Resource Center.
Jefferson Family Resource Center
Smalley Family Resource Center

Delaware

Delaware Parent Teacher Association
Kent County Parents as Teachers
Parent Information Center of Delaware, Inc.

Department of Defense Schools

European Parent Teacher Association

District of Columbia

Multicultural Community Service, Washington, D.C.
Roosevelt Senior High School Parent Student Teacher Association
Teaching for Change
Washington, D.C. Parent Teacher Association

Florida

Columbia Even Start Family Literacy
Family Network on Disabilities
Florida Parent Teacher Association
Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison, & Taylor Counties
Taylor County Even Start
Taylor County Pre-K

Georgia

Communities In Schools of GA
Georgia Parent Teacher Association
Georgia Parents as Teachers Network
United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta

Guam

Guam Parent Information and Resource Center
Guam Positive Parents Together, Inc.

Hawaii

Hawaii Parent Teacher Association
Parents and Children Together

Idaho

Family Advocates/Idaho PIRC
Idaho Parent Teacher Association

Illinois

A Star Is Born Birth to 3/Little Stars Pre-K
Center for Community Arts Partnerships
Happy Time Education Center
Illinois Parent Teacher Association
Kiddie Kollege of Fairfield
Wayne City Early Learning Center
Wayne County Family Enrichment Program

Indiana

Indiana Parent Teacher Association
Indiana Partnerships Center
Lake Station Schools Parents As Teachers
Mental Health America of Lake County
Owen County Learning Network

Iowa

Adams County Parents as Teachers
Iowa Parent Information Resource Center
Iowa Parent Teacher Association
Loren Children's Learning Center
Lutheran Services in Iowa
School Administrators of Iowa

Kansas

Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc.
Kansas Parent Teacher Association
PATHS (Parents as Teachers/Early Head Start)

Kentucky

Center for Parent Leadership
Kentucky Parent Teacher Association
United Way of Northern Kentucky

Louisiana

Louisiana Parent Teacher Association
Volunteers of America North Louisiana

Maine

Maine Parent Federation, Inc.
Maine Parent Teacher Association

Maryland

Maryland Parent Teacher Association
Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc

Marshall Islands

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)
Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) – RMI PIRC
Women United Together in the Marshall Islands

Massachusetts

Federation for Children with Special Needs
Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association

Michigan

Life Services Parent Center
Michigan Parent Teacher Association
Michigan Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC)

Minnesota

Minnesota Parent Teacher Association
PACER Center

Mississippi

Community Students Learning Center/ MSPIRC
Mississippi Parent Teacher Association

Missouri

Doniphan R-1 Parents as Teachers
Doniphan R-1 School District
Marshall Public Schools Parents as Teachers
Missouri Parent Teacher Association
Missouri PIRC at LIFT
Montgomery Co. R-II Parents as Teachers
Republic Parents as Teachers

Montana

Montana Parent Teacher Association
Women's Opportunity & Resource Development, Inc (WORD)

Nebraska

Nebraska Children & Families Foundation
Nebraska Parent Teacher Association

Nevada

Nevada Parent Teacher Association
Nevada State PIRC at the Education Alliance of Washoe County

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Parent Teacher Association
The Parent Information Center of New Hampshire

New Jersey

Caring For Kids
New Jersey Parent Teacher Association
Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey

New Mexico

New Mexico Parent Teacher Association
Parents Reaching Out

New York

EPIC-Every Person Influences Children
New York State Parent Teacher Association

North Carolina

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
North Carolina Parent Teacher Association
Richmond County Partnership for Children
Teen Parents as Teachers

North Dakota

Even Start Family Literacy Program
North Dakota Parent Teacher Association
Pathfinder Parent Center

Ohio

Ohio Parent Teacher Association
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Parent Information and Resource Center
Oklahoma Parent Teacher Association

Oregon

Families First Parent Resource Center
Healthy Start of Douglas County
Oregon Parent Teacher Association

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association
Family Connection of Easton, Inc.-Easton, PA

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Parent Information Network
Rhode Island Parent Teacher Association
South County Community Action Parents As Teachers Program

South Carolina

FACES Program (Family, Adult, and Children's Educational Services)-- Beaufort County School District
The Children's Trust of South Carolina-Columbia, SC
Clover Family Resource Center
Darlington County First Steps to School Readiness
Greenwood Community Children's Center
South Carolina Parent Teacher Association

South Dakota

South Dakota Parent Information and Resource Center
South Dakota Parent Teacher Association
West River Foundation

Tennessee

Tennessee Parent Teacher Association
Tennessee Voices for Children

Texas

East Dallas Community School
Mental Health America of Texas/Texas Parents as Teachers Program
Texas Parent Teacher Association

U.S. Virgin Islands

U.S. Virgin Island Parent Teacher Association

Utah

Children's Service Society
Even Start Family Literacy Program
Utah Family Partnership Network
Utah Parent Teacher Association
Utah Parents as Teachers

Vermont

PIRC-Vermont
Vermont Parent Teacher Association

Virginia

Children's Health Improvement Partnership of New River Valley
Embrace Diverse Schools-Springfield, VA
The Parent Institute-Fairfax, VA
Virginia Parent Teacher Association

Washington

Parent Trust for Washington Children (Washington Parents As Teachers State Office)
Washington State Parent Teacher Association

West Virginia

Marshall County Starting Points Center Inc./Parents as Teachers program
West Virginia Parent Teacher Association

Wisconsin

Family Services of Northeast WI
Parents Plus, Inc.
Wisconsin Parents as Teachers
Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association

Wyoming

Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc
Wyoming Parent Teacher Association