

Senator Bennet Fights to Improve Opportunities for Colorado Kids

Senator Bennet secured provisions to improve equity and address inequalities. Research shows that the single most important factor in school in determining a child's success in the classroom is a great teacher supported by strong school leaders.

- Access to higher-quality, evidence-based professional development, resources, and supports;
- A bipartisan amendment with Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) to [support opportunities for teachers](#) to grow and take on leadership roles in their school or district while allowing them to remain in the classroom;
- Support for teacher and school leader residency programs [inspired by proposals](#) Bennet has previously authored;
- A provision similar to Bennet's [proposal](#) to prepare and recruit, train, and retain effective principals;
- Funding for districts to modernize their entire human capital systems, including improving a district's approach to preparation, recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, tenure, and advancement;
- Support for efforts to provide students with information about federal financial aid in order to help increase access to college inspired by Bennet's [bipartisan bill](#) to simplify the process of applying for and receiving federal financial aid to attend college;
- An amendment to create a pilot project that would allow districts to design and implement a weighted student funding system that provides resources based on student need and includes additional funding for students from low-income families and English learners;
- New reporting requirements to increase transparency on the resources schools receive;
- Providing districts with flexibility to spend federal funding on early childhood education;
- A provision to provide greater access to coursework that allows students to earn college credit while still in high school;
- A study to ensure vital funding for English-learning programs is reaching the students who need it;
- An amendment requiring the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study and provide recommendations on ways to increase the coordination and effectiveness of existing federal programs across all departments and agencies that benefit or serve children;
- A provision allowing states to create the infrastructure needed for private and nonprofit organizations to implement shared services for early childhood education, like the innovative model employed by Colorado-based Merage Foundation's Early Learning Ventures;
- An amendment that would provide states and districts the capacity and necessary resources to implement family engagement strategies to improve student development and academic achievement;
- A measure requiring states to set a limit on the amount of time students will spend taking annual assessments;

- A provision requiring schools to publicly post information regarding annual assessments on the school district's website;
- A bipartisan amendment with Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) to make more federal education dollars available to low income children across the United States by treating poor children the same;
- An amendment cosponsored with Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) empowering school districts to identify opportunities to provide teachers with additional support for long-term professional development and improved working conditions;
- An amendment sponsored by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and inspired by Senator Bennet's [Social Impact Partnership Act](#) to allow states to enter into pay-for-success contracts for early childhood education.

Senator Bennet worked to reduce the prescriptive, top-down approach of No Child Left Behind. His work focused on reducing the federal overreach and promoting state-driven accountability systems while ensuring we take steps to close the achievement gap and provide all kids with a great education.

- State-designed accountability systems that maintain statewide annual testing requirements to monitor student achievement and growth and require states to set goals and identify schools that need improvement;
- Preserving one of No Child Left Behind's strengths by breaking down data to show if and how achievement gaps are being closed for different subgroups of students. This ensures transparency for parents and communities to monitor their students' academic progress year to year;
- Requiring districts to develop and implement evidence-based interventions for schools needing improvement;
- [Reducing the burden of data reporting requirements](#) for local school districts;
- A provision to allow states to use funding to develop or improve models to measure and assess student growth models.

Senator Bennet helped include incentives for teachers, principals, schools, and communities to apply their own innovative thinking to help address our most persistent education challenges.

- A bipartisan amendment to provide funding for schools, districts, nonprofits, and small businesses to develop, implement, expand, and replicate innovative and evidence-based practices to improve student achievement and increase graduation rates and college enrollment;
- Provisions from Bennet's [English Learning and Innovation Act](#), which support evidence-based and capacity building efforts to help English learners attain proficiency;
- [Revamping the Charter School Program](#) to support the development of charter schools that show promise and the replication of high-quality charter schools which have demonstrated success;
- An amendment to connect payment for educational services to positive outcomes in order to encourage innovative new educational approaches that help close the achievement gap while stretching taxpayer dollars further. This provision is based on a [bipartisan bill](#)

[Bennet has championed](#) to create pay-for-success contracts for a variety of government services.

Senator Bennet helped add provisions to support schools in rural communities to address the unique challenges they face with limited resources.

- A provision to help level the playing field by providing technical assistance to rural school districts when applying for competitive federal grants;
- An amendment that clarifies that rural school districts or education service agencies, like a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), can join together and submit a single consolidated application for funding under ESEA;
- A requirement that states consult with their rural school districts when developing state plans for vital Title I funding;
- A provision co-authored by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) requiring the Department of Education to study its organizational structure, processes and procedures for developing policies and regulations and to take steps to increase consideration and participation of rural schools;
- A measure co-authored by Senator Cochran to add rural schools to the Secretary's report card to ensure that information on student achievement in rural communities across the country is made available.