

The Honorable Bernie Sanders

Chair
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee

The Honorable Bill Cassidy

Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee

April 19, 2023

Dear Chair Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on policies the Committee should consider during the reauthorization of the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA). The **National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)** is a vibrant community of approximately 35,000 members - science educators and professionals committed to best practices in teaching science and STEM and its impact on student learning. NSTA thanks the HELP's Committee's bipartisan leadership in addressing ESRA reauthorization.

NSTA strongly believes that science education and science literacy must be elevated at all levels, but especially for elementary school learners. Unfortunately, far too many students, particularly at the elementary level, do not receive adequate instructional time dedicated to science. The average elementary school student spends 90 minutes per day engaged in academic activities tied to language arts, 60 minutes per day engaged in math activities, and only 20 minutes per day learning science. That simply is not acceptable. NSTA would like to see much more Federal education research, statistics, and technical assistance devoted exclusively to science education and the deployment of equitable science learning nationwide.

NSTA asks the Committee to consider the following provisions when undertaking ESRA reauthorization:

- Increase the frequency and comprehensiveness of the NAEP science assessment to match math and reading. Science should have equal priority with mathematics and English language arts in federal and state accountability requirements. Accountability drives the amount and quality of instruction provided in the classroom and will result in better student outcomes.
- Support and produce an Institute for Education Sciences (IES) national state-by-state scorecard for key science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education metrics. Having a national tool that aggregates all of the key metrics would be extremely beneficial to federal and state efforts to effectively scale up STEM-related experiences.
- Examine and increase the federal funding available for hands-on science learning materials, products, kits, and manipulatives available for instruction

Science literacy and education are recognized as vital to the future of our society, enabling us to make informed decisions about the collective challenges we face. NSTA looks forward to working with the HELP committee with the upcoming reauthorization of the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA), the Educational Technical Assistance Act, and the National Assessment of Education Progress Authorization Act to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality science education.

Sincerely,



Erika Shugart, Ph.D.

Executive Director
National Science Teaching Association