

**Including Low-Income Middle and High Schools in Accountability & Improvement
Systems in the Every Child Achieves Act
Senator Ron Wyden**

Under current law, many low-income and low-performing middle and high schools are left out of efforts to identify—and therefore improve—failing schools. In Oregon, more than 100 high-poverty schools are ineligible for the kinds of federal support that can help schools improve. Nationally, there are more than 2,000 of these schools. Denying eligibility to these schools leaves students at risk of underachieving and contributes to the alarmingly high drop-out rates among low-income and disadvantaged students across the country.

The Wyden-authored provision makes more middle and high schools eligible for federal dollars by making schools with 40 percent or more low-income students eligible for School Improvement Grants. These grants can be used for efforts such as extended learning time (e.g., nights, summers, weekends), intensive drop-out prevention and re-entry programs, and other reforms that can help students overcome initial academic failure and successfully graduate from high school.

This provision allows states and school districts to determine how best to target this funding where it is needed the most and ensures that schools serving a significant number of low-income children are not left out from this very important federal funding stream. This is a more promising approach than the overly-prescriptive federal mandates that failed under No Child Left Behind.

Read the provision in Section 1114 of the version of the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 currently before the Senate.

Provision Legislative Language

“(2) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY DISCRETION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A), a State educational agency may—“(A) identify any middle school or high school as in need of intervention and support if at least 40 percent of the children served by such school are from low-income families (as measured under section 1113(a)(1)(E)(ii)); and (B) use funds provided under subsection (c) to assist such schools consistent with such subsection.