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August 13, 2025

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine how states and districts collect and use data required under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). ESSA requires that states collect and report data on students' academic performance as well as other indicators of success and wellbeing.¹ This information is then made publicly available through the Department of Education's (Department) *EdFacts* database. ESSA also requires states to include information in publicly available state report cards.² When data such as these are accurately collected and presented clearly, they can help the Department, states, and school districts support schools by identifying the challenges schools are facing and opportunities to make sustained improvements. Similarly, the information included on state report cards can help families make informed decisions about their children's schooling. Unfortunately, we have concerns about whether all the information required under ESSA is collected with fidelity and distributed fully, accurately, and clearly both by the Department and by states on their report cards.³

Having accurate and clear data is imperative in order to support schools and best serve our nation's students. Moreover, data collection represents a significant time commitment from teachers, students, and school staff, so it is incumbent upon us to ensure that its value is used to help students reach their full potential. We want to respect this time investment by making sure that the Department is doing all that it can to help ensure the data are accurate and useful.

Specifically, I ask that GAO study:

¹ 20 U.S.C. § 6311(c)(4)(B) (2020).

² 20 U.S.C. § 6311(h)(1) (2020).

³ Nicholas Munyan- Penney et al, *Reassessing ESSA Implementation: An Equity Analysis of School Accountability Systems*, The Education Trust (Sept. 18, 2024) <https://edtrust.org/rti/reassessing-essa-implementation-an-equity-analysis/#key>

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1. How do selected states, districts, and families use data required by ESSA, including school report card data?
2. Identify and detail the steps the Department is taking to ensure the reliability of data required by ESSA and provide transparency about any data limitations.
3. Identify the efforts and steps the Department has undertaken to monitor whether states meet requirements for State Report Card Data quality and completeness.

Should you have any questions about this request, please contact Ilana Brunner (ilana.brunner@mail.house.gov) and Samantha Wilkerson (samantha.wilkerson@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

Ranking Member

Committee on Education and Workforce