



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF PLANNING, EVALUATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

NOV 15 2013

Mr. R. John Dawes
Chair
Citizens Advisory Committee
to the Chesapeake Executive Council
P.O. Box 1981
Richmond, VA 232178

Dear Chairman Dawes:

Thank you for your June 21, 2013 letter to Secretary Duncan sharing your concern, as Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Executive Council, over President Obama's Fiscal Year 2014 proposal to consolidate and restructure Federal STEM education programs. I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter.

We understand your concern about the possible loss of support for a program of key interest to your organization—more specifically the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—that is proposed for consolidation under the Administration's STEM proposal. While the U.S. Department of Education was not involved in the selection of programs that were included in the proposed consolidation, we have consistently supported similar consolidations of our own small, categorical education programs in favor of larger, more flexible authorities aligned with Administration policy priorities. Your letter correctly cites one of these proposed authorities—the Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education program include in the Administration's reauthorization proposal for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I would add that our STEM Innovation Networks proposal also is sufficiently flexible to support district- and school-level environmental education programs that contribute to the acquisition of STEM knowledge and skills. We believe these broader, more flexible programs are fairer to Federal grant applicants and allow States and communities to develop their own strategies and actions for addressing State and local needs, rather than prescribing such strategies and actions here in Washington.

Thank you again for your letter and for your efforts to support education.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Skelly
Director
Budget Service