



April 29, 2013

Rick Miller
Executive Director
California Office to Reform Education (CORE)
1107 9th Street, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: CORE ESEA Waiver Application

Dear Mr. Miller:

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a Washington, DC–based national policy and advocacy organization that works to improve national and federal education policy so that all students can achieve at high academic levels and graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship in the twenty-first century. The Alliance focuses on America’s six million most-at-risk secondary school students—those in the lowest achievement quartile—who are most likely to leave school without a diploma or to graduate unprepared for a productive future.

The next generation of Americans will need to graduate from high school ready to compete in a world of rapid globalization, burgeoning technological innovations, and changing labor markets. They will need to be informed citizens in a complex world. As the global economy demands that all students are ready for college and a career, the nation’s high schools must make available educational opportunities and supports that are needed for students to meet this higher standard. In order to provide the very best for the nation’s students, their schools must be able to provide them with the very best education.

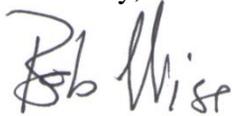
This emphasis on preparing students for college and a career is evident in CORE’s approach to high school redesign. There are a number of policies and practices within CORE’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request that would provide students with opportunities for work-based learning, one means toward helping prepare students for college and a career. Specifically, we are pleased to see the following within CORE’s ESEA Flexibility Request:

- A strong emphasis on expanding opportunities for Linked Learning, seeking to implement Linked Learning in all district high schools and to realign instructional content and pedagogy with college and career state standards while also integrating career pathway standards. (Linked Learning is “an educational method involving subject or career-specific ‘pathways,’ e.g., healthcare and law enforcement. The Linked Learning approach requires a challenging academic component, a technical component, a work-based learning component, and support services such as counseling for students.”)

- The establishment of district partnerships with ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career and the Linked Learning Alliance to implement Linked Learning and improve college and career readiness.
- The establishment of partnerships with local institutions of higher education to help prepare students for college and a career.

By integrating rigorous academics with career-based learning and real-world workplace experiences, Linked Learning is beginning to demonstrate a positive impact on California students. This approach can also serve as a model to other districts and states. Research shows that compared to traditional high schools, students who participate in the Linked Learning approach have increased rates of persistence and higher graduation rates. The focus on expanding these opportunities to more students is commendable and a critical component of ensuring that all students graduate ready for college and a career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Wise". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B" and "W".

Bob Wise
President

