

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) and U.S. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4), members of the House Committee on Education and Labor, today introduced legislation to strengthen the collection and sharing of longitudinal data – data that shows how students perform over time. Holt and McCarthy introduced the bill on the same day the Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing examining how the use of data systems in schools across the country can help improve education outcomes. They hope to incorporate the legislation into the overhaul of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently known as No Child Left Behind.

The METRICS Act of 2010 seeks to ensure that education stakeholders – policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents – are able to access, understand, and use data systems, such as those that calculate accurate graduation rates, measure teacher effectiveness, and track student progress as students move from grade to grade, school to school, and district to district. The bill would authorize \$65 million in competitive grants to states to improve the use of their statewide data systems and another \$65 million for a new competitive program to local education agencies with low-performing schools to help build the capacity to use data to improve student outcomes. Grantees would use funds to put in place a comprehensive plan to provide stakeholders with access to student education data, regularly analyze and share data, and improve school leaders' and educators' use of data.

“Always interested in finding practices that improve children's education, last year I visited a school in Union City, New Jersey to learn more about the innovations the school district has used to increase student achievement. By periodically evaluating all students and sharing those test data immediately with teachers, they are able to tailor instruction within a few days of the assessments to meet each student's individual needs. Improved use of information, like the kind that benefitted Union City, can help all our students do far better.”

“This legislation will provide competitive grants to states and districts to improve the use of their statewide data systems. Funding will be used to link data throughout the education system and across state agencies. This effort will improve access to and use of statewide data,” said McCarthy. “If we are to ever have a true picture of a student's progress, the dropout rate, and college and workforce preparedness, we must have data that will track a student year after year. Longitudinal data is far more valuable than the data currently available and I am proud to work with Rep. Holt to see that through.”

The METRICS Act builds on federal support in building data systems. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act required states to establish pre-K-to-college data systems in order to receive State Fiscal Stabilization Funds. Additionally, longitudinal data systems were also included in the Race to the Top applications. According to the national Data Quality Campaign annual survey, the majority of states are close to being capable of providing information on essential elements of a longitudinal data system.

New support, however, is needed to expand the ability of state longitudinal data systems to link across the education pipeline and across state agencies; to ensure districts and schools develop and implement processes and tools necessary to use both the data in the statewide data system and compliment it with local data that supports daily instruction; and build the capacity of all stakeholders, particularly educators, to use data for effective decision-making.