

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2015

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-3100

Dear Secretary Duncan:

We write to inquire about the formula and/or methodology that will be used as part of the proposed Postsecondary Institutions Ratings System (PIRS), for which feedback was originally solicited in the Request for Information published by the Department of Education in the Federal Register on December 17, 2013 (78 Fed. Reg. 76289 et seq.). The Department has maintained that PIRS will be available in advance of the 2015-2016 school year, yet no specific formula or methodology for how the ratings will be derived has been released to date.

Lawmakers, postsecondary institutions, and prospective students have anxiously awaited details regarding PIRS. The "draft framework," which was released in December 2014, contained virtually no new information to alleviate concerns that have been voiced in the higher education community. While we appreciate the opportunity to comment on that framework earlier this year, we are concerned that we have not yet received any further details about how this system will work in practice.

At this time we request specific information about how the ratings will be derived, any weighted formulas that will be used to generate an institution's rating, and any other relevant data elements, metrics, scoring, or methodology. With the next school year's start less than three months away, it is essential to clarify the ways in which the ratings system will use measurements such as post-graduate earnings, percentage of students receiving Pell Grants, and graduation rates. If, indeed, as we have urged, this ratings system will not be implemented or these measurements not used, it would be helpful to know that the Department has changed its original course.

As the appropriations process is currently underway in the House of Representatives, we would ask that you provide this information no later than July 6, 2015, to enable the Committees of jurisdiction time to review the information prior to any potential floor action. We look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Robert Hurt
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Chris Collins
Member of Congress



David Young
Member of Congress



H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress