May 12, 2015

Mr. Jason Chaffetz
Chairman
House Oversight & Government Reform
Committee
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Mr. Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member
House Oversight & Government Reform Committee
2230 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: NASSP Opposes Reauthorization of the D.C. School Voucher Program

Dear Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings:

As the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee prepares for a hearing on District of Columbia private school vouchers, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) would like to express strong opposition for the reauthorization of this program. Private school vouchers drain money away from public schools, reduce accountability in the education system, and have not conclusively been proven to result in student achievement. With fewer financial resources, public schools that are already struggling may be forced to implement reform efforts at the expense of other vital programs within the school.

Since its inception in 2003, the D.C. private school voucher program has failed to improve educational outcomes for participating students and has also demonstrated a lack of accountability and effective management practices. While supporters of the D.C. private school voucher program have argued that it has provided students with increased educational opportunities, many participating private schools choose not to accept students based on a number of discriminatory factors. On the other hand, public schools in Washington, D.C., and across the country are mandated to educate all students regardless of academic ability, socioeconomic status, or other challenges that private schools may not be equipped to accommodate.

School choice is appropriate within the public school system as long as equal access and opportunity are ensured without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or disability, and as long as accountability requirements are consistently applied. Instead of funding private school voucher initiatives, Congress should direct federal funds to public school improvement initiatives that increase the academic achievement of all students.
NASSP urges the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee to cease congressional support for the D.C. private school voucher program and find a more responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

JoAnn D. Bartoletti
Executive Director, NASSP