

Castle "Ed-Flex" Legislation Expected to Pass House Tonight -- March 14, 2006

President Bush will sign Castle measure into law enabling key education flexibility initiatives in Delaware to continue

Washington, DC -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today managed a key piece of legislation on the floor of the House of Representatives, S. 2363, that will extend the Education Flexibility Partnership Act, also known as Ed-Flex. Delaware is one of only ten states in the country to use the Ed-Flex provisions, which enable school districts to creatively use funding to help students learn. The legislation, which has already passed in the Senate and was introduced in the house by Congressman Castle, would extend Ed-Flex provisions until September 30, 2007 or until No Child Left Behind is reauthorized.

"This important bill, which was originally passed in 1994, will allow States that have already been approved for the Ed-Flex program to continue to participate until the No Child Left Behind Act is reauthorized and the issue of appropriate administrative flexibility can be re-examined by Congress. Ed-Flex provides greater State and local flexibility in using Federal education funds to support locally-designed, comprehensive school improvement efforts. This increased flexibility is provided in exchange for increased accountability for results. As always Delaware is on the forefront of education reform, and I am pleased that this extension will ensure they are able to keep up with these efforts. Since 2001, almost 60 schools in Delaware have been able to use the flexibility authority to better serve the needs of their students," Castle said on the floor of the House of Representatives

Most of the local school districts and charter schools in Delaware used the Ed-Flex authorization to enhance the implementation of two programs; the Federal Title I program, which provides funds to schools based on financial need and the state Extra Time funds. The flexibility within these programs has enabled schools to meet a broader range of student needs, and increase the amount of support given to students in need, such as tutoring or summer school.

Specifically, Ed-Flex allows the Secretary of Education to delegate the authority to States to waive certain Federal statutory or regulatory requirements affecting the State and local school districts and schools, if they have adopted challenging academic standards and strong provisions for holding schools accountable for student achievement. There are some provisions of Federal law that cannot be waived under the Ed-Flex program. Those provisions include: requirements relating to fiscal accountability standards; equitable participation by private school pupils and teachers; parental involvement; allocation of funds to States and local school districts; as well as health; safety; and, civil rights.