



April 7, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs DeLauro and Murray and Ranking Members Cole and Blunt,

We write on behalf of the Friends of IES, a coalition of 38 organizations committed to supporting the essential role of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). We thank you for increased funding for IES in FY 2022. To build upon this increase and to further support IES's critical mission, **we encourage you to provide at least \$815 million for IES in the FY 2023** Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill. This funding level would bolster the research and statistical infrastructure needed to develop and scale up evidence-based interventions with the aim of improving academic outcomes, support important work to meet the social and emotional needs of students and the education workforce, and continue to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in education.

IES is an independent, nonpartisan branch of the U.S. Department of Education and plays a critical role in developing the research base for and examining the effectiveness of education programs and curricula. Its four centers – the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Center for Education Research (NCER), National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) and National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE) – work collaboratively to efficiently and comprehensively deliver rigorous research and high-quality data, statistics, and evaluations.

We are deeply grateful for the increased funding for IES over the past few fiscal years, which has increased the capacity for IES to advance innovative research, develop the methodological skills of education researchers, and continue to support high-quality and trustworthy statistics and evidence-based resources. At the same time, a recent report from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) provided IES recommendations to build on its strengths to fund specific emerging research topic areas, support a broader range of research methods, and increase diversity of IES research and training grantees. This report highlighted historical constraints that IES has faced in supporting such work: "Given the breadth of what IES is expected to accomplish as mandated in ESRA, its funding for both programmatic

activities and staffing has historically been limited in comparison to other federal science, research, and statistical agencies with similar objectives.”(p. 3-3) The NASEM report also noted, “in order to achieve the overarching vision presented through these recommendations, IES will require additional investments.”(p. 9-4)¹ Appropriating at least \$815 million for IES in FY 2023 is necessary to more fully support the education research and statistical infrastructure essential to education policy and practice.

The **Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D)** line item supports NCER research grants in emerging lines of inquiry and pressing questions about education. IES has historically funded only one of every ten grant proposals through its annual education research grant Request for Applications (RFA). In FY 2021, NCER held its first Transformative Research in the Education Sciences RFA, resulting in awarding four out of 150 applications submitted. Increasing funding for RD&D in FY 2023 will enable NCER to increase its investment to support additional high-risk, high-reward research with the potential for transforming education.

With appreciation for the boost provided in FY 2022, additional funding for RD&D is essential to support needed research in foundational and emerging areas in education, including measures and assessments for career and technical education; the development and testing of education technology products that can personalize instruction; and approaches to teacher recruitment, retention, certification, assessment, and compensation. In addition, RD&D funding is critical for research and synthesis of effective practices to help improve education and better support the achievement of our nation’s students, including addressing persistent learning gaps that existed prior to, and have been exacerbated by, COVID-19.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), one of the 13 federal principal statistical agencies, provides objective data, statistics, and reports on the condition of education in the United States. NCES also provides critical investment in State Longitudinal Data Systems, which have helped states link K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to gain a better understanding of education and workforce outcomes.

NCES works with stakeholders to provide relevant data through administrative and longitudinal surveys, but limited funding and staff resources over the past decade has resulted in constraining NCES in its capacity to meet the real-time data needs of researchers and policymakers. Additional funding for NCES would provide greater flexibility to develop surveys such as the School Pulse Panel and more quickly release important educational indicators. Restoring purchasing power NCES has lost over the past decade would also expand the agency’s capacity to analyze data on timely education issues and link administrative education data to health and employment data for evidence-based policymaking and to understand the broader context of outcomes.

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. *The Future of Education Research at IES: Advancing an Equity-Oriented Science*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26428>.

The Nation's Report Card, NAEP, provides essential educational indicators on the progress of the nation's students and schools. The 2022 NAEP 4th and 8th grade math and reading assessments will provide important information on educational progress that may have been affected by the disruption to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. NCES is planning to incorporate adaptive testing and the ability to take assessments on a variety of devices in future administrations of NAEP. Additional resources for the Assessment line can support research and development to drive innovations in NAEP and the administration of voluntary NAEP assessments such as civics and science to produce state-level results.

The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) is the only federal agency specifically designated to develop and provide evaluations for programs for students with disabilities, but currently has a budget that has remained relatively flat since FY 2014 and still below its FY 2010 funding level. Due to limited funding, NCSER did not run competitions in FY 2022 for its annual special education research and training grants.

Research funded by NCSER has resulted in programs such as those that support youth with high functioning autism experiencing high levels of anxiety, individuals with Down syndrome learning to read, and students with learning disabilities studying to master math word problems. NCSER also provides special educators and administrators research-based resources that support the provision of a free appropriate public education and interventions to foster self-determination in students with disabilities as they transition into adulthood.

The Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) conduct applied research that is directly relevant to state and district administrators, principals and teachers. RELs also ensure that research is shared widely through its deep dissemination networks. Recent work by the RELs has been responsive to pressing issues, including REL Midwest research to address teacher recruitment and retention, resulting in the "Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educator Campaign." This initiative seeks to recruit individuals with expired teacher certificates into the teacher workforce by reducing – and in some cases, eliminating – professional learning requirements for recertification. This work is all driven by the state education agencies and other stakeholders in the regions. Additional funding is needed to research and support growing local and regional needs to respond to the impact of the pandemic on academic, social and emotional outcomes.

We also appreciate the inclusion of language in recent appropriations bills calling for the Department of Education to address how it will ensure adequate staffing levels, including in IES. **We are particularly grateful for the inclusion of a new program administration line item within IES in the FY 2022 omnibus appropriations bill**, which will provide additional flexibility for IES to hire staff to support the increased work that comes with added funding. We look forward to your continued oversight on this issue to ensure IES has the resources to employ the necessary staff to effectively carry out its mission.

We urge Congress to appropriate at least \$815 million for IES in FY 2023, an important step toward a goal of funding \$1 billion for IES in the next few years. With continued emphasis on

evidence-based policy and practice as our nation continues to recover from the pandemic, IES plays an essential role in responding to key research questions, disseminating data to inform decisions, and developing resources to guide learning and instruction. Sustained, robust investment in the education research and statistical infrastructure at IES is necessary to support the success of our nation's students, teachers, and education leaders.

Sincerely,

American Educational Research Association
American Mathematical Society
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant
Universities
Boston University
Carnegie Mellon University
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special
Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
ETS
Federation of Associations in Behavioral
and Brain Sciences
Institute for Higher Education Policy
(IHEP)
Johns Hopkins University

Knowledge Alliance
LEARN Coalition
Lehigh University
Marzano Research
Michigan State University, College of
Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Down Syndrome Society
New York University
Penn State University
Population Association of America
Results for America
Society for Research in Child Development
Tulane University
University of California System
University of California, Davis
University of Florida
University of Oregon
University of Virginia
University of Washington College of
Education
Vanderbilt University