



March 14, 2019

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

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

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

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole,

We are writing on behalf of the Friends of IES, a coalition of organizations committed to supporting the essential role of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), to encourage you to provide \$670 million for IES in the FY 2020 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill. This amount would restore the nearly ten percent decrease in purchasing power in real dollars that IES has experienced since FY 2011.

We recognize that non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding for FY 2020 would absorb a \$55 billion cut under the Budget Control Act. While strongly advocating for this additional IES funding, we urge Congress to first reach a new budget agreement to avert these cuts and increase NDD funding levels over FY 2019. This budget deal and its increase are vital for IES to maintain and build the investment made in education research and data to enhance instruction and student learning.

IES is a semi-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 and statistics. This information is essential to address our nation’s most pressing educational challenges and to help states and districts build a culture of evidence-driven policy. Local, state, and federal governments invest billions of dollars in public education each year and depend on the evidence that IES develops to inform how they spend these dollars.

IES has prioritized making its funded research findings and data more accessible to teachers and school leaders. We appreciated the modest increase for Research, Development and

Dissemination in FY2018, which helped IES fund the National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice, the launch of the CTE Network, and grants that include an analysis of the impact of student aid programs on college enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment. Yet, insufficient funding has constrained the ability to support emerging lines of inquiry and tackle pressing questions about education, such as what can be done to increase school safety, address challenges facing rural districts, support improved teacher professional development and supports, and bolster the impact of technology in the classroom. Due to current funding limitations, there is disruption of funding research and capacity building in priority areas. Further, many high scoring grants continue to go unfunded as only one of every ten grant proposals receives support.

NCES, as one of the 13 federal principal statistical agencies, provides objective data, statistics, and reports on the condition of education in the United States. The National Assessment of Educational Progress provides essential educational indicators on the progress of the nation's students and schools. 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 and serve as the basis of tools such as early warning systems that identify students at risk of dropping out of school. Sufficient funding for NCES would enhance the data collection from school districts and postsecondary institutions and the administration of longitudinal surveys. Responses to these surveys provide quality information for products such as Data Points reports, including recent statistics on student participation in dual enrollment programs and the prevalence of cyberbullying reported by principals.

NCSER is the only federal agency specifically designated to develop and provide evaluations for programs for students with disabilities. Research funded by NCSER include the development and evaluation of positive behavior supports strategies, programs to support students who experience reading difficulties, and interventions to foster self-determination in students with disabilities as they transition into adulthood. Additional funding for NCSER could support research that addresses special education teacher quality and shortages, including research on preparation, recruitment, retention, and high leverage practices, as well as research that would examine the link between students with disabilities and enrollment in developmental education classes in higher education. These are critical topics that NCSER has been unable to fund with a budget that is only two-thirds of what it was in 2005.

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 across the REL network has focused on literacy, including the development of a rubric for evaluating reading/language arts instructional materials for kindergarten to grade 5; a self-study guide for implementing early literacy interventions; and a study on time to language proficiency for Hispanic English learner students. With additional resources the RELs could produce additional research-based materials so that educators may better serve these incredibly diverse regions.

Thank you for your attention to our request to appropriate \$670 million for IES. Our education system will be stronger in the future if we provide meaningful, sustained support for rigorous education research and evaluation today.

Sincerely,

American Educational Research Association
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Autism Society of America
Carnegie Mellon University
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
EDGE Consulting Partners
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Knowledge Alliance
LEARN Coalition
Lehigh University
Literacy Research Association
National Center for Learning Disabilities
Penn State University
Population Association of America
Results for America
Society for Research in Child Development
Tulane University
University of Florida
University of Oregon
University of Virginia
Vanderbilt University
Virginia Commonwealth University
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