



February 5, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and
Minority Leader McConnell:

As the nation continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we write as 36 members of the Friends of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to urge that IES receive \$200 million in the next emergency COVID-19 relief package. This amount would provide additional funding for scaling up and testing interventions to address learning loss, particularly for students who have faced significant barriers to educational access during the past year. In addition, this amount would support needed data and evidence-based resources to guide teachers, administrators, and policymakers in state and local agencies on continued COVID-19 response and recovery.

We greatly appreciate the \$28 million for the National Assessment of Educational Progress included in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act. This additional funding will be important for administering the delayed 4th and 8th grade math and reading assessments in 2022 to provide comparable state-level data on achievement.

We are also deeply thankful to House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Scott, Congressman Sablan, and Congresswoman Leger Fernandez for introducing the Learning Recovery Act (HR 676), which authorizes IES to support research on strategies to address the gaps in educational access and outcomes that the pandemic has exacerbated. To support our nation's schools in meeting this challenge, emergency funding for IES is critical in the overall COVID-19 response.

As the independent, nonpartisan agency supporting education research and statistics within the Department of Education, IES is positioned to build upon ongoing work to inform policy and practice throughout the pandemic. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has added questions to surveys in the field to gauge the

impact of school closures on students, teachers, and school leaders. The Regional Educational Labs and the What Works Clearinghouse have also provided evidence-based guidance and technical assistance to inform school reopening plans and support instruction in remote and hybrid learning. IES Director Mark Schneider has launched [Operation Reverse the Loss](#) to broaden and accelerate these efforts, while President Biden has called for additional data collection and evidence-based guidance in his executive order for reopening schools.

Even as IES is proactively addressing the gaps in learning and socioemotional development borne by COVID-19, additional investment and the capacity to hire program officers and statistical staff are necessary for this work by IES to have the systemic impact to ramp up effective educational interventions and to measure and address disparate impacts experienced by students of color, students with disabilities, English Learners, and students facing economic hardship. The \$200 million in emergency funding requested for IES could be used to help support:

- Research grants at the National Center for Education Research to pilot promising interventions and expand effective teaching and learning programs to address learning loss. IES has the flexibility to use funds directed to understanding and addressing the impact of COVID-19 in education through a range of methods, including off-cycle requests for applications; research and development centers; and low-cost, short-term studies.
- The development and implementation of a school pulse survey, which [stakeholders](#) have recommended \$5 million in emergency funding for NCES to conduct. Additional funding could also support longitudinal surveys that can provide essential data on the long-term education outcomes of COVID-19.
- Investment in the National Center for Special Education Research, which has been severely underfunded, to respond to the significant barriers and potential learning loss that students with disabilities have experienced in shifting to remote instruction.
- Expanding the capacity of the Regional Educational Laboratories and the What Works Clearinghouse to provide technical assistance and resources to states and districts, and develop best practices in the return to in-person instruction.
- Establishing an ARPA-ED to invest in digital learning platforms and support higher risk education research with potential for transformative breakthroughs in education to help the most affected students in learning recovery.

Thank you for your attention to our request to provide \$200 million for IES in the next COVID-19 emergency relief package. As the nation works to safely reopen schools, it is imperative to support students who have experienced substantial disruption to their learning across all levels of education during the past year. Gathering data to inform policy and practice, scaling up effective interventions, and providing evidence-based

guidance are important tools in ensuring the success of our students and helping our nation begin to recover from the pandemic.

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
Boston 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 & Brain Sciences
Indiana University
International Literacy Association
Johns Hopkins University
Knowledge Alliance
LEARN Coalition
Lehigh University
Literacy Research Association
Michigan State University
National Association of School Nurses
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Down Syndrome Society
Population Association of America
Society for Research in Child Development
University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California System
University of Florida
University of Kansas
University of Oregon
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University of Washington College of Education
Vanderbilt University