

July 6, 2021

Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair, Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member, Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole, Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As your subcommittees develop their FY 2022 appropriations bill, we urge you to include the following funding levels for the following programs:

- **\$250 million for IDEA Personnel Preparation coupled with an additional \$90 million in mandatory spending from the American Families Plan as recommended in the President's FY '22 budget request** (currently funded at \$90 million)
- **\$132 million for Teacher Quality Partnership Grants under the Higher Education Act coupled with an additional \$280 million in mandatory spending from the American Families Plan as recommended in President Biden's FY '22 budget request** (currently funded at \$50 million)
- **\$20 million for the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence under the Higher Education Act with an additional \$40 million in mandatory spending from the American Families Plan as recommended in the President's FY '22 budget request** (currently unfunded)

Together these three programs represent the federal government's core programs intended to address shortages in the educator pipeline and diversify the profession for the future. The IDEA Personnel Preparation program is intended to provide the workforce to carry out the mandate of IDEA – including mental health experts such as school psychologists, counselors and social workers. Students with disabilities have been significantly affected by the pandemic. Despite the investment in education by the American Rescue Plan Act, none of those funds were dedicated to ensuring and maintaining a pipeline of well-prepared diverse educators. [The recent article in the Washington Post](#) exemplifies the challenge facing even well-to-do districts as there are not enough special education teachers available to carry out summer programming, despite funding from the American Rescue Plan Act.

The Teacher Quality Partnership Grant program, authorized by the Higher Education Act, provides support for critical innovations in educator preparation – for teachers and school leaders -- requiring partnerships between high need PK-12 schools and educator preparation programs. A strong clinical component, including a year long residency, is a feature of the grants, which

target the preparation of educators in shortage areas including math/science, ELL, and special education.

Authorized since 2008 in the Higher Education Act, the Augustus F. Hawkins program supports MSI's to expand preparation programs to address the lack of diversity among educators. MSI's prepare half of educators of color; thus, an investment in expanding their capacity will go a long way toward increasing the diversity of our workforce. Research is clear that educators of color benefit all students and make a significant difference in the achievement of students of color.

Recent data reveal:

- As a result of the teacher shortage, many states are hiring unprepared unqualified people to serve as educators – the proportion of uncertified teachers grew by 50% from 2014 to 2016;
- In 2018 approximately 100,000 classrooms were staffed by instructors who did not complete some type of educator preparation program;
- The educator pipeline does not look promising as the enrollment in teacher preparation programs is down 35% in the last five years;
- One in five teachers are people of color, compared to over half of K-12 students.
- Despite comprising only 3% of institutions of higher education, HBCU's prepare 50% of the nation's Black teachers;
- Despite making up just 17% of Institutions in the country, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) confer 58% of Hispanic bachelor's degrees in education. Among bachelor's degrees in education, HSIs additionally graduate 36% of Asian, 16% of American Indian and Alaska Native, 15% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and 12% of Black students.
- Special education is the field with the greatest teacher shortage, with 48 states and the District of Columbia reporting shortages;
- The shortage of special education faculty in higher education is fueling the shortage of special education teachers; since 2009 there has been a 19% reduction in the number of special education doctoral programs.

These programs together have suffered an ongoing diminishment of funds in the last several years, moving steadily downhill as the shortage of educators steadily has grown, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. Despite the critical lack of diversity of educators, the key federal program targeted to addressing this challenge has never been funded. We now have a critical opportunity to turn the tide and secure a well-prepared diverse educator workforce for our nation's students. We look forward to working with you to ensure a robust investment in the educator pipeline in the FY '22 appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)  
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
American Council on Education  
American Music Therapy Association

The Advocacy Institute  
American Physical Therapy Association  
The Arc of the United States  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Center for Learner Equity  
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Council for Learning Disabilities  
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates  
Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)  
The Education Trust  
EDGE Consulting Partners  
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
National Superintendents Roundtable  
National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR)  
National Writing Project  
PDK International  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Teach Plus  
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

Cc: Members of the House and Senate Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Subcommittees