



September 16, 2016

Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

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

As the start of fiscal year (FY) 2017 quickly approaches—and the House and Senate appropriators are working to complete action on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriation for the new year—the undersigned organizations urge Members to provide meaningful investments in programs that will support teachers and principals in creating schools where all students can succeed.

We are a group of organizations who believe that all schools can become great schools if teachers, principals, and other school leaders have the preparation and ongoing support needed to put into practice the best educational strategies and approaches. Collectively, we have prepared and supported thousands of effective teachers and leaders who are making a difference in high-poverty and other high-need schools. We are now working with States and local school districts to prepare for the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), whose initial implementation will be supported with FY 2017 funding. Indeed, FY 2017 is a particularly critical year for support of Federal teacher and school leadership programs, as the programs and activities States and districts put in place in that year will likely set the pattern for what is implemented and achieved over the full four-year ESSA authorization. With that imperative in mind, we urge the Congress to provide *increased funding* for the following specific programs.

- **Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants (Title II-A)**—Title II-A provides formula grants to States and school districts for activities to improve the quality of teaching and school leadership; increase the number of teachers, principals, and other leaders who are effective in improving student achievement; and ensure that students from low-income families and minority students have equitable access to effective teachers and leaders. The reauthorization under ESSA places greater emphasis on carrying out evidence-based practices, and gives States new authority to use program funds on activities that will strengthen the preparation and improvement of principals and other school leaders. Title II-A is the largest Federal program specifically dedicated to improving teaching and leadership and thus will be an indispensable vehicle for accomplishment of the overall objective of ESSA: student success. **We urge the Congress to fund Title II-A at \$2.25 billion.**
- **Teacher and School Leader Incentive Grants (TSLIG)**—The TSLIG supports efforts to improve school districts' human capital management systems and to develop, improve, or expand performance-based compensation systems. It is the successor to the Teacher Incentive Fund that the Congress has funded over the last decade. Because of the importance of making improvements in the procedures used by many districts for hiring, training, compensating, evaluating, rewarding, and supporting the career development of teachers, principals, and other school leaders, we believe that this program should continue to be a priority. **We urge the Congress to fund the TSLIG at \$250 million.**
- **The School Leader Recruitment and Support Program (TSLRP)**—TSLRP is the only Federal program with an exclusive focus on principals and other school leaders and thus is particularly critical given the major impact on principals on schools and classrooms. Research indicates that principals account for 25 percent of a school's impact on student achievement and that a highly-effective teacher can increase student achievement by as much as 20 percentage points. **We urge the Congress to fund the TSLRP at \$30 million.**
- **Education Research and Innovation (EIR)**—The EIR program supports development, validation, and scaling up of innovative strategies and interventions for addressing persistent education challenges. Under ESSA, EIR replaces the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3). i3 funded the development and expansion of a number of promising or demonstrably effective programs specifically designed to improve teaching and school leadership, which is a priority under the new program. **We urge the Congress to fund the EIR at \$180 million.**
- **Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED)**—The SEED program provides competitive grants to institutions of higher education, national nonprofit organizations, and the Bureau of Indian Education for activities that support the recruitment, preparation, and professional development of teachers or principals and other school leaders. Under ESSA, SEED will focus specifically on such activities as pathways that allow teachers, principals, and other school leaders with nontraditional preparation and certification to obtain employment in traditionally underserved districts; providing evidence-based professional development that addresses a range of needs, including literacy, numeracy, and remedial needs of students; and providing professional development that enhances the opportunity for students to participate in dual-enrollment and early-college programs. **We urge the Congress to fund the SEED program at \$100 million.**
- **Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP)**—The TQP program seeks to strengthen the education professions mainly through improvement in the initial preparation of teachers, school leaders, and early childhood educators, with a particular emphasis on programs that prepare educators to serve in high-poverty and rural school districts. The Administration requested that this program be replaced with a new Teacher and Principals Pathways initiative. Because the Congress has not taken action to create a new program, we support continuation and increased funding for the current TQP, with support provided for both teacher preparation and principal preparation grants. **We urge the Congress to fund the TQP program at \$125 million.**

In sum, the undersigned believe that the six programs described above are critical components of the national effort to improve student outcomes through critical investments in teaching and school leadership. Strong support in FY 2017 will be critical in helping to ensure that ESSA achieves its important objectives. Please support the students and schools in your state by increasing funding for these programs in the final 2017 appropriation.

Sincerely,

America Achieves  
America Forward  
Chiefs for Change  
Democrats for Education Reform  
Educators for Excellence  
Education Reform Now  
Leading Educators  
National Commission on Teaching & America's Future  
National Network of State Teachers of the Year  
New Leaders  
New York City Leadership Academy  
Public Impact  
Results for America  
School Leadership Preparation & Development Network  
Teach for America  
Teach Plus  
The School Leadership Project  
TNTP