



March 15, 2023

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

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

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

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

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin and Ranking Members DeLauro and Capito,

We write on behalf of the Friends of IES, a coalition of 41 organizations committed to supporting the essential role of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). We are thankful for additional funding provided for IES in FY 2023 that has expanded 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. **We encourage you to provide at least \$900 million for IES in the FY 2024** Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill. This amount would enable IES to build on ongoing research and development activities to improve educational outcomes, address added costs for grants and contracts due to recent inflation, and to bolster education research and data infrastructure.

IES is an independent, nonpartisan branch of the U.S. Department of Education charged with providing information on the condition and progress of education, educational practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to educational opportunities for all students, and the effectiveness of federal and other education programs. IES works collaboratively across its programs to meet this mission through producing high-quality research, trustworthy data and statistics, and developing partnerships between researchers and practitioners to inform evidence-based education policy and practice.

While we are deeply grateful for the increased funding for IES over the past few fiscal years, even with those added resources IES has been forced to curtail funding new research proposals, was unable to run competitions in education research and special education research, and delayed the administration of important statistical surveys due to limited funds. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) also found that the IES budget did not appear to be on par with other scientific agencies and that “the modest size seems

particularly unwarranted in light of the high degree of success IES has demonstrated in pursuit of its mission.”¹

At the same time, the demand for evidence-based strategies to accelerate learning and to support mental health needs of students and educators requires a significant investment in education R&D infrastructure. The 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading results, as well as recent reports that 49 percent of students were below grade level at the beginning of this school year² underscore the urgency to bring evidence-based programs to scale and harness the potential of innovation in education.

Within IES, the **Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D)** line item supports research and development grants in emerging topic areas and longstanding challenges in education policy and practice. The RD&D line also supports the synthesis and dissemination of evidence-based resources through the What Works Clearinghouse and the Education Resources Information Center.

The RD&D line is one of the primary federal funding sources for basic and applied education research grants and training grants that develop the methodological skills of a diverse education research workforce. Projects that received a total of nearly \$100 million in funding through the FY 2022 Education Research Grant competition are directly involving 15 million students and 360,000 teachers. The timely education topics being addressed in these grants range from equity in education focused on [community college students](#) and [youth in foster care](#), to testing the effectiveness of an [educational robotics program](#), to understanding the long-term impact of the use of a social-emotional development tool, [INSIGHTS](#).

Due to limited funding, this core grant competition within IES could not be launched in FY 2023, and several grant applications that were eligible for awards in the FY 2022 competition could not be funded. Limited funding for this and several additional core research and training competitions directly affected the ability to address important challenges and opportunities across education and the use of evidence-based tools in schools. In addition, the lack of FY 2023 RFAs diminished the capacity to develop early career scholars and broaden participation among IES grantees and grantee institutions. Additional funding within RD&D is critical to support research that drives the development of evidence-based education programs, that in turn complements new IES activities promoting high-reward and quick-turnaround scalable solutions to improve student outcomes.

Ongoing work supported through appropriations and the American Rescue Plan is leveraging IES-funded programs that have demonstrated improvements in academic and non-academic outcomes. As one example, the [Leveraging Evidence to Accelerate Recovery Nationwide Network](#) is aiming to scale up several IES-supported interventions, [Targeted Reading Instruction](#), [Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies \(PALS\) Reading](#), and [Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention](#) to accelerate learning affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. *The Future of Education Research at IES: Advancing an Equity-Oriented Science*, p. 195. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26428>.

² National Center for Education Statistics. December 2022 School Pulse Survey, Learning Recovery Dashboard: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/spp/>

funding for RD&D can expand this important work to scale up promising practice, as well as support several topics of national interest identified by NASEM, including teacher education and the development of the education workforce, and education technology and learning analytics.

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 (SLDS)**, which have helped states link K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to gain a better understanding of education and workforce outcomes. Increased funding for SLDS could support additional grants for states to enhance data quality, develop data governance structures, and pilot innovative measures as some states are currently doing to develop an alternate measure of poverty in lieu of free- and reduced-price lunch status.

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. The School Pulse Panel has provided timely and relevant information on how schools have responded throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and in implementing activities to support learning and social-emotional outcomes. Additional funding for the **Statistics** line would expand the agency's capacity to collect and analyze data on timely education issues, as well as link administrative education data to health and employment data for evidence-based policymaking and to understand the broader context of outcomes.

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 illuminated the devastating impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on learning outcomes. While the sole NAEP assessment being conducted in 2023 is the Long-Term Trend assessment, funding for NAEP is essential to plan for future administration of mandatory and voluntary NAEP assessments, update assessment frameworks, and report NAEP results. Additional resources for the Assessment line can support implementing innovations to incorporate adaptive testing, the joint R&D agenda that NCES and the National Assessment Governing Board is undertaking, and the administration of voluntary NAEP assessments such as civics and science to produce state-level results.

The Research in Special Education line supports research and training grants within the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). 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 still remains below its FY 2010 funding level of \$70 million. 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.

Due to limited funding, NCSER did not run competitions in FY 2022 for its annual special education research and training grants. Yet, with funding from the American Rescue Plan, several NCSER research grants are responding to the particular challenges students with disabilities faced in the COVID-19 pandemic, in collaboration with state agencies and school

districts. These grants include a [virtual process for autism spectrum disorder diagnosis for more timely access to early intervention services](#), [professional learning for teachers in small-group instruction of students with or at risk for math disabilities](#), and a [parent-implemented preschool language program for preschoolers with developmental language disorder](#).

Even with the success that NCSER-supported work has had to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, there are several important areas, such as educators and school-based service providers; access, participation, and successful completion of college for persons with disabilities; and special education financing, for which increased investment in NCSER could support.

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 Southeast research to advance evidence-based instruction in early childhood literacy in South Carolina. This work involved a partnership with the South Carolina Department of Education to implement the Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy. 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 urge Congress to appropriate at least \$900 million for IES in FY 2024, which would bolster the necessary education research and data infrastructure to address emerging and persistent challenges in education. For our students to succeed and to be internationally competitive, we must make robust investments in the science of teaching and learning and we must have the necessary data to make evidenced-based decisions on allocating education dollars. Failure to continue the recent trajectory of funding increases for IES would have devastating impacts on our ability to improve our schools.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Learning Innovation
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Mathematical Society
American Psychological Association Services, Inc.
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
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE)
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Johns Hopkins University
Knowledge Alliance
LEARN Coalition
Lehigh University
Marzano Research
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council on Teacher Quality
New York University
Penn State University
Population Association of America
Results for America
Rice University
Society for Research in Child Development
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (TED)
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Florida
University of Michigan
University of Oregon
University of Virginia
University of Washington College of Education
Vanderbilt University