



March 6, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health &  
Human Services, Education, & Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Appropriations Leaders:

As Friends of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), we appreciate that the President's budget request is a demonstration of strong support for IES. While this is a positive step toward restoring the overall funding level for IES to its pre-2009 level, it leaves two important programs well below funding levels in 2008: The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) and the Regional Education Laboratories (REL).

During this time of urgent and far reaching change in education, never has the need been greater for effective policies and practices based upon sound research. We urge you to build upon the President's request of \$675.8 million and restore, as a bare minimum, \$11.2 million to RELs and \$16.6 million to NCSER, matching the 2008 funding level. We encourage you to provide \$703.6 million for the education sciences in the FY 2016 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports important research; data collection and statistical analysis; evaluation; and dissemination. This work contributes to a growing evidence base that informs educational practice and policy across the nation. An adequate funding level will allow IES to build upon existing findings, and to conduct new research, which has been limited due to the effects of sequestration and other cuts.

The Friends of IES is a coalition of scientific associations and institutions, research and practitioner organizations, and other groups with an interest in IES. We support the Institute's mission to expand fundamental knowledge and understanding of education from early childhood through higher education and the workforce; provide rigorous and relevant evidence on which to ground education practice and policy; share this information broadly; and promote knowledge utilization in policy and practice.

IES funds research and produces statistics and data to improve our understanding of education at many levels—early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and higher education. It also supports research in special education, rural education, teacher effectiveness, education technology, student achievement, reading and math interventions, and many other areas. As Congress and the White House call for using evidence-based practices in education, adequate resources for IES would fund studies that not only increase knowledge of the factors that influence teaching and learning, but also the application of those findings to improve educational outcomes.

Even in the face of budgetary constraints, investment in education research represents a small, but important, piece of the Department of Education’s budget. Indeed, \$703.6 million would restore the cuts that IES has faced since 2009.

The impact of these reductions is tangible:

- In FY 2014, the National Center for Special Education Research was not able to fund any new awards.
- Over the past couple of years, the National Center for Education Research could not support all of the proposals that met its rigorous standards for review. In 2014, more than a quarter of eligible grants were not funded.
- Cuts to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) postponed the administration of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP tests for civics, history, and geography in 2013. Providing the president’s request for NAEP in FY 2016 would allow these assessments to take place in 2018.

An educated workforce is a necessary component of the nation’s economy, and long-term, sustained investment in IES produces results that shape the development of practices and policies that reach all students. We thank you for your support of IES and urge you to strengthen the research foundations of education by supporting IES in the FY 2016 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

American Educational Research Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association  
Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Education Development Center, Inc.  
EDGE Consulting  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences  
Knowledge Alliance  
Learning Disabilities Association  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
Population Association of America

Society for Research in Child Development  
Success for All Foundation  
WestEd