



March 27, 2018

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

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
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

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

We are writing on behalf of the Friends of IES, a coalition of organizations committed to supporting the essential role of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), to encourage you to provide \$670 million for IES in the FY 2019 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill. This level of funding is essential to maintain and build upon the research and data infrastructure that state and local education leaders depend on to make effective and efficient decisions.

IES is a semi-independent branch of the U.S. Department of Education and plays a critical role in developing the research base for and examining the effectiveness of education programs and curricula. Local, state, and federal governments invest billions of dollars in public education each year and depend on the evidence IES develops to inform how they spend these dollars. As the nonpartisan agency for education research and data and the evaluator of federal education policies, IES helps ensure that taxpayer money is being invested in efforts that are supported by rigorous research. IES support for researcher-practitioner partnerships, research centers, statewide longitudinal data systems, and the Regional Educational Laboratories has helped to build a culture of evidence use in states across the country.

IES will soon have a permanent Director in place for the first time in four years. While providing outstanding leadership, acting directors were forced to make tough decisions due to insufficient funding -- such as cutting training grants or leaving high quality and promising grants unfunded. We encourage Congress to empower the new Director by bolstering the IES budget to give him flexibility to fund new grants and support emerging lines of inquiry.

Insufficient funding for Research, Development and Dissemination means that many pressing questions about education remain unanswered, such as what can be done to increase school safety, address challenges facing rural districts, and bolster the impact of technology in the classroom.

While IES has several studies on higher education in the works, there is a lot that students and families still will not know without additional investment in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Data collected by NCES can help inform students and families about higher education outcomes, including enrollment, completion, and post-college success. Moreover, this data would increase transparency at higher education institutions.

Additional funding for the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER) could support research that addresses special education teacher quality and shortages, including research on preparation, recruitment, retention, and high leverage practices, as well as research that would examine the link between students with disabilities and enrollment in developmental education classes in higher education. These are critical topics that NCSEER has been unable to fund with a budget that is only two-thirds of what it was in 2005.

While \$670 million would be an increase from the FY 2017 budget of \$605 million, it is worth recalling that in FY 2010 the IES budget was \$660 million. The IES budget has been continually reduced ever since. At a time when Congress, the Department of Education, and states are asking for more evidence and data, the stagnant budget limits the ability of IES to respond in full.

Thank you for your attention to our request to appropriate \$670 million for IES. Our education system will be stronger in the future if we provide meaningful, sustained support for rigorous education research and evaluation today.

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
Autism Speaks
Boston University
Center for Research and Reform at Johns Hopkins University
Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council for Exceptional Children

Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
EDGE Consulting LLC
Education Development Center
Educational Testing Service
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Florida State University
Knowledge Alliance
Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN)
Lehigh University
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of State Directors of Adult Education
Penn State University
Population Association of America
Results for America
Society for Research in Child Development
Success for All Foundation
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Virginia
Vanderbilt University
WestEd