October 25, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey,

As you consider the next steps for the FY 2017 budget, we, the undersigned individuals and organizations representing education research scientists, institutions, organizations, deans, and faculty are writing to convey our strong support to restore FY 2016 levels for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). We are greatly concerned about and deeply oppose the significant cuts to IES included in the FY2017 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill passed by the Appropriations Committee on July 14. The committee cut $82 million in funding from an already underfunded budget, threatening the tremendous contributions that IES is making to support education research that informs efforts to improve our schools and support our students.

As the independent education research, evaluation and statistics institute within the Department of Education, IES continues to produce rigorous knowledge that drives practical solutions to our nation’s education challenges. Investing in scientifically valid research benefits teaching and learning while laying the groundwork for an educated population and future workforce. The promise of this education evidence base has been explicitly recognized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, bipartisan legislation that requires increased use of evidence-based education policies. Unfortunately, as states are moving forward to implement ESSA, the Appropriations Committee voted to cut funding for IES, the source of the evidence that would empower states to successfully advance the quality of education across this nation. If these cuts are part of a final budget agreement, students across the country will lose out on the benefits from advances in research that best support their progress.

The bill approved by the Appropriations Committee would cut all but one line in the IES budget, with the largest cut to Research, Development, and Dissemination (RDD). The proposed $41 million decrease, to $154 million, is below the RDD budget for every year since 2004. These cuts would be devastating to the quantifiable progress being made by programs under the RDD line. For example, visits to the What Works Clearinghouse website climbed by 7 percent compared to last year, with 2,807,060 page views since the beginning of FY 2016. That is a monthly average of 311,896 page views. IES is also in the process of upgrading and relaunching the Find What Works search. This tool will help states meet the requirements of ESSA to provide evidence supporting the programs used in schools. Additionally, thanks to ongoing efforts to continually improve accessibility and usefulness of the Center, visits to the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) have also increased since last year, with 33,401,955 page views of the website since the beginning of FY 2016. The proposed reductions in the FY2017 budget threaten to undercut both programs’ gains, limiting access to useful research for practitioners and policymakers even as interest in such research is growing.

Under the bill passed by the Appropriations Committee, the proposed funding levels for the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) would prevent new research grants entirely, severely limiting the ability of researchers to explore and
develop emerging interventions. Last year IES introduced low-cost, short duration evaluations holding
tremendous potential to accelerate the contributions of research. In response to the needs of the field,
IES also established new research networks on college completion and science teaching. We urge the
Appropriations Committee to not only restore these funds, but also return NCSER funding to its previous
level of funding in FY 2010, $71 million.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Assessment Governing Board would
see a combined decrease of $20.5 million, almost 13 percent, from the current $157 million budget. As
the Nation’s Report Card, these assessments inform us how students in the United States compare to
students in other countries, including in math and science. The National Center for Education Statistics
(NCES) collects, analyzes and reports statistics on key measures of international comparisons of
students, enrollment projection, education expenditures and teacher demand and supply – and yet, the
House bill passed by the committee further cuts the current NCES budget of $137 million by $9 million.
Finally, the current legislation proposes reduced funding for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems
(SLDS), a critical tool for educators, officials, and parents to track student performance over time and
across different schools and districts.

While other nations are informing education practice with research, data, and statistics and
demonstrating measurable improvements, the cuts in the current bill put us at a disadvantage. Given
the small overall budget size of IES, these cuts reflect significant proportions of the various budget lines.

As education research scientists, institutions, organizations, deans, and faculty, we urge you to invest in
education research. We have witnessed the results of employing valid, reliable research to improving
outcomes for all students, and we understand the truly detrimental impact these cuts would have.
Given the importance of education to building a strong economy and meeting our nation’s commitment
to equity and opportunity for all young people, we urge you to restore funding for these essential
programs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Organizational Signatories

114th Partnership
American Educational Research Association
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
American University of Health Sciences
Association of American Universities
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Ball State University Teacher’s College
Bethel School District
Boston College Lynch School of Education
Boston University School of Education
Carnegie Mellon University
Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning
Center for Behavioral Education & Research, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut
Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University
Center for the Study of Education Policy
Clowder Consulting
Cognitive Science Society
Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (University of Kentucky)
College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University
College of Education and Human Services, Montclair State University
College of Education at Boise State University
College of Education University of Oregon
College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
College of Education, University of Nevada Las Vegas
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cooperative Ventures
CoreCollaborative International
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Exceptional Children, Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)
Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Early Childhood
Council for Exceptional Children-Division for Research
Drexel University School of Education
Easterseals
Educational and Community Supports (University of Oregon)
Education Management & Curriculum Consultants Group LLC
Educational Leaders Without Borders
Evaluation Strategy, LLC
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Florida State University College of Education
Gordon & Heller, Inc.
Houston Education Research Consortium
illuminatED LLC
Knowledge Alliance
Lane County Superintendents' Council
Lane Education Service District
Learning and Education Academic Research Network Coalition
Literacy Volunteers of Dona Ana County
Magnolia Consulting
MERAssociates
Missouri Association of School Psychologists
Missouri Prevention Center
National Association for Music Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Education Association
Nebraska Center for Science, Mathematics & Computer Education
Nyre and Associates, LLC
Ohio University - The Patton College of Education
Pemberton Research
Population Association of America
Portland State University Graduate School of Education
Research Initiative on Social Justice and Equity
Research Triangle Educational Consultants
Rice University School Mathematics Project
ROSworks, LLC
School of Education and Counseling Psychology, Santa Clara University
SMU Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Society for Research in Child Development
Special Education Program, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut
Springfield Public Schools
Success for All Foundation
TCU College of Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
Tests for Higher Standards
Texas Center for Education Policy - University of Texas at Austin
The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)
The Learning Partnership
University Council for Educational Administration
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University of Connecticut
University of Missouri System
University of Vermont
Uplift, Inc.
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Victory Productions, Inc.
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Stephanie Brown, Florida State University/National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools
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Katherine Brun, Iowa State University
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Mindy Gumpert, Old Dominion University
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John Hanson
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Douglas Harris, Tulane University
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