

April 3, 2014

Senator Barbara Mikulski  
Chairwoman  
U.S. Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
U.S. Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of Congress:

As organizations representing teachers, administrators, chief state school officers, business and community groups, and members of the education community, we would like to express our strong support for the recommended \$320 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund (renamed the Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund (TLIF) in the Administration's budget request) for fiscal year 2015.

TIF provides a catalyst for change in how teachers and principals at high need schools are supported, evaluated and compensated. TIF grantees are demonstrating how to create systems that attract and retain the most effective educators in these schools, as well as ways to use more accurate evaluation, targeted professional development and new roles for teacher leaders to drive instructional improvement across the faculty. Last year a study illustrated increases in teacher effectiveness and student achievement gains at TIF sites across a number of states, districts and schools (<http://www.niet.org/assets/increasing-educator-effectiveness-lessons-learned-from-teacher-incentive-fund-sites.pdf>). Additional studies of individual TIF initiatives have found similar results. The Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund would build on that strength by ensuring grantees invest in comprehensive human capital systems that improve the effectiveness of teachers and principals and increase the quality of instruction in high need schools.

Continued funding of TIF benefits our nation's students and educator workforce in a number of ways—

- It would ensure teachers are evaluated in comprehensive ways that provide them information to improve their practice
- It would make student achievement growth a significant factor in measuring teacher and principal performance

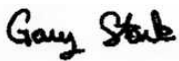
- It would create performance based compensation systems that reward educators for excellence and encourage improvement
- It would create career ladders and pathways for teachers to advance in the profession without having to leave the classroom
- It would continue to provide significant local flexibility on the design of systems

The current program has allowed local school districts and not-for-profits to bring successful innovative results-driven programs into schools and classrooms through strong collaboration between teachers and administrators. To date, after 4 rounds of awards since 2006, there are approximately 130 TIF grantees in more than 25 states and hundreds of districts, each one building on the work of its predecessors. There is very strong demand for new TIF grants, since the last awards were made in 2012.

We urge you to fund the Teacher Incentive Fund and continue its successful work to help states and districts to redesign evaluation, support and compensation with instructional goals. The \$320 million in TIF funding in FY2015 would ensure that new districts and states have the opportunity to strengthen teacher and principal effectiveness and student success in high need schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary Stark  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Institute for Excellence in Teaching



Kati Haycock  
President  
The Education Trust



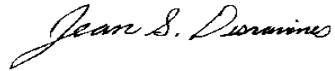
Melissa Lazarin  
Managing Director, Education Policy  
Center for American Progress Action Fund



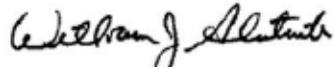
Chris Minnick  
Executive Director  
Council of Chief State School  
Officers




Charles Barone  
Policy Director  
Democrats for Education  
Reform



Jean Desravines  
Chief Executive Office  
New Leaders for New Schools



William Slotnik  
Executive Director  
Community Training and  
Assistance Center (CTAC)



Gary Beckner  
Executive Director  
Association of American  
Educators



Celine Coggins  
Chief Executive Officer  
Teach Plus



Sue Hildick  
President  
Chalkboard Project



Joe Williams  
President  
Education Reform Now