

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Blunt, and Ranking Member Cole:

Thank you for your continued leadership to support the needs of students and schools, especially those made most marginalized and vulnerable by our current systems. We are appreciative of the increased funding provided in the final fiscal year (FY2022) appropriations bill for core education programs. As the nation continues to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, and our students and educators grapple with the impacts of years of underinvestment in critical programs, we urge you to build upon the increases provided last year and go further in significantly investing in core education programs in FY2023.

Students living in poverty, students with disabilities, students learning English, students experiencing homelessness, students in the foster care system, students who are incarcerated, students who are undocumented, Black and Brown students, Native students, and students who identify as LGBTQ+ have all faced and will continue to experience disproportionate challenges that impeded their learning during the pandemic and as we recover. This disproportionality is evident across many adverse experiences that disrupted learning. As a result, many students have navigated challenges on multiple fronts and face significant barriers to thriving in school. Food insecurity, unreliable access to remote learning technology, reduced access to student support and education services, and homelessness as the result of familial unemployment and stress are just some of the elements that have played a role in disrupting and diminishing students' learning and positive development opportunities. Further, racial inequities highlighted by both COVID-19 and ongoing racial violence against Black Americans cause additional stress and anxiety for students of color and expose some of the additional daily challenges they face.

The pandemic will have a long-term effect on student learning, outcomes, and experiences, and it is important to make investments that will address immediate needs and provide the resources needed for all students to succeed. As the undersigned civil rights, education, and immigration advocacy organizations, we urge you to include the attached investments in the FY2023 appropriations bill so our students and communities can receive the support necessary to recover and ultimately thrive.

Sincerely,

All4Ed
Education Reform Now
Learning Policy Institute
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Urban League

SchoolHouse Connection
Teach Plus
The Education Trust
UnidosUS

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Programs:

- **Triple funding for Title I, Part A.** As a part of this request, we encourage Congress to:
 - Target Title I funds toward the highest poverty school districts. We recommend allocating the funding through the Targeted Assistance Grant and Education Finance Incentive Grant (EFIG) formulas or another formula that is more targeted toward high poverty districts, and allocates at least as great a percentage of funds to school districts in the top two quintiles of poverty nationally as these formulas; and,
 - Maintain the flexibility of Title I and refrain from requiring specific uses of funds.
 - Include a \$100 million reservation to support states and districts in making their education spending more equitable, such as by establishing voluntary State School Funding Equity Commissions (additional explanation included below).
- **A 10 percent reservation of Title I, Part A funding for evidence-based school improvement activities** required under section 1003(a) of ESEA. This will help to ensure there are sufficient resources to address the increased needs of districts and schools serving students most impacted by the pandemic as states use their accountability systems to identify new schools, including those identified for Targeted Supported and Improvement (TSI) based on individual groups of students, for additional support.
- **\$3 billion for Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act** to support local efforts to diversify the teaching workforce, advance teacher leadership, and provide high-quality teacher professional development – including support for high-quality induction and mentorship, and training in culturally responsive instruction, social and emotional development, restorative justice, and trauma-informed instructional practices.
- **\$400 million to support teacher leadership opportunities**, including with funds within the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program, through programs designed to provide high-quality mentorship, induction, and coaching programs, especially for those programs focused on supporting underrepresented individuals in the teaching workforce such as teachers of color and multilingual teachers, such as programs created through the Teachers LEAD Act (H.R. 7122/ S.B. 3881).
- **\$300 million to provide financial support for teachers pursuing in-demand credentials** in shortage areas, like special education and bilingual education, advanced certification like National Board Certification, and incentives for teachers with in-demand and advanced credentials to remain in the classroom. Research has demonstrated the impactful role of teacher qualifications on both teaching quality and student achievement. This program could be created through the EIR program, similar to the Administration’s budget request suggestion EIR funds could be used to “improve(ed) retention for fully certified, experienced, and effective educators.”
- **\$40 million for the School Leadership Recruitment and Support Program** to increase student access to well-prepared and diverse school leaders.
- **\$2 billion for Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act** to ensure funding reflects the growing number of English learners, supports parent engagement programs and resources in their home language, supports effective dual language learning models, and provides opportunities to strengthen the pre-service preparation, professional learning, and advancement of bilingual teachers.

- **\$5.3 billion for Title IV programs, including:**
 - **\$2 billion in Title IV, Part A funding** for the breadth of mental, physical, social, and emotional student supports and services, such as funding for school counselors, social workers, nurses, and nutrition programs.
 - **\$1.8 billion in Title IV, Part B funding** to support 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which offer robust afterschool and extended learning time programs.
 - **\$500 million within Title IV, Part D for the Magnet School Assistance Program.** Research shows magnet schools support school integration and have positive academic and social outcomes for students, yet the Magnet School Assistance Program has been underfunded.
 - **\$1 billion for Title IV, Part F** for Full-Service Community Schools, which encourage coordination of academic, social, and health services through partnerships among public elementary and secondary schools, LEAs, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other public or private entities.
- **\$120 million for the Fostering Diverse Schools program, as proposed in the Administration’s FY22 budget.** This program would provide planning and implementation grants to help communities foster diverse learning environments. In the FY2022 appropriations bill, Congress directed, in a bipartisan manner, the U.S. Department of Education to utilize ESEA Title IV-A’s capacity building and technical assistance reservation to support states and districts in their efforts to foster diversity across and within school districts. The funding through this reservation will likely not be sufficient to address the high degrees of racial and socioeconomic segregation in our nation’s public schools and we encourage Congress to robustly invest in the Fostering Diverse Schools program.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Programs:

- **\$17.4 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B,** which would provide a significant increase to programs and services authorized by IDEA and create a glide path for full funding.
- **\$300 million for IDEA, Part D personnel preparation program** to support the development of our nation’s special education educators.

McKinney-Vento Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program:

- **\$800 million for the McKinney-Vento Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program** to increase the identification of students experiencing homelessness, re-engage students, and address their academic, social, emotional learning, and basic needs. This is the same level of funding as provided in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act and would provide for continuity of ARP-HCY programming and services, particularly in LEAs that received direct funding to support students experiencing homelessness for the first time through ARP-HCY. Further, the FY23 appropriations bill should maintain the flexibility in the use of EHCY funds provided for in ARP-HCY, allowing for wrap-around services that meet the needs of the whole child and thus facilitate attendance, enrollment, and school success.

Higher Education Act (HEA) Programs:

- **\$1 billion for the Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program** to support year-long, paid teacher and school leader residency programs and Grow Your Own (GYO) programs.
- **\$300 million in the Augustus Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program** to support comprehensive teacher preparation at programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs).
- **Double TEACH Grants from \$4,000 to \$8,000** so the program more effectively underwrites the cost of comprehensive preparation and lowers inequitable affordability barriers faced by students of color and students experiencing low incomes. To make the program more effective the loan conversion penalty should be removed, or reformed, and early educators should be made eligible for benefits.

Data and Innovation Programs:

- **\$140 million to bolster statewide data systems, including the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)**, so state and district leaders can address current and evolving information needs. Specifically, we urge Congress to invest at least \$100 million in the SLDS program and at least \$40 million in the WDQI fund. Funding provided should be allocated so states will be provided with funding to address immediate needs (such as incorporating pandemic-related data collections into statewide data systems) and provide grants for large-scale data projects (including modernizing and linking legacy data systems across early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, workforce, and health sectors, aggregating assessments, and opportunity-to-learn data into a single dashboard, and updating data security).
- **\$428 million for State Assessment Grants** so states have the resources necessary to adapt, improve, and carry out critical student assessment activities, which have been severely disrupted by the pandemic and are one necessary component of understanding how the pandemic has impacted student academic learning over the last two school years.

Career and Technical Education Programs:

- **\$200 million for Career-Connected High Schools** to support the expansion of advanced coursework and ensure greater alignment between high school and higher education.

Advancements to Funding Equity and Targeting Needs:

- Closing the comparability loophole within Title I to ensure that low-income schools do not receive less funding than their more affluent counterparts and that such calculations are based on actual expenditures that include teacher salaries.
- Ensuring federal funds supplement and do not supplant state and local funds, and there is a meaningful way to ensure compliance.
- Providing incentives for states and districts, such as reserving \$100 million within Title I, to make their education spending more equitable, such as establishing voluntary State School Funding Equity Commissions to identify and address funding and educational opportunity equity gaps created by state funding formulas and policies regarding resource use; examining similar resource

equity gaps within school districts. In addition, Congress should urge the U.S. Department of Education to initiate an annual report of K-12 education funding with state-by-state information on the adequacy, effort, and equity of K-12 education funding formulas. Such a report should also identify any areas of progress and include recommendations.

Resources for critical U.S. Department of Education operations:

- Ensure the **U.S. Department of Education has adequate dedicated funding for the agency to monitor and enforce** the critical legal protections for students accessing their education, including under McKinney-Vento’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY) (particularly at the state and local liaison levels), Title I and Title III of ESEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and to properly exercise the mission of the Office for Civil Rights. Further, we urge Congress to direct the U.S. Department of Education to utilize funding to improve all existing data collection activities – which are key levers to monitor the implementation of critical legal protections for students – so data is collected effectively, reported timely, and available in a public and accessible manner.