

May 26, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members,

On behalf of the Alliance for Learning Innovation (ALI) — a coalition that brings together organizations and stakeholders from the philanthropic, non-profit, and private sectors to advocate for research-based innovation in education — we write to request significantly increased funding for education research and development (R&D) in the fiscal year 2023 appropriations bills. Without more robust investment in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the Department of Education’s (ED) Education Innovation and Research Program (EIR), and the National Science Foundation (NSF), the U.S. will not be able to unleash the potential of our students to thrive and our country to successfully compete in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

The pandemic demonstrated the importance of having a health care system that could generate and use knowledge to solve pressing problems. Decades of under-investment in our education R&D engine left our schools struggling to respond to COVID-19. Improvements are needed at every level to make our education system more competitive and meet the challenges we face. Building a robust federal education R&D engine to power those innovations will help equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to help every student succeed.

However, up to this point, education R&D has remained woefully underfunded compared to the funding for research and innovation in other sectors, including health, energy, and agriculture, despite the fact that educating our next generation is essential to all sectors. More specifically, the budget of IES, the ED’s R&D arm, was just [\\$737 million](#) in FY 2022, around 0.4% of the agency’s [total budget](#). By [comparison](#), the U.S. Department of Agriculture spends over \$3 billion annually on R&D related to food and agriculture.

American leadership in technology and innovation, a cornerstone of competitiveness, rests in large part on our nation's R&D capabilities. This is important not just for responding to the unprecedented competition from China, but also for developing the breakthrough innovations needed to help every child reach their full potential. We therefore ask you to commit to a long-term plan to increase federal funding for education R&D by fourfold over the next five years. Critical investments within ED and NSF, described below, will set the foundation for significant growth in achievement and opportunity fueled by effective innovation. With the appropriate oversights, this investment will help overcome limitations of education R&D. These programs will benefit every state, school district, and classroom in the country by increasing the effectiveness and impact of current investments in education and increasing efforts to identify new solutions to long-standing challenges.

Within the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill, we respectfully request Congress provide \$334 million for ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's EIR program. The EIR program funds the development, implementation, evaluation, and scaling of innovative and evidence-based programs to improve student outcomes.

Of equal importance, we request Congress to provide a \$1 billion budget for IES so that it can meet the opportunities, needs, and objectives facing our nation's educational system – with at least \$815 million in fiscal year 2023 toward that goal. IES is currently conducting multiple, important [efforts](#) to understand and address the impacts of COVID on learning. But more can be done, including the creation of new programs that embrace transformative and disruptive ideas for education, upgrades to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as well as increases to existing proven programs. This investment can ensure that we do not continue ineffective practices and instead invest in continuous improvement strategies that will enable us to understand which ideas and solutions work best for each region and in diverse contexts.

Within the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies bill, we urge Congress to provide at least \$1.39 billion for the Education and Human Resources (EHR)/STEM EDU Directorate at NSF. This funding will help NSF to address vital challenges facing the U.S. talent pipeline, strengthening our national competitiveness in STEM education and beyond. We also support at least \$879.87 million in funding for the new Directorate of Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP) and the inclusion of STEM education and education research as a focus area of the new Directorate. This level of investment is a small down payment against the large opportunity identified by Congress in its competitiveness policy authorization legislation.

Lastly, we recommend the Committee continues to encourage strong collaboration between NSF and ED to maximize these critical investments and expedite the discovery and adaptation of evidence-based innovations in education to the benefit of all students, practitioners, and schools.

We hope to see strong support for education research and innovation in the FY 2023 appropriations. Without these additional resources, the U.S. will not be able to ensure it has the necessary talent, drawn from all states and regions of our great nation, to drive the next century of ideas and innovation.

Sincerely,

100Kin10

Digital Promise

Education Reform Now

Federation of American Scientists

InnovateEDU

LearnPlatform

New Classrooms

Project Evident

Software & Information Industry Association

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)

The Education Trust

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Learning Agency

University of Oregon

John Bailey, Former Special Assistant to the President, President George W. Bush

Stacey Childress, Advanced Education Research & Development Fund

Bart Epstein, Chief Executive Officer, EdTech Evidence Exchange

Elizabeth Fairchild, Executive Director, Business Forward

Kumar Garg, Vice President of Partnerships, Schmidt Futures

Jeff Livingston, Founder, The Center for Education Markets Dynamics; Chief Executive Officer, EdSolutions

Talia Milgrom-Elcott, Executive Director and Founder, 100Kin10

Na'ilah Nasir, President, Spencer Foundation

Bror Saxberg, Founder, LearningForge LLC

Jim Shelton, Former Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

Kim Smith, LearnerEngine, former Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Pahara Institute; Entrepreneur in Residence, Cambiar Education

Katrina Stevens, CEO & President, The Tech Interactive

Jane Swift, President & Executive Director, LearnLaunch; Former Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts