Alliance For Learning Innovation

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November 21, 2022

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

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

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

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.

There are two urgent trends that additional education R&D will help address. The first is addressing the alarming unfinished learning students experienced during the pandemic. As the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend (LTT) assessment shows, the COVID-19 pandemic has only further exacerbated achievement gaps and led to serious learning loss, creating a national emergency. "Compared to 9-year-olds in winter 2020, the 9-year-olds who took the assessment in winter 2022 scored seven points lower in mathematics and five points lower in reading—the largest score decline in reading since the 1990s and the first-ever decline in mathematics." Recently released NAEP results show that between 2019 and 2022 national average score declines in mathematics for fourth- and eighth-graders were the largest ever recorded in that subject. An analysis of NWEA assessment data suggests it could take as long as five years for some students to catch up in reading and math. These trends threaten America's competitive position in the world. The nation needs a robust research agenda to identify ways of accelerating student learning to close these gaps.

Second, education research supports the STEM and R&D goals Congress and the Administration have identified as crucial for the country's national security. The President's National Security Strategy identified as a priority high-quality education and training, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), especially for women and girls, which "build enduring advantages that bolster

our strength and resilience." The House China Task Force Report also stated that "The U.S. must harness its domestic talent by creating a STEM-capable, skilled workforce to remain competitive in the global economy, foster innovation, and provide a foundation for shared prosperity." Boosting education R&D will directly contribute to strengthening the STEM pipeline critical for our nation's economic and national security. Boosting education R&D will directly contribute to strengthening the STEM pipeline critical for our nation's economic and national security.

Within the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-H) bill, we respectfully request Congress provide:

- At least $844 million for the Institute of Education Sciences. IES is currently conducting multiple, important efforts to understand and address the impacts of COVID on learning. Within this amount, ALI requests $75 million for the National Center for Advanced Development in Education (NCADE), as included in the House report and robust funding (at least $289.8 million) for Research, Development and Dissemination efforts. This investment can ensure that we leverage the existing research and evidence while also developing innovative practices with the potential to create dramatic breakthroughs in learning and teaching, especially for the most underserved populations.
- $384 million for ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program.
- Continued support for IES' School Pulse Panel, which tracks the effects of COVID on schools through a national sample of elementary, middle, and high schools. This program has provided invaluable information as one of the nation's few sources of reliable data focused on school reopening efforts, as reported by school district staff and principals in U.S. public schools.

Within the Commerce, Justice, Science bill, we urge Congress to provide

- At least $1.327 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.
- Provide robust 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.

Lastly, we recommend that the final appropriations language 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. Ongoing collaborative efforts between the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, including the collaboration on two NSF National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research Institutes focused on education, is an example of the types of collaborations that should be supported in the future.

Education R&D is woefully underfunded compared to the funding for research and innovation in other sectors, including health and energy. The IES budget was $737 million in FY 2022 — around 0.4% of ED's total budget. By comparison, the Department of Agriculture spends over $3 billion annually on R&D on food and agriculture, or more than 1.5% of the agency's overall budget. Critical investments within ED and NSF, described above, will set the foundation for significant growth in achievement and opportunity fueled by effective innovation. 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.

We hope to see strong support for education research and innovation in the FY 2023 appropriations. Without these additional resources and oversight of ensuring that resources and findings go where they are needed most, 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.

EdTech Evidence Exchange

The Learning Agency

New Classrooms Innovation Partners

Thomas B. Fordham Institute

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)

Digital Promise Global

Common Sense Media

InnovateEDU

Pamela Cantor MD

John Bailey, Former White House Domestic Policy Advisor for President Bush

The Education Trust

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

Jane Swift, President, LearnLaunch; Former Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

LearningForge LLC

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Dan Lips, Head of Policy, Lincoln Network

The Tech Interactive

Project Evident

Digital Promise Global

LearnPlatform

Education Reform Now

Beyond100K

Advanced Education Research and Development Fund (AERDF)

Cambiar Education

Teach Plus

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Lewis-Burke Associates LLC