

**Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee**

**April 8, 2019**

The LEARN Coalition (LEARN) would like to thank the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (L-HHS-ED) for soliciting the views and recommendations of public witnesses on Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 funding. LEARN consists of 40 leading research colleges of education across the country which support critical investments in research aimed at advancing the scientific understanding of learning and development. We advocate for greater funding for these priorities across all Federal agencies, including the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

LEARN urges the subcommittee to make significant investments in key education research programs as part of the FY 2020 appropriations process. These investments are critical if we are to advance the knowledge and practice needed by early childhood, K12 and postsecondary education in our country. Specifically LEARN is requesting \$670 million for IES. Within IES, LEARN would recommend \$210 million for the Research, Development and Dissemination (R, D and D) line item and \$61 million for the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). At the National Institutes of Health, we would urge the Subcommittee to provide \$1.606 billion and \$1.994 billion for NICHD and NIMH respectively.

In addition to our focus on these individual programs, we would be remiss if we did not highlight the importance of the initial work to raise non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding for FY 2020 and FY 2021. As you know, NDD funding would be cut by \$55 billion compared to FY 2019 spending levels under the Budget Control Act. We hope this early work by the leaders of the House Budget and Appropriations Committees brings about an eventual agreement by the House, Senate and Administration to increase NDD spending over FY 2019 levels. Absent a bipartisan agreement to increase the non-defense discretionary spending caps, we fear investments in education research would face crippling cuts. Such an agreement would allow for significant investments in education.

While advocating for these programmatic and budget cap increases, we also want to provide the Subcommittee with a real-world picture of the impact of education research funding. Recent IES and other agency funding for education research has produced critical gains in knowledge and understanding of evidence-based practice. Examples of the impact of these dollars include the development and adoption of a statewide approach to math instruction in Florida that has also been adopted by other States and localities, both urban and rural. This curriculum allows students to receive specialized math instruction through a teacher and teaching style with which they connect. Another effort funded by IES is the implementation of a reading curriculum that has shown such positive results for young children that it is now being adopted as a statewide literacy approach by a State legislature. Lastly, NCSER funding has helped lead to the adoption of positive behavior intervention and supports, a behavior management approach that is designed to help children with disabilities and others reach their academic potential without the disruption that behavior issues can cause.

With respect to our funding recommendations, our priority is an increase for IES and the R, D and D and NCSER line items. As the primary Federal Agency charged with supporting research for education practice and policy, IES is essential to developing a comprehensive, reliable evidence base, and ensuring that teaching and learning practices are grounded in scientifically valid research. Increased funding for education research is vital to the implementation of major Federal education programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Higher Education Act, as all of these statutes require a focus on the use of evidence-based approaches.

With the importance of developing reliable knowledge and evidence-based practices, LEARN is requesting \$670 million for IES overall and \$210 million for the Research, Development, and Dissemination line item within IES, in order to keep up with growth and inflation. The funding for research in special education, through the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), also should be increased by \$5 million, to \$61 million, still well below its FY 2010 historically high level of \$71.1 million. These increases are critically needed as only one out of every 10 applications are funded by IES, due to budget constraints, presenting lost opportunities to further strengthen evidence-based practice across the education spectrum.

NICHHD and NIMH also fund critical education research efforts. NICHHD is essential to education research as it examines brain functions and the impact of different educational services on learning and development. LEARN supports a similar percentage increase in NICHHD funding to our request for IES – in line with growth and inflation – to bring the total to \$1.606 billion. This increase will ensure that researchers can build on the knowledge already gained, evaluate what works best in treating developmental disorders, and develop new research-based strategies to improve student’s learning and development.

Additionally, LEARN supports a similar percentage increase in funding for NIMH over FY 2019 enacted levels, bringing the total funding to \$1.994 billion. This increase will help further understanding of the behavioral, biological, and environmental mechanisms necessary for developing interventions to reduce the burden of mental and behavioral disorders and optimizing learning and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony urging increases for IES, NICHHD and NIMH. LEARN happy to respond to any questions that result from your review of this testimony.

The Members of LEARN are:

Boston University - Wheelock College of Education and Human Development

Boston College - Lynch School of Education

Columbia University - Teachers College

Indiana University - School of Education

Iowa State University - College of Human Sciences

Georgia State University - College of Education & Human Development

John Hopkins University - School of Education

Louisiana State University - College of Human Sciences and Education

North Carolina State University - College of Education

Oklahoma University - Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education

Purdue University - College of Education

Penn State University - College of Education

Syracuse University - School of Education  
Rutgers University - Graduate School of Education  
Texas A&M University - College of Education and Human Development  
The Ohio State University - College of Education and Human Ecology  
University of Arizona - School of Education  
University of Alabama - College of Education  
University of California – Santa Barbara Gevirtz Graduate School of Education  
University of Central Florida College of Community Innovation and Education  
University of Connecticut - Neag School of Education  
University of Florida - College of Education  
University of Georgia - School of Education  
University of Houston - College of Education  
University of Illinois Urbana – Champaign College of Education  
University of Kansas - School of Education  
University of Kentucky - School of Education  
University of Maryland College Park - College of Education  
University of Minnesota - College of Education and Human Development  
University of Missouri - College of Education  
University of North Carolina - School of Education  
University of Oregon - College of Education  
University of Pittsburgh - School of Education  
University of Southern California - Rossier School of Education  
University of South Carolina - College of Education  
University of South Dakota - School of Education  
University of Vermont - College of Education and Social Services  
Vanderbilt University - Peabody College of Education and Human Development  
Virginia Commonwealth University - School of Education  
University of Wisconsin- Madison - School of Education