

Auburn University
College of Education

Boston University
Wheelock College of Education and Human
Development

Boston College
Lynch School of Education

Florida State University
College of Education

Georgia State University
College of Education & Human Development

Indiana University
School of Education

Iowa State University
College of Human Sciences

John Hopkins University
School of Education

Lehigh University
College of Education

North Carolina State University
College of Education

Oklahoma University
Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education

Penn State University
College of Education

Purdue University
College of Education

Syracuse University
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 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 Maryland College Park
College of Education

University of Minnesota
College of Education and Human Development

University of Missouri
College of Education

University of Nevada-Reno
College of Education

University of North Carolina
School of Education

University of Oklahoma
College of Education

University of Oregon
College of Education

University of Pittsburgh
School of Education

University of Southern California
Rossier School of Education

University of Texas at Austin
College of Education

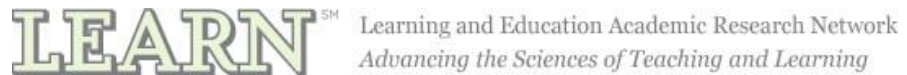
University of Vermont
College of Education and Social Services

University of Wisconsin – Madison
School of Education

University of Wyoming
College of Education

Vanderbilt University
Peabody College of Education and Human
Development

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Education



July 1, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Appropriations
Subcommittee Labor,
HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education &
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair,
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Committee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chair,
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Labor, HHS, Education, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee,
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education &
Related Agencies
U.S House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Committee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S House of Representatives

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

We are writing on behalf of the Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN) Coalition to respond to the Institute of Education Science’s (IES’s) Federal Register notice on May 26, 2022, about grant competitions for fiscal year (FY) 2023. In addition to sharing details about funding opportunities for the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), IES stated that they would not be competing three of their main grant programs during FY2023, including their Education Research Grants (305A). In this letter, we will discuss how this decision is extremely detrimental to the nation’s current education infrastructure. Additionally, we will emphasize the urgent need for increased Federal investments for IES so that the agency can steadily provide grant opportunities to the field, as it has been directed to by the Education Sciences and Research Act (ESRA).

IES is unable to support the nation’s education research infrastrucutre to its full potential despite a dire need for research in the field today. Despite IES’s critical efforts supporting the development and dissemination of education research in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, the agency has been unable to fund all deserving grant applications for the past two years. In FY2021, NCSER was unable to fund all the grant applications rated outstanding or excellent due to a lack of sufficient funds. In FY2022, NCER was also unable to fund all grant applications rated outstanding or excellent, leading to the difficult decision to pause 3 main grant programs in FY2023. In a clarifying letter from NCER commissioner Elizabeth Albro, she explained that the decision to not run certain competitions was partly due to IES’s decision to increase maximum award levels for FY2021 projects so that teams “had sufficient funds to carry out their proposed work”. LEARN Members are thankful for the increase in these maximum award levels in

FY2022. Yet, it is now evident that years of chronic underfunding and understaffing has meant that IES has to choose between raising grant funding levels to match costs, funding all deserving applications and running all its grant competitions. This should not have to be a choice; the nation cannot keep emphasizing the importance of education then not fund research in ways to improve it. **LEARN members urge Congress to provide IES with a 10 percent increase in overall Federal funding annually to ensure that the nation’s education research infrastructure can be strengthened rather than weakened by IES.** We believe that this must start with the current fiscal year for which Congress is debating funding – FY2023.

If IES does not receive the necessary investments to fund its work, then researchers cannot create solutions that improve outcomes for students. Likewise, the lack of a grant competition means that researchers can’t further their expertise in developing knowledge. This sidelines researchers from growing their abilities and further enriching our nation’s ability to tackle our educational shortfalls. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic shed light on how critical education research is to understanding and supporting students nationwide, particularly those from at-risk populations. As the nation looks towards COVID-19 recovery, it is just as important that Federal funds go towards the general education research infrastructure so that research is not negatively impacted in the short or long-term. In order to make the best return on investment, the Federal government must provide strong funding to IES so that it can consistently fund education research nationwide.

Despite IES’s critical work supporting the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and ensuring the availability of high-quality education research, it currently receives significantly less funding than similar agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). According to the report released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) titled, “The Future of Education Research at the Institute of Education Sciences,” IES does “not appear to be on par with that of other scientific funding agencies” with the report calling for further investments in the agency. For context, IES received \$737.5 million in Federal funding overall in FY22 in stark contrast to NIH and NSF which received \$44.96 billion and \$8.84 billion respectively. LEARN encourages Congress to heed NASEM’s call and provide sufficient funding so that IES’s budget can reflect that of other scientific funding agencies, such as NSF and NIH.

Thank you for considering our request for an annual 10 percent increase in funding for IES overall, we look forward to engaging further on ways for IES to expand and improve. Should you wish to follow up on this information, please contact Alex Nock at anock@pennhillgroup.com

Best Regards,

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