



November 22, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs Cole and Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Vice Chair Collins,

We write on behalf of the Friends of IES, a coalition of 37 organizations committed to supporting the essential role of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). **As work continues on Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriations, we urge you to include the highest possible amount for the IES top line in the final bill.**

We appreciate the maintenance of funding for many of the IES budget line items in the House and Senate FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) bills, particularly given the constraints in the Fiscal Responsibility Act. We applaud the increase in the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) in the Senate bill, and the boost for Statistics in the House bill. We are concerned, however, with two provisions of the House bill – the proposal to eliminate funding for the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and the rescission of unobligated FY 2024 funding that would impact the RELs and the SLDS program.

The RELs serve as an important connection between research and practice, with researchers working with states and districts to develop evidence-based resources for teaching and learning. REL Southeast played a pivotal role in the improvements in reading outcomes seen in Mississippi as the state implemented evidence-based reading instruction throughout its schools.

RELs have taken a key role in synthesizing and translating evidence into actionable practices. Recent activities include Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV), where REL Northeast & Islands is supporting eight Maine districts to help them better understand how to use research and data to assess and improve innovation implementation. In addition, REL Southwest developed a partnership with the Oklahoma State Department of Education and school districts in Oklahoma to build educator capacity in using research-based early learning practices to improve student academic outcomes. Eliminating funding for this long-established program would dramatically decrease opportunities for states and school districts to build evidence-based policy and practice.

We also have concerns with Section 310 in the House bill, which would rescind \$25 million of unobligated FY 2024 IES appropriations. Funding for IES has historically been made available for two years to provide flexibility to adjust to emerging needs to support both new awards and continuation funding for grants and contracts. The second year of funding for IES programs should not be treated as an avenue to offset other programs within the LHHS bill.

Rescinding unobligated funds, intended to be drawn down for long-term REL contracts and SLDS grants, disrupts IES's ability to plan and support its contractors and grantees who work directly with state departments of education, school districts, and educators to develop evidence-based policy and practice. Particularly for the SLDS program, the rescission of unobligated FY 2024 funds would significantly impede infrastructure modernization efforts needed to create more nimble and flexible data systems while also maintaining student privacy.

IES plays a critical role in producing research findings that include testing and scaling up of evidence-based programs, highlighting education statistics on important topics, and developing resources that translate research into practice, including through the Accelerate, Transform, and Scale (ATS) initiative. Additional investment overall in IES would bolster the agency's ability to support research on longstanding and emerging topics in education, including in special education and artificial intelligence (AI), and maintain current administrative data collections and longitudinal surveys conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Thus, we strongly urge Congress to act by December 20 to include the highest possible amount for IES as part of a final FY 2025 package, while preserving existing investments into the science of teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Learning Innovation
American Educational Research Association
American Mathematical Society
American Psychological Association Services
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Coalition for Community Schools
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Partners
ETS
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Institute for Educational Leadership
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Knowledge Alliance
LEARN Coalition
Lehigh University

National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council on Measurement in Education
National Council on Teacher Quality
Penn State University
Population Association of America
Rice University
RTI International
Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
The Consortium of Social Science Associations
The Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS)
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Michigan
University of Oregon
University of Washington College of Education
Vanderbilt University