June 07, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the Senate works to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations (LHHS-ED) bill, the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to make the necessary critical investments in the academic, social, and emotional needs of the nation’s children. Specifically, we ask that you accept language in the FY 2020 LHHS-ED Appropriations bill passed by the House Appropriations Committee which provides $260 million in funding for a new social and emotional learning initiative, $53 million for Teacher Quality Partnership grants that could incorporate social and emotional learning in teacher residency programs as well as report language which clarifies funds can be used to develop educator competencies in supporting student academic, social and emotional development and disseminating evidence-based strategies to a broad range of stakeholders. This funding would represent an unprecedented federal commitment to supporting state education agencies, universities, community-based organizations, school districts, schools, and researchers in significantly accelerating and scaling work that is being conducted to educate the whole child for success in school, work, and life.

Research shows that social and emotional learning promotes improved academic achievement for students and increases positive life outcomes. Social and emotional learning also promotes positive outcomes for adults starting with improved graduation rates and employment prospects along with reduced toxic teacher stress that may lead to decreased teacher and school leader retention rates, improved classroom instruction, and a safer and more productive school climate. Yet, only 22 percent of educators feel they are very prepared to teach social and emotional learning in the classroom, which creates a significant gap between community demand and community preparedness. This is not surprising when looking at new knowledge about human development from neuroscience and the sciences of learning and development that demonstrates

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how effective learning depends on secure attachments; affirming relationships; rich, hands-on learning experiences; and explicit integration of social, emotional, and academic skills.\(^4\)

Therefore, we recommend that the FY 2020 Senate LHHS-ED bill commit to a strong focus on evidence-based “whole-child” approaches to education by including:

- $170 million within the Education Innovation and Research program for grants for evidence-based, field-initiated innovations that address student academic, social, and emotional needs;
- $25 million within the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant program for teacher professional development and pathways into teaching that provide a strong foundation in child development and learning, including skills for implementing social and emotional learning strategies;
- $53 million for the Teacher Quality Partnerships (TQP) to improve the quality of teachers working in high-need schools and early childhood education programs by creating model teacher preparation and residency programs which can be used to support teachers in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students.
- $25 million within the School Safety National Activities program to make schools safer through a new competition that will help local educational agencies (LEAs) directly increase the number of mental health and child development experts in schools; and
- $40 million for Full-Service Community Schools to provide comprehensive services and expand evidence-based models that meet the holistic needs of children, families, and communities.

We also recommend that FY 2020 Senate LHHS-ED bill include the following clarifications and directives in the accompanying report language:

- Explicitly state that Title II–A funding under ESSA can be used to develop educator competencies in supporting student social, emotional, and cognitive development into licensing and accreditation requirements for teachers, school leaders, administrators, and counseling staff.
- Direct the Department of Education to brief the Committees on Appropriations on the Office of Effective Teaching and Social and Emotional Learning’s plans for disseminating the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety’s clearinghouse of evidence-based strategies to internal and external stakeholders, including SEAs and LEAs, and the office’s plans for leveraging the Center’s knowledge of evidence-based SEL strategies to inform fiscal year 2020 grant competitions.

Our knowledge of the collective outcomes of social and emotional learning builds off a generation of research from respected, nonpartisan organizations such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, & Academic Development, the Learning Policy Institute, the American Institutes for Research, and the RAND Corporation.

We appreciate your tremendous leadership in providing adequate resources to the Department of Education. While we understand the fiscal constraints you are under, we know the inclusion of funding for these kinds of initiatives in the FY 2020 Senate LHHS-ED appropriations bill will further encourage innovation and understanding of the integrated nature of social, emotional, and academic development that will ensure that all children have the skills they need to learn and thrive.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations in Support**
Afterschool Alliance
Alliance for Excellent Education
American Psychological Association
America's Promise Alliance
Big EQ Campaign
Buck Institute for Education/PBL Works
Center for Reaching & Teaching the Whole Child
Center for Resilience and Wellbeing in Schools
Center for Responsive Schools
Citizen Schools
City Year, Inc.
Coalition for Community Schools
Committee for Children
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Democrats for Education Reform
E3: Education, Excellence & Equity
EDGE Consulting
EDGE Partners LLC
EL Education
Engaging Schools
Erikson Institute
Facing History and Ourselves
GLSEN
Hatching Results
Hope for the Day
Inner Explorer
Institute for Educational Leadership
International Center For Social Emotional Peace Learning
International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Graduate School
International Observatory for School Climate and Violence Prevention
Learning Forward
Lions Clubs International
Mental Health America
Mindset Works
National After-school Association
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform
New Teacher Center
Operation Respect
Parents as Teachers
Pure Edge, Inc.
REAL Prevention LLC
Research and Assessment Design (RAD) Science Solutions
Ripple Effects
School-Connect
School Social Work Association of America
Search Institute
SEL Launchpad
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators
Social Development Research Group
Social Emotional Learning Alliance of the United States (SEL4US)
TASH
Teach Plus
Transformative Educational Leadership
Transforming Education
Tribes Learning Communities, Inc.
Wings for kids
xSEL Labs

State and Local Organizations in Support
California:
   California Social-Emotional Learning Alliance
   EduCare Foundation
   Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley
   Sacramento City Unified School District
   UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies
   Center for the Transformation of Schools, UCLA

Connecticut:
   INSIGHTS Intervention, LLC
   Mutt-i-grees Curriculum—Pet Savers Foundation—North Shore Animal League of America and Yale University
   The School of the 21st Century, Yale University

Florida:
   School District of Palm Beach County
Georgia:
   Atlanta Public Schools

Illinois:
   Chicago Public Schools
   Dupage County Regional Office of Education
   Rush University Medical Center

Maryland
   Johns Hopkins School of Education
   School of Nursing at Johns Hopkins University

Minnesota:
   Minneapolis Public Schools

Mississippi:
   Mississippi Department of Education

Missouri:
   Wyman Center

Montana:
   Southwest Montana School Services
   Western Montana Professional Learning Collaborative (WMPLC)

Nevada:
   Washoe County School District

New Jersey:
   Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab
   SEL4NJ

New York:
   Fordham University
   Department of Psychology, Fordham University

Ohio:
   Cleveland Metropolitan School District
   Community and Youth Collaborative Institute, College of Social Work at Ohio State
   University
   The Ohio State University LiFEsports Initiative

Oregon:
   SEL4OR

Texas:
Austin Independent School District
Dallas Independent School District

Virginia:
Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning – Curry School of Education and Human Development, University of Virginia
The Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia
Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP)
The UVA Center to Promote Effective Youth Development
Youth-Nex: The University of Virginia Center to Promote Effective Youth Development

Washington:
School’s Out Washington
Senator John McCoy - Washington State Senator (38LD)
Washington Association of School Social Workers
Washington School Counselor Association
Washington State Association of School Psychologists