

April 10, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

As the FY2020 appropriations process gets underway, we, the 76 undersigned organizations, write to you **in support of \$14.5 million in funding for the School Leader Recruitment and Support Program (SLRSP)**—the *only* federal program specifically focused on investing in evidence-based, locally-driven strategies to strengthen school leadership in high-need schools.

We are a group of organizations that believe our schools should be places where great teachers thrive and all students excel. We know that we can reach this goal by prioritizing investments in strategies that address how our schools—not just individual classrooms, but all classrooms within a school—are organized and led.

More than a decade of research shows just how crucial it is that our schools be led by well-prepared, well-supported principals. School leaders account for 25 percent of a school's impact on student learning,<sup>i</sup> and an above-average principal can improve student achievement by 20 percentage points.<sup>ii</sup> Moreover, like workers in any other profession, the best teachers want to work for the best bosses. Outstanding school leaders attract and retain great educators: fully 97 percent of teachers list principal quality as critical to their retention and career decisions—*more than any other factor*.<sup>iii</sup> And school leaders transform the lowest-performing schools, where the positive effects of strong leadership on student achievement are most pronounced.<sup>iv</sup> In fact, a landmark study found “virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”<sup>v</sup>

Authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) with bipartisan support to strengthen the School Leadership Program (SLP), SLRSP empowers states and school districts, individually or in partnership with nonprofits or institutions of higher education, to accelerate the recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of dynamic school leaders who have a measurable, positive effect on student achievement in high-need schools. If funded in FY2020, 100 percent of SLRSP grants would go to projects designed to prepare and support principals and other leaders serving the children and communities with greatest need.

In the past, SLP seeded some of the country's most innovative and effective principal preparation programs<sup>vi</sup> in places like Oakland, Chicago, and New York City along with rural communities in Alaska, North Carolina, and Texas. Many of these school leadership initiatives have since grown exponentially to reach many more schools, teachers, and students in need of outstanding leadership—greatly expanding the impact of the federal government's initial investment.

What's more, SLP grantees have helped to galvanize dramatic changes to the principal preparation sector as a whole, where there is now broad consensus that programs should adopt evidence-based practices and draw on a range of outcomes that include student achievement to assess program quality<sup>vii</sup>—prompting necessary changes to the way principals are trained to lead our nation's schools in states and districts across the country.

We are now working with states, districts, and schools on implementation of ESSA. We recognize that investments in school leadership are critical to achieving the major goals of ESSA and delivering on the promise of local control: strong, sustained implementation of improvement strategies in every classroom, every year, across entire schools.

Getting well-prepared, well-supported leaders in every school is a bipartisan cause. Through the FY 2020 appropriations process, **we urge Congress to restore funding for SLRSP at \$14.5 million** to seed innovative, evidence-based school leadership programs and partnerships that promise a return for students, schools, and communities that far exceeds this targeted investment.

Sincerely,

Achievement Network  
Advance Illinois  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
America Forward  
American Federation of School Administrators  
AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation  
ASCD  
BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life)  
BEST NC (Business for Educational Success and Transformation in North Carolina)  
Bloomington Public School District 87  
Brown County CUSD #1  
Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University  
Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University  
Center for Urban Education Leadership, University of Illinois-Chicago  
Chicago Public Schools  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional (CASEL)  
Committee for Children  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
Cuddle Care, Inc  
Deans for Impact  
Democrats for Education Reform  
DuPage Regional Office of Education  
Ed Allies  
EDGE Consulting LLC  
Educators for Excellence  
Fred Rodgers Magnet Academy  
Governors State University  
Hope Street Group  
Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration  
Illinois Education Association  
Illinois Federation of Teachers  
Illinois State University Lab Schools  
Kappa Delta Pi  
LBDNH  
League of Education Voters  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Learning Forward  
Lifeline for Courageous Leaders, LLC  
McLean County Unit 5  
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)  
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)  
National Center on Education and the Economy

National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Council of Professors of Educational Administration  
National Council on Teacher Quality  
National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET)  
National Network of State Teachers of the Year  
National SAM Innovation Project, NSIP  
New America  
New Classrooms Innovation Partners  
New Leaders  
New Teacher Center  
New York Educator Voice Fellowship  
North Park University  
NYC Leadership Academy  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Profound Gentlemen  
Public Impact  
Relay Graduate School of Education  
Results for America  
Roosevelt University  
School of Education/Principal Endorsement Program, Aurora University  
Schools That Can  
Stand for Children  
Steans Family Foundation  
Success for All Foundation  
TASH  
Teach For America  
Teach Plus  
Teaching Matters  
Teaching Trust  
The Education Trust  
TNTP  
University Council for Educational Administration  
University of St. Francis

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<sup>i</sup> Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning: A review of research for the Learning from Leadership Project*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx>.

<sup>ii</sup> Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>iii</sup> Scholastic Inc. (2012). *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on the Teaching Profession*. New York, NY: Scholastic and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from [http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Gates2012\\_full.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Gates2012_full.pdf).

<sup>iv</sup> Seashore Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., & Anderson, S. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning*. Washington, DC: Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.aspx>.

<sup>v</sup> Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004).

<sup>vi</sup> New Leaders. (2017). "Leadership Changes Everything." *America Forward Evidence in Action Blog*. Retrieved from <http://www.americaforward.org/evidence-in-action-leadership-changes-everything/>.

<sup>vii</sup> University Council for Educational Administration and New Leaders. (2016). *State Evaluation of Principal Preparation Programs Toolkit*. Retrieved from [www.sepkit.org](http://www.sepkit.org).