LEARN ℠ Learning and Education Academic Research Network
Advancing the Sciences of Teaching and Learning

May 2, 2022

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chair, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Shaheen, Ranking Member Moran, Chair Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt:

We are writing on behalf of the Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN) Coalition to express our support for increased funding for several key STEM related research programs that your subcommittee will debate as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations process. LEARN, a coalition of 41 leading research colleges of education across the country, supports 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 National Science Foundation (NSF). Specifically, LEARN is requesting $11 billion be allocated to NSF overall, and for Congress to match the President's FY2023 budget proposal by providing $1.37 billion towards the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR), which the Administration's FY2023 budget request be renamed the Directorate for STEM Education (EDU), and robust funding for the new Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP). While advocating for these increased resources for FY2023, we want to express our appreciation for the increases for NSF provided in FY2022.

While we are grateful for the funding NSF was appropriated in FY2022, we respectfully recognize that increased funding is required to address the effects of historical underinvestment in fundamental research in the United States as well as to support COVID-19 recovery. According to the National Science Board, more than $3 billion in high-quality proposals are submitted each year that cannot be funded with current appropriations. The potential impact of these missed opportunities is even starker when considering the return on investment of fundamental scientific research and the significant investments that other nations –both allies and adversaries–are making in comparable research areas.

In addition to our call for a $11 billion funding level for NSF, LEARN supports funding for NSF's EDU directorate at $1.37 billion in FY2023. EDU works to prepare the next generation of STEM professionals by conducting rigorous research and evaluation of STEM education. Over the past 20 years, the share of U.S. research and development funded by the Federal government has declined; this decline has disproportionately

impacted the higher education sector reducing resources to the sector that drives the most innovation in this area. Stagnation in these key U.S. talent development programs come as our national security leaders are sounding alarm bells over foreign talent recruitment programs which are effectively siphoning STEM capacity from the United States and elsewhere to countries that are strongly investing while we remain complacent. As Congress considers making a large investment in STEM education through the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES)/United States Innovation and Competition (USICA) Act, we urge you to first invest in EDU which has been successfully supporting STEM education research and dissemination to ensure the creation of an adept and diverse STEM workforce.

Finally, LEARN members are invigorated by the Administrations new call for funding for the TIP directorate. As noted in the President's FY2023 budget, a portion of TIP's mission is to "cultivate new education pathways leading to a diverse and skilled future technical workforce comprising researchers, practitioners, technicians and entrepreneurs." The newly proposed funding for TIP would allow for work across the public and private sector to provide practical experiences to learners and encourage strategic cross-sector partnerships. By targeting a range of educational institutions from community colleges and vocational schools to graduate schools, adequate funding for TIP would ensure that the nation's STEM workforce is as diverse as it is strong. As a nascent directorate, we urge Congress to provide TIP with robust funding so it can accomplish its innovative goals.

The LEARN Coalition believes strongly that collectively these key investments will advance scientific learning and development to ensure a globally competitive, STEM-educated workforce in the long run. Thank you for considering these requests and please contact us if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,
Camilla P. Benbow, Ed.D.
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