

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Capito, and Ranking
Member Baldwin:

On behalf of the Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN) Coalition, we express strong support for increased funding for education research programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 27 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations legislation. We also request that the Subcommittee include, as was the case with the final FY 26 bill, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) program and line item totals in the bill text. In addition, we urge the Subcommittee to strongly consider bill language that would require IES to restart the grant process: the issuance of new grant competitions, the statutorily required peer review process, and the awarding of meritorious grant applications. LEARN has long been concerned about the lack of adequate staffing and operations at IES as a whole, the National Center for Education Research (NCER), and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), as a result of the Administration's staff reductions, contract cancellations, and other actions, which have impacted the ability of to ensure the good use of taxpayer dollars supporting education. We urge the Subcommittee to use its oversight powers to spur the Administration to return IES to adequate staffing levels and begin the aspects of the grant process that we described above as soon as practical.

LEARN, a coalition of 40 leading research colleges of education across the nation, advocates for critical investments that advance the scientific understanding of learning and development. These investments are essential to enhancing educational outcomes and strengthening the global competitiveness of the United States.

LEARN Members respectfully urge the Subcommittees to include no less than \$900 million for IES, with \$291.8 million allocated to the Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D) line item, and \$71.6 million for NCSER. Additionally, LEARN urges the Subcommittee to include \$1.87 billion for the National Institute

Auburn University College of Education

Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development

Florida State University Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

Georgia State University College of Education & Human Development

Indiana University School of Education

Iowa State University College of Health and Human Sciences

Johns Hopkins University School of Education

Lehigh University College of Education

New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

North Carolina State University College of Education

Penn State University College of Education

Purdue University College of Education

Teachers College – Columbia University

Texas A&M University College of Education & Human Development

The University of Texas at Austin College of Education

University of Buffalo Graduate School of Education

University of California – Berkeley, Berkeley 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 Houston College of Education

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign College of Education

University of Illinois Chicago College of Education

University of Iowa College of Education

University of Kansas School of Education and Human Sciences

University of Maryland College Park College of Education

University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development

University of Missouri College of Education & Human Development

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Education

University of Oregon College of Education

University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education

University of Pittsburgh School of Education

University of South Florida College of Education

University of Southern California Rossier School of Education

University of Utah College of Education

University of Virginia School of Education and Human Development

University of Wisconsin – Madison School of Education

Vanderbilt University Peabody College of Education and Human Development

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education

of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and \$2.54 billion for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Beyond increased funding, LEARN urges the Subcommittees to conduct oversight on the staffing levels of IES and its lack of grant making operational structure. The decision to implement staffing cuts through a department-wide Reduction in Force (RIF) last year disproportionately impacted IES, raising serious questions about the future of its core research, evaluation, and data functions—critical resources for educators, policymakers, and State and local leaders. Inadequate staffing to conduct day-to-day operations at IES undermines the ability of the four IES centers to operate cohesively and at optimal effect. Additionally, IES presently has no contractor to conduct peer review of grant applications. The lack of staffing, plus no assistance through contractors has ground the issuance of grant applications, their review and the awarding of grants to a standstill for over a year.

In addition to oversight of the grant process at IES, the Subcommittee can make clear its view of the importance of research at IES by including bill language that would require the Institute to restart its grant process. The lack of the issuance of any new applications for IES funded research, the lack of a review panel contractor and the lack of any awards from the 2024 applications makes clear that IES needs to be compelled to carry out the direction provided by the final FY 26 bill in funding NCER and NCSEER. We urge the consideration of the following bill language in the FY 27 LHHS Subcommittee bills:

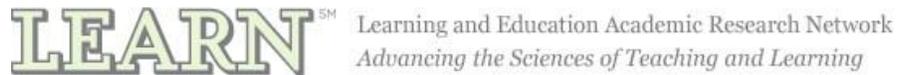
Provided further, the Institute shall within 90 days of the enactment of this Act, reestablish the review panel process required by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 and initiate the process of publishing applications for new awards through the National Center for Education Research and the National Center for Special Education Research. Provided further, the Institute shall make awards from submissions for such applications before the end of fiscal year 2027.

With respect to NIH, LEARN encourages the Subcommittee to maintain longstanding language pertaining to indirect cost rates that was included in the final FY 26 LHHS appropriations bill. Indirect costs cover essential expenses that support research infrastructure, including compliance with ethical standards, human subject protections, and administrative oversight. Maintaining this language in the appropriations bill is crucial to upholding the quality of NIH-funded research.

LEARN respectfully urges Congress to increase funding for IES, NICHD, and NIMH in FY 27, specifying IES program and line items in the bill text. We also urge oversight of IES's grantmaking process and the consideration of bill language on this topic. Lastly, we urge that the historical language on indirect costs for NIH funded research be maintained in the FY 27 bill. By making these investments, Congress will ensure that the nation remains a global leader in education research, supporting the success of students, educators, and communities nationwide.

Thank you for your consideration. LEARN remains committed to working alongside Congress to advance education research that improves lives and strengthens our nation's educational system.

Sincerely,
Camilla P. Benbow, Ed.D.



Co-Chair, Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN)
Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development of the Peabody College
of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University

Rick Ginsberg, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN)
Dean of the School of Education, University of Kansas

Glenn E. Good, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN)
Dean of the College of Education, University of Florida