



October 22, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
132 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Kingston  
Chairman  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
1101 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Kingston and Ranking Members Moran and DeLauro:

On behalf of the nation's 115,500 elementary, middle, and high school principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders, the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) urge you complete and pass an omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2015. In addition, we urge you to make a strong investment in education within this spending package.

There is no room for debate when it comes to investing in our children through high-quality education programs, and we must support our nation's educators to help students reach their greatest potential. While leading research substantiates that teachers have the greatest influence on student achievement, many studies validate the role of the principal. Principals are recognized for their ability to influence a variety of factors that positively affect schools. They indirectly affect student outcomes by recognizing and supporting teachers, but they also directly influence schools by creating high-functioning learning environments. The evidence about successful schools is clear: A great teacher makes a great classroom, but only a principal can lead a school's success and sustain long-term improvements. The following programs support and enhance the work of Pre-K-12 school leaders, and we ask that you fund them at the maximum levels possible.

**Title II, Part A**

Research has shown that effective school leadership is second only to instruction as a factor in raising student achievement. However, a 2013 report from the US Department of Education on "The Use of Funds Under Title II" of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), shows that only 4% of federal dollars are spent on principal

professional development. This is extremely troubling as Title II acts as the primary federal program to improve educator performance. As the roles and responsibilities of school leaders continue to expand, principals must be afforded additional opportunities for professional learning and growth as they work to improve teaching and learning in all schools.

We were extremely pleased to see that the FY 2015 Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee report recognizes the importance and impact of school leadership on student achievement. In the report, the subcommittee directed the US Department of Education to provide guidance to state education agencies (SEAs) to ensure principals are receiving “sufficient professional development opportunities.” The inclusion of this language in the subcommittee report is a positive step forward by policymakers in recognizing the critical need to help build the capacity of principals in implementing the wave of reforms occurring simultaneously at the federal, state, and local levels, and provide them with the support they need now.

However, in the final FY 2015 spending bill, we urge you to invest even more in principal professional learning opportunities by including language that requires local education agencies receiving Title II funds from ESEA to allocate no less than 10% of the total funds available for professional development for Pre-K, elementary, middle level, and high school principals to improve instructional leadership. Additionally, we were pleased to see that the Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Act, 2015 (H.R. 5464) introduced in the House included an increase of \$117 million for Title II, Part A over FY 2014 levels. We ask that you fund Title II, Part A at no less than \$2.5 billion for FY 2015.

### **School Leadership Program**

The School Leadership Program is the only federal program dedicated to recruiting, mentoring, and training principals and assistant principals to serve in high-need schools. However, this program has seen decreased funding since FY 2012, hamstringing efforts to recruit, train, and develop effective school leaders to implement new federal, state, and local requirements. We urge you to fund the School Leadership Program at the president’s FY 2015 requested level of \$35 million and support school leaders at a time when the demands placed on their instructional leadership capacity have never been greater.

### **Title I Grants to LEAs**

Reductions to the Title I formula grant program have hurt the neediest students and school districts, especially at a time when closing the achievement gap is a critical educational and economic imperative. Our organizations were pleased to see that the Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee on Appropriations approved a slight increase in Title I funding to \$14.4 billion in FY 2015. Furthermore, we were pleased to see the prioritization of Title I in the House’s Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Act, 2015 (H.R. 5464). Formula-funded programs such as Title I are foundational educational investments that support our most vulnerable students. This type of federal funding should help

achieve equity, not exacerbate inequity, which is why we ask that you fund Title I at no less than \$14.4 billion in the final FY 2015 Labor-HHS-Ed spending bill.

### **IDEA State Grants**

Budget cuts over the last few years have reduced services and decreased the federally funded share of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to 14.5%. Congress initially pledged to fund 40% of IDEA expenses, but has provided less than half of that amount for several years, despite increasing costs and inflation. This places the burden of special education funding primarily on states and districts. Like Title I, this formula-funded program provides key resources to support students with special needs and services in order to provide equitable educational opportunities to all students. We believe Congress must move toward its promise to fully fund 40% of the national average per-pupil expenditure for students receiving IDEA services. Thus, our organizations were pleased to see both the Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee on Appropriations and H.R. 5464 include small increases for IDEA state grants. Congress should fund IDEA state grants at no less than \$11.6 billion in the final FY 2015 Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations bill.

### **Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Program**

As we seek to ensure our nation's workforce remains competitive in a global market, a strong federal commitment to literacy is desperately needed. The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Program is the only targeted federal literacy funding for teacher professional development and research-based interventions for children from birth through grade 12 who do not have the literacy skills to progress through the educational system and graduate college and career ready. Research clearly demonstrates that a high-quality, literacy-rich environment beginning in early childhood is one of the most important factors in determining school readiness and success, high school graduation, college access and success, and workforce readiness.

We were especially appreciative that both the Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee on Appropriations and H.R. 5464 recognize the importance of the SRCL program and provided \$168 million to maintain funding for it. We urge you to allocate this same amount in your final spending bill. These funds will allow the six states that have received SRCL Implementation grants—Georgia, Louisiana, Montana, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Texas—to continue to provide support for specialized professional development and supplemental assistance targeting literacy instruction and specialized interventions to meet their students' needs.

### **Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT)**

The primary goal of the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program is to improve student academic achievement through the effective integration of technology in curriculum and instruction, and to ensure that every student is technologically literate by the end of eighth grade. This program received \$100 million in FY 2010, but since then funding has been eliminated. Providing no funds for this program has severely hindered states' and districts' capacity to keep pace with the increasing demands for the instructional use of technology and devices. While much of the focus on education

technology has been on upgrading the bandwidth of schools and educational institutions to foster digital learning, this focus is moot if schools and educators do not have the devices and training necessary to be able to successfully incorporate the technology and best practices in digital learning into schools and classrooms. We request that any spending bill fund this program at \$267 million in FY 2015, especially considering the increasing use of online assessments and instruction.

### **Career and Technical Education State Grants**

Career and technical education programs have great potential to promote a personalized learning environment for each student through strong curriculum and instruction; increase student achievement through integrated academic and career and technical education (CTE) programs; and further engage students in their learning. To ensure that more students across the country have access to quality CTE programs, adequate federal support for expanding and replicating high-quality CTE programs is imperative. We request that you fund Career and Technical Education State grants at the Senate Subcommittee's FY 2015 Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Act level of \$1.12 billion.

### **Early Childhood Education**

The success of our nation's education system depends on giving every student a high-quality early childhood education experience that will provide them with an academic pathway that leads to being college and career ready. The positive academic impacts of early learning are further enhanced when schools connect high-quality Pre-K programs with kindergarten, first, second, and third grade programs. Further, longitudinal studies have shown that an integrated learning continuum for children from age three to grade three (Pre-K-3 education) contributes to sustaining achievement gains made in Pre-K programs. To support this continuum beginning in the earliest years, we are pleased to see that the Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Subcommittee addressed the importance of early learning by providing \$350 million to support preschool development grants and ask that you fund this program at no less than \$350 million.

We recognize the challenges you face in crafting an omnibus appropriations bill, however, we hope you will consider the under-investment that education has received in previous years and the detrimental effect a continued lack of investment will have for our nation's young people, our economy, and our global competitiveness. Thank you for your consideration of our requests, and we hope we can count on your support to fund these critical investments in our nation's future.

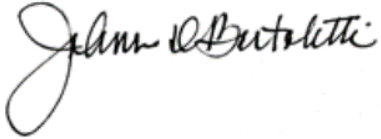
Sincerely,



Diann Woodard  
President  
AFSA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail Connelly". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Gail Connelly  
Executive Director  
NAESP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JoAnn Bartoletti". The script is cursive and elegant, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

JoAnn Bartoletti  
Executive Director  
NASSP