Friends of IES
Institute of Education Sciences

February 25, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Appropriations Leaders:

We are writing on behalf of the Friends of IES, a coalition of organizations focused on highlighting the important role of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in supporting education research, to encourage you to provide $728 million for IES in the FY 2017 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill. This request builds upon the administration's request of $693.8 million and restores the budget for two programs, the Regional Educational Laboratories (REL), and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) to their FY 2010 funding levels.

The Institute of Education Sciences is the independent and nonpartisan statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education charged with providing and disseminating scientific evidence on which to ground education policy and practice. With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which includes new evidence-based provisions, IES will serve as a critical resource for states and school districts as they implement the new law. Given the significance of the changes in ESSA and the shift to state and local autonomy, IES will most likely see a spike in demand for evidence.

Adequate funding for all IES programs in FY 2017 will enable the Institute to best support important research, data collection and statistical analysis, and dissemination. This work contributes to a growing evidence base that informs effective and efficient educational practice and policy across the nation.

To successfully implement ESSA, states and school districts will need more capacity to conduct research and identify evidence-based strategies that work for their students. The RELs are uniquely qualified to meet the needs of the field as their charge is to help states and districts systematically use data and research to answer important issues of education policy and practice with the goal of improving student outcomes. States drive what issues the RELs will address based on their specific needs and those of other education stakeholders in the regions. Indeed, ESSA recognizes the role of the REL program in

providing research-based technical assistance to states and districts as they work to apply the new evidence-based definition (Sec. 8549C).

In 2015, NCSER funded 39 interventions that improved education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities. However, beginning in 2011, NCSER has seen a budget reduction of over 30 percent. This reduction has limited critical research in early intervention and special education, and in activities designed to train the next generation of special education researchers. Thus, projects targeting pressing issues in the field, such as special initiatives or more resource-intensive Research and Development Centers, have not been competed.

The contributions of IES go well beyond the pressing needs of implementing ESSA. An educated workforce is a necessary component of the nation's economy, and long-term, sustained investment in IES produces results that shape the development of practices and policies that reach all students. We thank you for your support of IES and urge you to strengthen the research foundations of education by providing $728 million to IES in the FY 2017 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

American Educational Research Association
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of Population Centers
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council for Exceptional Children
EDGE Consulting Partners
Education Development Center, Inc.
Education Northwest
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Knowledge Alliance
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Marzano Research
McREL International
National Center for Learning Disabilities
Population Association of America
Society for Research in Child Development
Success for All Foundation
WestEd