

March 18, 2016

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

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

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

We are writing to you in support of funding for the School Leader Recruitment and Support Program (SLRSP), which was authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to strengthen the existing School Leadership Program (SLP). The only federal program specifically dedicated to school leadership, SLRSP will provide grants to high-poverty school districts to assist in the recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of effective principals and other school leaders. Robust investment in SLRSP is essential to achieving the major goals of ESSA, including closing achievement gaps and improving student performance.

Everything that happens in schools—setting high expectations for students, helping teachers grow and improve their practice, engaging families and communities—depends upon the caliber of our nation’s principals. Research shows that principals account for 25 percent of a school’s impact on student achievement, and a highly effective principal can increase student achievement by as much as 20 percentage points. Because closing the achievement gap rests largely in the hands of educators leading schools that serve large populations of high-need students and the turnaround leaders charged with transforming chronically underperforming schools, it is essential that we make the investments that support the identification, development, and retention of exceptional leaders in these schools.

SLRSP empowers eligible entities—including state or local educational agencies—to pursue a range of activities in support of school leadership, including the development and implementation of leadership training programs, the provision of ongoing professional development for school leaders, and the dissemination of best practices regarding the recruitment and retention of highly effective school leaders. Finally, leveraging invitational priorities, SLRSP incentivizes eligible entities to focus on principal preparation and professional development practices for which there is evidence of effectiveness as demonstrated through rigorous research.

Given the critical importance of school leadership, we recommend that Congress allocate at least \$30 million for SLRSP in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, in line with the Obama Administration’s FY17 budget request.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

America Forward
Bloomington Public Schools District 87
Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council
Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago State University
College of Education, Governors State University
College of Education, Northern Illinois University
Deans for Impact
Educational Leadership Program, Western Illinois University
Educators 4 Excellence (E4E)
The Education Trust
Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI)
Golden Apple Foundation
Illinois Association of School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO)
Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB)
Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
Jersey City Public Schools
Large Unit District Association (LUDA)
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Board Resource Center, Illinois State University
National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY)
New Leaders
North Central College Education Department
NYC Leadership Academy
Palos Heights District 128
Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202
Public Impact
Quincy Public School District 172
Results for America
Shelby County Schools
Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
Teach For America
Teach Plus
The School Leadership Project (TSLP)
TNTP
University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)