

June 1, 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, the undersigned current and former principals, teacher leaders, and other school leaders affiliated with New Leaders, urge you to provide strong funding for the School Leader Recruitment and Support Program (SLRSP), which was authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to strengthen the School Leadership Program (SLP).

New Leaders is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing all children with a high-quality education that prepares and inspires them to be successful in college, career, and citizenship. To achieve this critical goal, New Leaders develops transformational school leaders and advances the policies and practices that allow great school leaders to be successful. Since 2001, New Leaders has developed 2,500 teacher leaders and school leaders, like us, who are currently supporting 450,000 students.

Though we serve educators, students, and their families in more than 15 communities across the country, we are united by our belief—grounded in research and experience—that an outstanding principal, supported by a strong leadership team and supervisor, can turn every school into a place where teachers thrive and students excel.

And we are unified by our support for SLRSP, the only federal program specifically dedicated to school leadership. With support from several SLP grants between 2003 and today, New Leaders has provided us with the high-quality, job-embedded training and support we need to effectively lead and achieve dramatic gains for our students.

Research shows that school leaders 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. As leaders of some of our nation's highest-need schools and districts, we know firsthand that closing achievement gaps and turning around underperforming schools and dropout factories requires that such schools be led by transformational leaders—individuals who have the instructional prowess and leadership skills to get results for students in every classroom, across an entire school, every year.

Moreover, strong investment in the next generation of school leaders via SLRSP is essential to achieving the major goals of ESSA. 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.

Given the critical importance of school leadership, we urge Congress to allocate at least \$30 million for SLRSP in FY2017, in line with the Obama Administration's budget request and sufficient to carry out a new school leadership competition during the critical planning year before full ESSA implementation takes place in SY2017-18.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Taffi Loving (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Arlington, TX  
Corey Basmajian (Cohort 12 New Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Joseph Manko (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Kimberly Felton (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Lisa Brown (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Mary Rice (2011-12 Emerging Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Rosalind Fleming-Akpaide (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Zaharah A. Valentine (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Baltimore, MD  
Adam Taylor (Cohort 7 New Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Eleanor Alderman (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Jason Colon (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Katie Yezzi (Cohort 2 New Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Kirsten Scheu (Cohort 1 New Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Leroy Gaines (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Lynn Bernhardt (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Sean McClung (Cohort 10 New Leader) – Bay Area, CA  
Alison Harris Welcher (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Ashley Jackson (Cohort 2 New Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Frederick Mohrien (Cohort 13 New Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Paul B. Barnhardt (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Rashada Tedder (Cohort 7 New Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Rhiannon Riley Polite (Cohort 12 New Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Tracy Osborne (2012-13 Emerging Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Trishi Stewart (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Charlotte, NC  
Alfonso Carmona (Cohort 8 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Althea M. Hammond (Cohort 5 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Alyssa Nickow (Cohort 12 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Andre Cowling (Cohort 6 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Arlana Bedard (Cohort 3 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Asrar Maye (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Carmilla Young (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Christine Diaz (Cohort 11 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Clariza Dominicci (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Debra Kearney (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Isamar Vargas Colón (Cohort 10 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Jasmine Bankhead (Cohort 8 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Jessica Reisner (Cohort 14 New Leader, 2013-14 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Matthew Fasana (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Michael Nick (2012-13 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Mirtha E. Quintana-Toomey (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Nicole Spicer (2011-12 Emerging Leader) – Chicago, IL

William R Klee (Cohort 10 New Leader) – Chicago, IL  
Jason Carr (Cohort 15 New Leader, 2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Memphis, TN  
Shanta Mackey (Cohort 1 New Leader) – Memphis, TN  
Tonya Miller (Cohort 6 New Leader) – Memphis, TN  
Vanessa Hopkins (Cohort 11 New Leader) – Memphis, TN  
Charlotte Burney Tillman (Cohort 7 New Leader) – New Orleans, LA  
Chvonne Simmons (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – New Orleans, LA  
Nancia Sterling (Cohort 11 New Leader) – New Orleans, LA  
David O'Hara (Cohort 10 New Leader) – New York City, NY  
Drema Brown (Cohort 2 New Leader) – New York City, NY  
Franklin Headley (Cohort 3 New Leader) – New York City, NY  
Sha-Wonda Williams-Credle (2011-12 Emerging Leader) – New York City, NY  
Tara Bringley (Cohort 11 New Leader) – New York City, NY  
Ameenah S. Poole (2013-14 Emerging Leader) – Newark, NJ  
Tamika Rice (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Newark, NJ  
Verna Battle (2012-13 Emerging Leader) – Newark, NJ  
Amanda Beringer (2014-15 Emerging Leader) – Washington, DC  
Aqueelha James (Cohort 12 New Leader, 2011-12 Emerging Leader) – Washington, DC  
Maisha Riddlesprigger (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Washington, DC  
Michelle N. Pierre-Farid (Cohort 3 New Leader) – Washington, DC  
Natalie Smith, Ph.D. (Cohort 13 New Leader, 2012-13 Emerging Leader) – Washington, DC  
Raymond A. Weeden, Jr (Cohort 7 New Leader) – Washington, DC  
Shavonne Gibson (Cohort 9 New Leader) – Washington, DC