

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, United States House of
Representatives Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, United States House of
Representatives Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, United State House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and
Related Agencies
2358B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, United State House of
Representatives Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
2358B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Congress continues its work to finalize appropriations for fiscal year 2016, we—as organizations that see the substantial impact that principals and school leaders have in strengthening schools—urge you to continue critical funding for the School Leadership Program (SLP).

As the only currently funded, federal program dedicated specifically to strengthening school leadership, SLP provides high-poverty school districts with critical support in their efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain transformational school leaders. Continued support for this program is essential because dynamic leaders help create positive school environments, increase the retention of highly-skilled teachers, and have an outsize effect on student achievement.

Research shows—and our experience confirms—the tremendous importance of strong school leadership, especially in underperforming schools. Ninety-seven percent of teachers list school leadership as essential or very important for their career choices, and principals account for fully one quarter of a school's effect on student achievement; a highly effective principal can increase student achievement by as much as 20 percentage points.

Eliminating funding for SLP would halt the tremendous progress that has been made in developing and implementing best practices to attract talented educators and provide them with critical support in their efforts to create school environments where teachers love to teach and students love to learn. In doing so, it would deny hundreds of thousands of students the opportunity to learn in a school where the leadership has the tools to help them maximize their achievement.

Given the undeniable importance of school leaders, we urge you to continue funding for SLP, at or above FY15 levels, in any final appropriations bill, ensuring that school leaders have access to the development opportunities and supports that enable them to drive positive change for students and teachers.

Sincerely,

American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)

America Forward

Bloomington Public Schools District 87

California League of Middle Schools

Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University

Deans for Impact

Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership, Old Dominion University

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement

Leading to Learn

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY)

New Leaders

Project LEADER, Universidad del Este, Puerto Rico

Public Impact

Region 5 Education Service Center School Leadership Program

School Leadership Preparation and Development Network (SLPDN)

Teach For America

Teach Plus

The VIVA Project

Quincy Public School District 172