

April 3, 2017

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 organizations and teachers, teacher leaders, principals, other schools leaders, and advocates, write to you **in support of funding for the School Leader Recruitment and Support Program (SLRSP)**—the only federal program specifically focused on investing in evidence-based, locally-driven strategies to strengthen school leadership in high-need schools.

We are a group of organizations and individuals who believe that all schools can become great schools if teachers, principals, and other school leaders have the preparation and ongoing support needed to put into practice the best educational strategies and approaches. We are now working with states, districts, and schools on implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

And we all know that leadership matters. More than a decade of research shows that well-prepared, well-supported principals have a huge influence on teacher practice and student success. School leaders account for 25 percent of a school's impact on student learning,ⁱ and an above-average principal can improve student achievement by 20 percentage points.ⁱⁱ Moreover, like workers in any other profession, the best teachers want to work for the best bosses. Outstanding school leaders attract and retain great educators: fully 97 percent of teachers list principal quality as critical to their retention and career decisions—*more than any other factor*.ⁱⁱⁱ And school leaders transform the lowest-performing schools, where the positive effects of strong leadership on student achievement are most pronounced.^{iv} In fact, a landmark study found “virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”^v

Authorized by ESSA with bipartisan support to strengthen the School Leadership Program (SLP), SLRSP empowers states and school districts, individually or in partnership with nonprofits or institutions of higher education, to accelerate the recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of dynamic school leaders who have a measurable, positive impact on student achievement in high-need schools. Robust investment in school leadership via SLRSP is critical to achieving the major goals of ESSA and delivering on the promise of local control: strong, sustained implementation of improvement strategies in every classroom, every year, across entire schools.

Our schools should be places where great teachers thrive and all students excel. We can reach this goal by prioritizing investments in strategies that address how our schools—not just individual classrooms, but all classrooms within a school—are organized and led. Unfortunately, school leadership has historically been overlooked and underfunded,^{vi} which has done a great disservice to teachers, students, and school communities who rely on the support and expertise of well-prepared, well-supported principals.

Through the FY 2018 appropriations process, **we urge Congress to fund SLRSP at \$30 million** to seed innovative, evidence-based school leadership programs and partnerships.

Sincerely,

Achievement Network
Advance Illinois
American Federation of School Administrators
AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation
ASCD
BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life)
Bloomington Public School District 87
Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University
Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University
Chicago Public Schools
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Cuddle Care, Inc.
Deans for Impact
DuPage Regional Office of Education
Educators for Excellence
Governors State University
Hope Street Group
Illinois Education Association
Kappa Delta Pi
Learning Forward
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Center on Education and the Economy
National Council of Professors of Educational Administration
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Network of State Teachers of the Year
National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP)
New Classrooms Innovation Partners
New Leaders
New Teacher Center
New York Educator Voice Fellowship
North Park University
NYC Leadership Academy
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Profound Gentlemen
Public Impact
Quincy Public Schools - District #172
Relay Graduate School of Education
Results for America
School of Education/Principal Endorsement Program, Aurora University
Schools That Can
Sonoma Charter School
Stand for Children
Success for All Foundation
TASH
Teach For America
Teach Plus
Teaching Trust
TNTP
University Council for Educational Administration

And the following individual educators, education leaders, and advocates:

Adam Walker	Elena Hoehn	Mark Bailey
Aja Foote	Elizabeth Gallo	Mark Janka
Alexandra Broin	Elizabeth Leisy Stosich	Mary Dybdahl
Alicia Arenas	Elizabeth Ozol	Matthew Fasana
Alicia Haller	Elsie Kathleen Kane	Megan McDonald
Alison Johnson	Emilie Wainwright	Michael T. Johnson
Alison Welcher	Emily Appel	Michaela Fray
Allania Moore	Erin Gilrein	Michelle Farid
Allison Nino	Ernest Peterson	Miki Bellon
Alohaa Fuller Chin	Frank Perrone	Nancy Ellen Masterson
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Andrea L. Dixon	Jasmine Thurmond	Pauli Amanda Patterson
Andrew Hlavka	Jenna Zelenetz	Phyllis McCluskey-Titus
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Ann Sundstrom Allen	Jennifer Baker	Ralph Kober, Ed.D.
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Avery Beauford	Jessica Wilbanks	Renee Ridolfi
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Bonnie Williamson	Joanne Marshall	Romy Trigg-Smith
Brandon Clark	Judy Touzin	Ronald Rapatalo
Briget Pellebon	Julianna Sikes	Ronald Towns
Carolyn Jones	Kandace Johnson	Rosalyn Andrews
Caryn Flegler	Karen Rivas	Sandra J. Citron
Charlotte Burney-Tillman	Kate Lobel	Sean Allan McClung
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Crystal Harden-Lindsey	Kelly Bezan	Soya Denise Moore
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Danielle Lockett	Kerry Moll	Stephanie Morimoto
Danielle Rubel	Kevin Zimmer	Susan Gonzales
Danielle Rubel	Kimberly Ross	Susan Wiechman
Dave Taylor	Kristen Ehlman	Taffi Loving
David Brown	Laura Boling	Tanya Bloomfield
Debra Wexler	Laura Landon-Favatas	Tara Bringley
Delvin Burton	Lenora Denise Taylor	Teresa Tanieri
Demeka Simmons	Liesl Groberg	Valencia Koker
Derek Allen Young	Linda Kolbusz-Kosan	Virginia Patterson
Donna Wood	Lissette Rua	William Florio
Dr. Darlene Ruscitti	Malissa Mootoo	William T Trent
Dr. Kimberly Felton	Manuel Adrianzen	
Ed Howerton, Ed.D.	Marcy Reedy	

ⁱ Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning: A review of research for the Learning from Leadership Project*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx>.

ⁱⁱ Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

ⁱⁱⁱ Scholastic Inc. (2012). *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on the Teaching Profession*. New York, NY: Scholastic and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Gates2012_full.pdf.

^{iv} Seashore Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., & Anderson, S. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning*. Washington, DC: Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.aspx>.

^v Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004).

^{vi} For the past several years, more than two-thirds of districts have invested zero federal professional development funds on school leaders. Sources: U.S. Department of Education (2015). *Findings from the 2014-15 Survey on the Use of Funds Under Title II, Part A*. U.S. Department of Education (2014). *Findings from the 2013-14 Survey on the Use of Funds Under Title II, Part A*. U.S. Department of Education (2013). *Findings from the 2012-13 Survey on the Use of Funds Under Title II, Part A*. All retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/resources.html>.