

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Survey on the Use of Funds Under Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality State Grants—State-Level Activity Funds.

New Leaders is a nonprofit organization that develops dedicated, skilled leaders at every level of our education system—from teacher leaders to principals and superintendents—equipping them to elevate instruction and achievement across classrooms, schools, and districts. Since 2000, we have trained 3,200 great school leaders who reach 500,000 students annually. We have active partnerships in over 30 cities and with over 150 charter schools. Our leaders—64 percent of whom are people of color—overwhelmingly work with America’s highest-need students: 78 percent of students served come from low-income families and 87 percent are children of color. And an independent study by the RAND Corporation found that students who attend New Leader schools outperform their peers by statistically significant margins specifically because of the strong leadership of their New Leader principal. **New Leaders knows great leadership: we are the principal preparation program with the strongest evidence of positive impact on student achievement.**^[i]

More than a decade of research shows—and our experience confirms—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,^[ii] and an above-average principal can improve student achievement by 20 percentage points.^[iii] 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.*^[iv] And school leaders transform the lowest-performing schools, where the positive effects of strong leadership on student achievement are most pronounced.^[v] In fact, a landmark study found “virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”^[vi] **In every type of school, great leaders ensure children and their families have access to great schools.**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), our new bipartisan federal education law, has taken significant steps to elevate the importance of leadership^[vii]—and states have responded with universal agreement. **Every single state has included in its ESSA plan a commitment to investing federal dollars on school leadership.**^[viii]

As states continue their work to successfully transition to ESSA and implement their plans to comply with the federal law and advance student success, the Department has an opportunity to build on these locally-driven efforts to advance a critical, shared goal and national imperative: **Let’s get a well-prepared, well-supported principal in every school.**

To enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected from states regarding their use of Title II, Part A funds, we encourage the Department to inquire about the following **activities* specific to school leadership** and distinct from other similar investments for teachers or other school personnel:**

- **Pipeline.** Supporting districts and schools to advance teacher leadership, including by providing:
 - Opportunities for effective teachers to lead evidence-based professional development for their peers (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(v)(I))
 - Initiatives focused on multiple career paths, such as instructional coaching and mentoring (including hybrid roles that allow instructional coaching and mentoring while remaining in the classroom), school leadership, and involvement with school improvement and support (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(vii)(I))
- **Recruitment and Retention.** Supporting districts and schools to recruit and retain effective principals or other school leaders (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(v)), including strategies focused on:
 - Training and support for teacher leaders, principals, or other school leaders to serve on instructional leadership teams (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(v)(II))

- Attracting and retaining effective principals or other school leaders from underrepresented minority groups (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(v))
- Attracting and retaining effective principals or other school leaders in low-income schools and school districts, which may include performance-based pay systems (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(vii)(II))
- **Preparation.** Improving principal or other school leader preparation, by:
 - Reforming program standards and approval processes (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(i))
 - Establishing school leader residency programs (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xi))
 - Establishing or expanding principal or other school leader preparation academies (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xii))
- **Licensure.** Improving principal or other school leader licensure, by:
 - Reforming principal or other school leader certification, recertification, or licensing systems (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(i))
 - Establishing, expanding, or improving alternative routes for state certification of principals or other school leaders (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(iv))
- **Professional Development and Support.** Supporting districts to:
 - Design or implement evidence-based induction programs for new principals or other school leaders (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(vii)(III))
 - Develop or implement high-quality, evidence-based professional development programs for principals or other school leaders (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(viii))
 - Design or implement principal or other school leader evaluation and support systems (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(ii))
 - Develop and provide training to principals, other school leaders, coaches, mentors, and evaluators on implementing the teacher evaluation system (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(ii))
 - Provide other professional development specifically for principals or other school leaders, such as regarding technology (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(ix)), postsecondary education coursework or dual or concurrent enrollment programs (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xiv)), preventing and recognizing child sexual abuse (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xv)), early childhood education programs (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvi)), STEM education (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvii)), or career and technical education (ESEA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xviii)).
- **Leadership Set-Aside.** Taking advantage of the opportunity to set aside 3 percent of a portion of state funds for leadership investments (ESEA section 2101(c)(3))

**Note:* To support the Department’s efforts to minimize burden, we have focused on the allowable activities articulated in statute; at the same time, we strongly urge the Department to inquire about investments in principals or other school leaders separate from investments in teachers even when they may be listed together in ESSA.

***Note:* When we refer to “school leadership,” we expect the Department will inquire about states’ strategies to strengthen the caliber of principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders, including principal supervisors and other leaders who meet the statutory definition in ESEA section 8101(44).

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Survey on the Use of Funds Under Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality State Grants—State-Level Activity Funds. If you have any questions about these comments, please contact policyteam@newleaders.org.

- [i] Herman, R., Gates, S. M., Chavez-Herrerias, E. R., and Harris, M. (updated 2017). *School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review*. The RAND Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1550-2.html.
- [ii] 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>.
- [iii] 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.
- [iv] 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.
- [v] 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>.
- [vi] Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004).
- [vii] New Leaders. (2016). *Prioritizing Leadership: Opportunities in ESSA for Chief State School Officers*. Retrieved from http://newleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PrioritizingLeadership_OpportunitiesESSAChiefStateSchoolOfficers.pdf?vsmid=2646&vcid=3.
- [viii] New Leaders. (2018). *Prioritizing Leadership: An Analysis of State ESSA Plans*. Retrieved from http://newleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018.NL_ESSA-State-Plan-Policy-Brief-FINAL.pdf.