



May 19, 2022

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro  
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Tom Cole  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

As you work to craft a Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations bill, the undersigned members of the Coalition for Teaching Quality and other partner organizations urge you to provide meaningful funding levels for the federal programs designed to close opportunity gaps in student access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce. The Coalition for Teaching Quality represents national civil rights, disability, parent, student, community, and education organizations advocating together to ensure that all students have access to well prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.

Unfortunately, prior to the pandemic, historically underserved students were disproportionately taught by inexperienced teachers or teachers on substandard licenses (e.g. long-term substitutes, emergency credentialed, or out of field teachers).<sup>1</sup> More than 100,000 classrooms were staffed by substitutes or teachers without training, and schools with high enrollment of students of color were four times as likely to employ uncertified teachers as schools with low enrollment of students of color.<sup>2</sup> Nearly every state reported shortages in high need subjects like math, science, special education, world language and bilingual education, as well as English language instruction.<sup>3</sup> The COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated these inequities at a time when students – and our society – can least afford it. During the omicron surge we saw the impact of educator and school staff shortages with schools across the country having to close, delay reopening after the holiday break, or shift to remote learning as educators were either sick or caring for family members. Shortages in high-need subjects that pre-date COVID-19 persist this school year with, for example, 48 states having shortages of special education teachers.<sup>4</sup> Due to the added stress of the pandemic, 55% of educators – and about 60% of Black and Hispanic/Latino educators – reported in a recent survey that they plan to leave the profession earlier than they had originally planned.<sup>5</sup>

Research has shown that teachers who enter the profession through less comprehensive preparation pathways – such as emergency and alternative pathways that do not offer student teaching and a full curriculum for teaching – are two to three times more likely to turn over than those who receive

comprehensive preparation. Access to comprehensive pre-service teacher preparation – that includes intensive student teaching as well as learning about children’s learning and development, curriculum and teaching methods, and how to teach English learners and students with disabilities – along with effective recruitment efforts, and ongoing, high-quality professional development are the key ingredients to ensuring that students have access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce.

We are now at an inflection point and seek your support to ensure our country rebuilds from the pandemic in an equitable manner where all students have access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce. To chart a new course we need robust, sustained, systemic, and research-based investments in the educator workforce that support educators throughout their career so that they have the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to help students thrive, especially the students furthest from opportunity.

Thus, we urge you to make the following investments, from comprehensive educator preparation through educator leaderships, in FY 2023 that support student access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce:

**Provide \$1 billion to the Teacher Quality Partnership program.**

The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grant program funds comprehensive educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education, that pair intensive student teaching under the supervision of an expert mentor teacher with coursework in children’s learning and development, as well as curriculum and teaching methods, including how to differentiate instruction. The type of comprehensive educator preparation programs it funds include teacher residencies, school leader preparation, and undergraduate- and graduate-preparation programs, all of which feature partnerships with underserved school districts. Comprehensive preparation, coupled with induction support, is effective at keeping teachers in the profession. In fact, teachers who enter the profession through programs that bypass intensive student teaching and coursework are 2 to 3 times more likely to leave the profession than those who enter through comprehensive preparation programs.<sup>6</sup> Teacher residency programs are a pathway into teaching that help to prepare diverse cohorts of teachers, increase teacher retention, and produce more effective teachers than less comprehensive preparation routes.<sup>7</sup> Additionally residencies offer financial support that helps underwrite the cost of preparation in exchange for a service commitment of teaching a high-need subject in an underserved school for at least 3 years. Grow Your Own programs, including paraprofessional teacher training programs, 2+2 programs, and applied baccalaureate programs, recruit and train teacher candidates from nontraditional populations that are more likely to reflect the local communities they plan to teach in. Candidates receive financial and other support like coaching as they work to complete their teaching credentials.<sup>8</sup> Increased investments in TQP would help expand teacher residencies and Grow Your Own programs, as shown in ED’s notice for applications for the program this year.<sup>9</sup> TQP is a vital program that has been chronically underfunded. Over the past decade, there has been a cumulative gap of over \$2.5 billion between TQP’s authorization and funding levels.

**Provide \$300 million to the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program.**

The Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program is specifically designed to support comprehensive teacher preparation at programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) of higher education including Alaska Native-serving or Native Hawaiian-serving institutions (ANNH), Asian American and

Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPISI), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Native American-serving nontribal institution (NASNTI), and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs). Teacher preparation programs at these institutions are a long-standing source of well-prepared and diverse teachers.<sup>10</sup> For example, despite making up just 3% of institutions of higher education,<sup>11</sup> HBCUs prepare 50% of the nation's Black teachers.<sup>12</sup> Further, nearly half of all Latino/a teachers with a bachelor's degree earned their degree at an MSI. Roughly 35% of Asian Americans, 50% of Pacific Islanders, and 35% of Native Americans with a bachelor's degree in education earned it at an MSI.<sup>13</sup> More than a decade after its enactment, Congress finally provided funding (\$8 million) for the grant program in FY 2022, but a much larger investment is needed. To put this into context consider that the grant cycle under the TQP program is five years with an average award of \$1 million a year. This is a critical program that must be well funded if we are going to support a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce.

**Provide \$300 million to the Individuals with Disabilities Act Part D Personnel Preparation program.**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part D personnel preparation program (IDEA-D-PP) is specially designed to comprehensively prepare specialized instructional support personnel, special educators, early educators, and the higher education faculty and researchers that support their preparation. Yet funding for this program pales in comparison to need. This academic year, almost every state (48) reported shortages of special education teachers. Additionally, prior to the pandemic, all areas of teacher shortage, including those of special education teachers, were more severe in schools serving higher populations of students of color.<sup>14</sup> There is a clear and immediate need to address these shortages by investing in this program.

**Provide at least \$320 million to support educator leadership, the earning of high-need and advanced certifications and credentials, and improved school structures to support teaching and learning.**

Educator shortages that were persistent pre-pandemic have been significantly amplified by COVID-19 and changes to the labor market. Unfortunately, these new challenges exacerbate the already disproportionate access to certified and experienced educators for students of color, students with disabilities, and low-income students. Thus, the Biden Administration has proposed to dedicate \$320 million of an overall request of \$514 million, within the Education Innovation and Research program (EIR) to invest in educator recruitment and retention. EIR provides grant funding to create and develop innovative programs, implement and replicate existing initiatives, or take to scale entrepreneurial and evidence-based practices to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students. Grantees also must evaluate the solutions put forth to address persistent educational challenges.

We support the use of EIR for identifying and scaling effective educator recruitment and retention programs. This includes programs that fund educator leadership initiatives, the cost of earning high-need and advanced certification and credentials, and grants to help schools adapt structures to better support teaching and learning. Educator leadership programs could help expert teachers mentor novice teachers, increasing teacher effectiveness and school staffing stability. Increasing the number of teachers with certifications in shortage areas and advanced certifications is a key strategy for supporting student learning and closing equity gaps. Funding to help schools improve their structures could improve teaching and learning by providing educators more time to collaborate and plan and provide more personalized learning environments for students. To ensure EIR is put toward these productive uses, we recommend an appropriation of \$554 million, which reflects the higher funding provided to EIR by the

FY2022 spending bill (\$234 million), more than the U.S. Department of Education projected at the time of its budget release.

### **Provide \$3 billion for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program, Title II, Part- A of ESEA**

Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is designed to support student learning by growing the skills and expertise of educators through high-quality professional development, preparation, support for new educators such as induction and mentoring programs, changes to teaching and learning conditions such as lowering class sizes, and more. Access to high-quality professional development is an essential element to ensure that educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support all children in meeting college and career ready standards. Similarly, Title II-A can help states and districts address educator shortages. Prior to the pandemic, educators reported leaving the classroom due to lack of support in the areas of high-quality, on-going professional development; poor compensation; and inadequate working conditions. These concerns have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A robust federal investment in Title II, Part-A of ESEA would play a pivotal role in supporting states and local entities to address such challenges. Yet over the past six fiscal years there has been an over \$1 billion gap between Title II-A's authorization and funding level.<sup>15</sup> Title II, Part-A provides states with necessary resources to implement ESEA as intended and support personnel in more effectively and equitably meeting the needs of students and the communities in which they serve. Title II, Part A is a crucial funding stream for educator professional development. Likewise, it is also a tool to address the critical shortage of educators. Ultimately, adequate funding for Title II, Part-A enables the teaching and learning conditions that help students thrive.

### **Make access to comprehensive educator preparation affordable and effectively raise educator salaries by addressing student loan debt burdens**

One barrier in the development of a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce is the high and rising cost of comprehensive educator preparation. Research shows that college students' potential debt burdens influence their career decisions, making them less likely to pursue a career in education<sup>16</sup> where teachers earn about 20% to 30% less than similarly credentialed professionals in other fields.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, student loan debt burdens impact retention as they put further strain on educators' already low pay.<sup>18</sup>

More than two-thirds of those entering the education field borrow money to pay for their higher education, resulting in an average debt of \$20,000 for those with a bachelor's degree and \$50,000 for those with a master's degree.<sup>19</sup> Further, the high cost of college and the burden of student loans disproportionately impacts students of color.<sup>20</sup> For example, data from the National Center for Education Statistics reveals that 91% of Black students and 82% of Latino/a students who prepared to teach took out federal student loans, compared to 76% of white students.<sup>21</sup> Further, federal financial aid data show that across racial and ethnic groups, white students are the least likely to come from families that are unable to financially contribute to their higher education.

Service scholarship programs and loan forgiveness programs that help cover the cost of comprehensive educator preparation are found to be effective for the recruitment and retention of teachers when, among

other important features, they cover all or a significant amount of the cost of preparation and are well-designed and implemented.<sup>22</sup>

The TEACH Grant and Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program – both created in a bipartisan fashion – are our nation’s service scholarship and loan forgiveness programs that are specific to educators. The TEACH Grant provides a maximum award of about \$4,000 in aid per year to undergraduate and graduate students who commit to teaching a high-need subject in an underserved elementary or secondary school for four years. The Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) Program provides up to \$5,000 in loan forgiveness for teachers that serve in underserved schools for five consecutive years. Teachers that serve in underserved schools and teach the high-need subject of special education or secondary math and science can earn up to \$17,500 worth of loan forgiveness. It has been well over a decade and a half since either program has been updated to align with the skyrocketing cost of higher education. For example, since 2007, when the TEACH Grant program was created, student loan debt has increased by \$1 trillion.<sup>23</sup>

Through the FY 2023 appropriations process and through other legislative action Congress can take the following steps to align these programs to today’s preparation costs, dire educator shortages, and low educator pay:

- For the TEACH Grant Program, end the annual cuts to grant awards for educators in training which are scheduled to continue through 2029, double the program’s award, expand the program to early educators, and reform or eliminate the loan conversion penalty.
- For the TLF program, ensure all educators serving in underserved districts can access the program, remove administrative burdens that keep educators under student debt for longer periods of time by allowing them to concurrently earn credit toward TLF and Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and allow educators to completely retire their debt after 5 years of service.

Together, these investments will provide our country with a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce that is equipped to teach the students furthest from opportunity.

On behalf of civil rights, disability, parent, student, community, and education organizations advocating for all students to have access to fully prepared and effective educators, thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Co-Chairs of the Coalition for Teaching Quality, Kaitlyn Brennan ([kaitlynbrennan88@gmail.com](mailto:kaitlynbrennan88@gmail.com)) and Kuna Tavalin ([ktavalin@exceptionalchildren.org](mailto:ktavalin@exceptionalchildren.org)), for additional information.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

ACTFL

All4Ed

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Federation of Teachers

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Psychological Association

Association of Educational Service Agencies

Aurora Institute

California Association for Bilingual Education

Californians Together

Center for Learner Equity

Citizens for Effective Schools

Communities In Schools

Council for Exceptional Children

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

EDGE Consulting Partners

Green Dot Public Schools

HACU - Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE)

ImmSchools

Japanese American Citizens League

KnowledgeWorks

Learning Forward

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

National Association for Music Education

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

National Black Justice Coalition

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Teacher Residencies

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)

National Council of Teachers of English

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Education Association

National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium

National Rural Education Association

New Hampshire Learning Initiative

#### ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED ABOUT RURAL EDUCATION

PDK International

Prepared To Teach, Bank Street College

Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)

Public Advocates

Rural School and Community Trust

Small School Districts Association

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

#### TEACH

Teach Plus

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (TED)

The Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation

The Education Trust

United Teachers Los Angeles

CC: The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman; The Honorable Richard Shelby, Vice Chairman; The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair; The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member; The Honorable Patty

Murray, Chair; The Honorable Richard Burr, Ranking Member; The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Chairman; The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member.

## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Cardichon, J., Darling-Hammond, L., Yang, M., Scott, C., Shields, P. M., & Burns, D. (2020). *Inequitable opportunity to learn: Student access to certified and experienced teachers*. Learning Policy Institute.
- <sup>2</sup> Cardichon, J., Darling-Hammond, L., Yang, M., Scott, C., Shields, P. M., & Burns, D. (2020). *Inequitable opportunity to learn: Student access to certified and experienced teachers*. Learning Policy Institute.
- <sup>3</sup> Espinoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Taking the long view: State efforts to solve teacher shortages by strengthening the profession*. Learning Policy Institute.
- <sup>4</sup> Carver-Thomas, D. (2022, February 9). *Teacher shortages take center stage*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/teacher-shortages-take-center-stage>
- <sup>5</sup> Kamenetz, A. (2022, February 1). *More than half of teachers are looking for the exits, a poll says*. NPR.org. <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/01/1076943883/teachers-quitting-burnout>
- <sup>6</sup> Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L. & May, H. (2012). Retaining teachers: How preparation matters. *Educational Leadership*, 69(8), 30-34. Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute
- <sup>7</sup> Guha, R., Hyler, M.E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Learning Policy Institute.
- <sup>8</sup> Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Learning Policy Institute.
- <sup>9</sup> Department of Education. (2022, February 25). *Applications for new awards; Teacher quality partnership grant program*. Federal Register. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/25/2022-03889/applications-for-new-awards-teacher-quality-partnership-grant-program>
- <sup>10</sup> Gasman, M., Castro Samayoa, A., & Ginsberg, A. (2016). *A rich source for teachers of color and learning: Minority serving institutions*. Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions.
- <sup>11</sup> Lomax, M. (2015, December 14). 6 reasons HBCUs are more important than ever. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@DrMichaelLomax/6-reasons-hbcus-are-more-important-than-ever-6572fc27c715>.
- <sup>12</sup> Fenwick, L. (2016). *Teacher preparation innovation and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*. Howard University School of Education.
- <sup>13</sup> Gasman, M., Castro Samayoa, A., & Ginsberg, A. (2016). *A rich source for teachers of color and learning: Minority serving institutions*. Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions.
- <sup>14</sup> Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/454.278>.
- <sup>15</sup> Title II-A is authorized at \$2.296 billion
- <sup>16</sup> Rothstein, J. & Rouse, C.E. (2011). Constrained after college: Student loans and early-career occupational choices. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95.
- <sup>17</sup> Baker, B.D., Farrie, D., & Sciarra, D. (2015). Is school funding fair? A national report card. Education Law Center.
- <sup>18</sup> <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://1xfsu31b52d33idlp13twtos-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-Higher-Education.pdf%23page%3D179&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1651531406825141&usg=AOvVaw0EVG3UYbULBUzWNRZ6WtQU>
- <sup>19</sup> Staklis, S. & Henke, R. (2013). Who considers teaching and who teaches? National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Education, (2015). Web tables: Trends in graduate student financing: Selected years, 1995–96 to 2011–12, National Center for Education Statistics.
- <sup>20</sup> Scott-Clayton, J. & Li, J. (2016). Black-white disparity in student loan debt more than triples after graduation. *Evidence Speaks Reports*, 2(2).
- <sup>21</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, “Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study,” <https://nces.ed.gov/b&b/> (accessed on 06/2019).
- <sup>22</sup> Podolsky, A. & Kini, T. (2016). How Effective Are Loan Forgiveness and Service Scholarships for Recruiting Teachers? (policy brief). Learning Policy Institute.
- <sup>23</sup> New York Federal Reserve (n.d.). Center for Microeconomic Data <https://www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/hhdc/background> The Federal Reserve Fund of New York data shows that in quarter 4 of 2007, student loan debt stood at \$550 million. In quarter three of 2021 it stood at \$1.58 trillion.