



December 18, 2025

Senator Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Washington, D.C.
20510

Representative Robert Aderholt
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Washington, D.C.
20510

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

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We, the undersigned 57 organizations, are members or partners of the Coalition for Teaching Quality (CTQ). CTQ 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.

As you work to craft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectively urge you to:

- (1) **Provide increased funding to essential federal programs that support all students' access to a well-prepared, experienced, and stable educator workforce;**
- (2) **Write the funding levels for these programs directly into the bill text of the funding measure to ensure that funds are allocated towards activities authorized under each respective program discussed in this letter; and**
- (3) **Take immediate action to ensure education programs are housed and administered within the Department of Education (the Department), so that funding is delivered efficiently and on time, duplication and burden is avoided, students' civil rights are protected, and technical assistance is readily available.**

Further, as you work to increase funding to stem teacher shortages and boost student achievement, we ask that you not cut funding for other education-related programs.

As briefly mentioned above, we write in opposition to and with serious concerns about the Administration's executive actions to scatter over 80 education programs—including educator workforce programs—totaling over \$33 billion in funding across four non-education agencies through interagency agreements (IAAs).¹ These IAAs run contrary to numerous federal laws enacted by Congress in a bipartisan manner that require these education programs be housed in and fully administered by the Department. These IAAs add new layers of bureaucracy, create inefficiencies, and place additional burdens on states, school districts, and institutions of higher education. They threaten to complicate, disrupt, and slow access to critical education funding, including funding that supports access to quality educators. Additionally, these IAAs fragment and decentralize the dissemination of research-based practices and the provision of technical assistance across education programming, including programs that sustain high-quality educator preparation and support. **We ask that Congress take immediate action, including putting language in the FY 2026 appropriations bill that requires education programs historically operated by the Department be fully housed and administered within the Department.**

Today, the average student in our country is about half a grade level behind pre-pandemic achievement in both math and reading.² Despite clear evidence that educators are the most important in-school resources for student success, nationally, in the most recent school years, 1 in 8 teaching positions were left vacant or filled by teachers not fully certified for their assignments.³ Educator shortages are especially acute in high-need subjects,⁴ rural areas, and in schools serving areas of concentrated poverty. For example, schools with concentrated poverty experience teacher turnover rates 50% higher than their wealthier counterparts, while many rural communities are struggling to address shortages, and in turn are resorting to measures such as four-day school weeks that risk undermining student achievement.⁵ Nationally, about one in 10 principals leave their roles each year, with higher turnover in areas of concentrated poverty.⁶ Our nation's shortages, which are primarily driven by teachers leaving their current school or the profession altogether, underscore the need for ongoing support.

Specifically, strong recruitment, access to comprehensive preparation, early career support, and ongoing, high-quality professional development, and career ladders are key to ensuring that students have access to well-prepared, experienced, and effective educators.

Federal support is critical to aid state and local efforts to stem teacher shortages and boost student achievement. We therefore urge you to increase investments in the four programs described below, each of which is designed to increase teacher retention and improve student learning. Despite clear need, these programs have seen marginal or no funding increases over the last few fiscal years. Instead—and counterproductively—they have faced proposed elimination in the White House's FY 2026 budget request and abrupt grant cancellations.

The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) program: Supports comprehensive teacher and principal preparation programs that must partner with high-need school districts, including rural districts, to train educators.⁷ Grantees pair intensive, mentored clinical practice with tightly integrated coursework and provide two years of support for new educators. Research has shown that these features of comprehensive preparation, collectively, are linked to stronger teaching and higher retention.⁸ With over 25,000 preparation programs nationwide, increased investments are necessary to spread effective preparation and early-career support models and provide needed capacity and educators for high-need districts.

The Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program: Supports teacher preparation at programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), and minority-serving institutions of higher education (MSIs). These institutions are long-standing sources of well-prepared and effective teachers and prepare a disproportionate share of teachers of color.⁹ With over 930 HBCUs, TCCUs, and MSIs nationwide, these often under resourced institutions, many of which have educator preparation programs, play a key role in addressing teacher shortages.¹⁰ Increased investments in Hawkins will allow these institutions to build on their track record of preparing effective educators that serve in areas of need.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act Part D Personnel Preparation program: Funds programs that prepare specialized instructional support personnel, special educators, early educators, and the higher education faculty and researchers who train them. Research shows that well-trained and experienced special education teachers raise both math and reading achievement for students with disabilities,¹¹ yet the need far outpaces funding for this program. Most states report special education teacher shortages, and many schools enter every school year with vacancies that are difficult to fill.¹²

Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants Program (ESEA, Title II, Part-A): Supports student achievement by providing funding to states and school districts to grow educators' skills through high-quality professional development, preparation, and support for new educators, including induction

and mentoring. High-quality professional development is most effective and improves student achievement when it is sustained, content-focused, job-embedded, and collaborative, all of which are required by ESEA.¹³ Yet current funding for Title II-A is approximately \$800 million lower in unadjusted dollars than it was in 2010 and more than \$2 billion lower in current dollars.¹⁴ A robust federal investment in Title II, Part-A, of ESEA will help states and local entities recruit, prepare, support, and retain qualified and effective educators.

Together, these investments will provide needed support to states and districts and help them ensure that all students have access to the most important in-school factor to learning: educators.

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, **we again urge you to (1) provide increased funding to these essential federal programs that support a well-prepared, experienced, and stable educator workforce; (2) write the funding levels for these programs directly into the bill text of the funding measure; and (3) take immediate action to ensure education programs are housed and administered within the Department of Education.**

We thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Kaitlyn Brennan (kbrennan@kbstrategies.org) or Zach Curtis (zcurtis@nbpts.org), Co-Chairs of the Coalition for Teaching Quality, for additional information.

Sincerely,

AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education)

ACTFL

AFT

All4Ed

Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Psychological Association

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents

Calculus Roundtable

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Coalition on Human Needs

Council for Exceptional Children

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

EDGE Partners

EdTrust

Education Deans for Justice and Equity (EDJE)

Education Law Center

Education Law Center-PA

Educational Theatre Association

Educators for Excellence

Feminist Majority

First Focus Campaign for Children

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE)
InnovateEDU
Institute for Educational Leadership
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Learning Forward
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Art Education Association
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
National Association for Music Education
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR)
National Council for the Social Studies
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Dance Education Organization
National Education Association
National Rural Education Association
National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)
National Women's Law Center
Native American Disability Law Center
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Advocates
Racine Educators United (REU)
State Wide Education Organized Committee
Students Engaged in Advancing Texas (SEAT)
TEACH
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (TED)
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Center for Learner Equity

CC: The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair; The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair; The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair; The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member; The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D., Chair; The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member; The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chair; The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Ranking Member

Attachment: [June 12, 2025, CTQ Letter to Congress on FY26 Appropriations Recommendations.](#)

Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Department of Education. (2025, November 18). *U.S. Department of Education announces six new agency partnerships to break up federal bureaucracy: New agreements signed with Departments of Labor, Interior, Health and Human Services, and State* [Press release]. <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-six-new-agency-partnerships-break-federal-bureaucracy/>
- ² Dewey, D. C., Fahle, E., Kane, T. J., Reardon, S. F. & Staiger, D. O. (2025). *Pivoting from the pandemic recovery to long-term reform: A district-level analysis*. Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University. <https://educationrecoverycorecard.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Pivoting-from-Pandemic-Recovery-to-Long-Term-Reform-A-District-Level-Analysis.pdf>
- ³ Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417-458 <https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA12211>; Grissom, J. A., Egalite, A. J., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). How principals affect students and schools: A systemic synthesis of two decades of research. Wallace Foundation. <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/How-PrincipalsAffect-Students-and-Schools.pdf>; Tan, T. S., Comai, S., & Patrick, S. K. (2025). State teacher shortages 2025 update: Teaching positions left vacant or filled by teachers without full certification. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-teacher-shortages-vacancy-resource-tool-2025>
- ⁴ Learning Policy Institute. (2025). *Teacher shortages by subjects across states* [Fact sheet]. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-shortages-subjects-across-states-factsheet>
- ⁵ 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>; Kilburn, M. R., Phillips, A., Gomez, C. J., Mariano, L. T., Doss, C. J., Troxel, W. M., Morton, E., & Estes, K. (2021). *Does four equal five? Implementation and outcomes of the four-day school week*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA373-1.html; For examples of districts and schools adopting four-day school week, see: Fortino, J. (2024, October 21). *Independence attracted more teachers thanks to 4-day school week. A Missouri law could end it*. NPR in Kansas City. <https://www.kcur.org/education/2024-10-21/independence-attracted-more-teachers-thanks-to-4-day-school-a-missouri-law-could-end-it>; Gonzalez, S. (Host). (2023, November 8). Schools across the U.S. are trying a 4-day week. Why? To retain teachers [Podcast Episode]. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/08/1211632901/schools-across-the-u-s-are-trying-a-4-day-week-why-to-retain-teachers>; Hall, S. (2024 July). Embracing the four-day school week. *School Administrator Magazine*. <https://www.aasa.org/resources/resource/embracing-four-day-school-week>; McDaniel, M. (2023, May 25). Bogalusa school board approves four-day week for next school year. *Nola.com*. https://www.nola.com/news/education/bogalusa-schools-move-to-four-day-week-next-school-year/article_ea76e304-fb12-11ed-a830-f7e7cf84aac8.html; Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. (2023). *Districts and charters attending a four-day week 2010-11 to 2023-24*. <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/districts-and-charters-attending-four-day-week-2010-11-2023-24>; Wirtz, (2024, March 28) Louisiana Senator moves to ban 4-Day school week model. *KPEL.com*. <https://kpel965.com/louisiana-senator-ban-4-day-school-week/>
- ⁶ Levin, S. & Bradley, K. (2019). *Understanding and addressing principal turnover: A review of the research*. National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Center for Education Statistics. (2023, July 31). *Roughly one in ten public school principals left profession in 2021-22 school year* [Press Release]
- ⁷ In the Higher Education Act, a “high-need local educational agency”—one of the required partners in a TQP partnership—is defined to include local education agencies that meet eligibility requirements of the Rural and Low-income School Program or of the Small, Rural School Achievement Program. Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §200(10)(A) (2024).
- ⁸ Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024). Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation. Learning Policy Institute & EdPrepLab. <https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825>
- ⁹ Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/559.310>
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education. (2025). *Eligibility Matrix 2025*. <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-higher-education/eligibility-designations-higher-education-programs>
- ¹¹ Ondrasek, N., Carver-Thomas, D., Scott, C., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2020). *California’s Special Education Teacher Shortage* [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education.
- ¹² Learning Policy Institute. (2025). *Teacher shortages by subjects across states* [Fact sheet]. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-shortages-subjects-across-states-factsheet>
- ¹³ Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/122.311>; Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §8101(42) (2015).
- ¹⁴ Darling-Hammond, L., DiNapoli, M., Jr., & Kini, T. (2023). *The federal role in ending teacher shortages*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/649.892>