



April 23, 2026

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 48 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) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to:

- (1) Provide increased funding to the following essential federal programs that support all students' access to a well-prepared, experienced, and stable educator workforce:**
 - **The Teacher Quality Partnership program,**
 - **The Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program,**
 - **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Personnel Preparation program,**
 - **The Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program, and**
 - **The National Professional Development program.**
- (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) Include legislative language that requires education programs that were operated by the Department of Education (the Department) before January 1, 2025, be fully housed and administered within the Department, so that funding is delivered efficiently and on time, duplication and burden are avoided, students' civil rights are protected, and technical assistance is readily available.**

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

Today, the average student in our country is about half a grade level behind pre-pandemic achievement in both math and reading.¹ 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.² Educator shortages are especially acute in high-need subjects. In fact, last school year (2024–25), all states reported teacher shortages in more than one area, with particularly widespread shortages in special

education (45 states), math (40 states), science (41 states), and bilingual and multilingual instruction (31 states).³ Shortages are also severe in rural areas and in schools serving areas of concentrated poverty. For example, schools with concentrated poverty experience teacher turnover rates 50% higher than those of 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.⁴

Our nation's schools experience teacher turnover that is twice as high as that of other developed nations, including Finland and Singapore.⁵ This is a leading cause of shortages and has a negative impact on student achievement.⁶ Recent analyses show that 1 in 7 teachers moved schools or left the profession after one school year, with three-quarters of these teachers doing so voluntarily for reasons other than retirement.⁷ Additionally, nationally, about one in 10 principals leave their roles each year, with higher turnover in areas of concentrated poverty.⁸ Yet the difference between highly effective principals and those who are below average have been found to be associated with around three additional months of student learning in reading and math—effects that extend across an entire school.⁹

Research has shown that strong recruitment, access to comprehensive and affordable preparation, early career support, ongoing high-quality professional development, and career ladders are key to ensuring that students have access to well-prepared, experienced, and effective educators. **The five programs discussed below—when adequately funded—provide the full continuum of these research-based supports that matter for a high-quality educator workforce and student success. We therefore urge you to increase investments in these programs and to write their funding into the bill text to ensure that the funds Congress appropriates are efficiently and effectively sent by the Department to the communities that rely on them.**

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.¹⁰ Grantees pair intensive, mentored clinical practice with tightly integrated coursework and must provide two years of induction support for new educators. Research has shown that these features of comprehensive preparation, collectively, are linked to stronger teaching and higher retention.¹¹ Research also shows that comprehensively prepared teachers are more effective: a recent evaluation of Texas's large-scale investment in paid teacher residencies found first-year teachers who completed these residencies were as effective as fifth-year teachers in reading.¹² 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. Increased TQP funding would enable more preparation programs to partner with high-need school districts to prepare effective educators, which will help stem chronic teacher shortages in their schools.

The Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program (Hawkins): Supports teacher preparation 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ Expanding funding for Hawkins could help remove barriers that prospective teachers, including prospective teachers of color, face to accessing and completing comprehensive preparation. Due to cost and other barriers, research shows that teachers of color are less likely than their white counterparts to enter through comprehensive preparation programs, have access to courses critical to effective teaching, or complete student teaching. These gaps in preparation are all factors that make teachers more likely to leave their classrooms or the profession altogether, which is a leading cause of

shortages.¹⁵ Increased investments in Hawkins will allow these institutions to remove barriers to comprehensive preparation for more teachers and build on their track record of preparing effective educators who serve in areas of need.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education 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. The program also provides scholarships and stipends to individuals preparing to enter the field, accompanied by a federal service obligation requiring recipients to work in special education after completing their training. Research shows that well-trained and experienced special education teachers raise both math and reading achievement for students with disabilities,¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ At the same time, the number of K–12 students receiving special education services has increased by more than one million students between 2013 and 2023, heightening the need to recruit and retain qualified personnel.¹⁸ IDEA-D, Personnel Preparation funds are crucial to ensure that schools have the educators, specialized instructional support personnel, and research-based practices needed to support the estimated 7.5 million children with disabilities nationwide who receive services under IDEA.

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.¹⁹ Most rigorous studies over the past two decades have found that, on average, teachers continue to improve as they accumulate additional experience, especially in environments that support professional learning and collaboration. This makes investments in Title II-A that support professional development a vital investment both for stemming the turnover that causes shortages and for boosting student achievement.²⁰ Yet current funding for Title II-A is approximately \$800 million lower in unadjusted dollars than it was in 2010 and more than \$2.2 billion lower in current dollars.²¹ 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.

National Professional Development Program (ESEA, Title III, Part-A; NPD): Funds high-quality preparation and ongoing professional development to equip educators with the practices and skills necessary to support English learners (ELs) in achieving proficiency in English and meeting and exceeding challenging state academic standards. There is a need for increase funding for NPD as recent studies find that less than half of all teachers felt prepared to teach ELs, including in key academic subjects like English Language Arts, math, and science.²² Moreover, in the last school year (2024–25), 31 states reported shortages in educators teaching bilingual education or English as a Second Language, all of which underscore the need for targeted investments in high-quality preparation and professional development for EL instruction.²³ This competitive grant program is funded via Title III’s national activities set-aside.²⁴

Grant Cancellations Have Interrupted the Preparation and Professional Development of Educators in Underserved Communities

Despite the need for increased federal funding and support to help states and local educational agencies stem teacher shortages, the Administration has counterproductively cancelled over 120 grants from the competitive grants mentioned in this letter, totaling at least \$504 million.²⁵ These cancellations have had profound impacts on the schools and communities that benefit from these programs. For example, they have disrupted the training of future teachers in rural districts across at least 6 states (Arkansas,

California, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Virginia). In some communities, such as rural Arkansas and Louisiana, grantees have leveraged TQP to bridge distance by partnering high-need school districts with educator preparation programs to provide high-quality preparation for paraprofessionals who did not have a university within commuting distance.²⁶ They have also forced aspiring special education educators and educators preparing in other fields at HBCUs and other MSIs to choose between taking on debt or dropping out of teacher preparation altogether.²⁷

These examples are only the tip of the iceberg of the damage caused. There has not been a full public accounting by the Department of the education funding it has cancelled, including programs that support a high-quality educator workforce. To date, the most comprehensive rendering is a 2025 resource from Ed Week that finds that, across more than 30 Department programs, over 730 grants worth more than \$2 billion were cancelled via administrative action.²⁸ At a minimum, the public should have an accounting of how their taxpayer dollars were spent and the number of educators who had support cut off and the classrooms that were impacted as a result.

Interagency Agreements Threaten to Further Disrupt Funding Delivery and Technical Assistance

Additionally, as briefly mentioned above, we write in opposition to and with serious concerns about the Administration's executive actions to scatter nearly 120 education programs—including educator workforce programs—totaling over \$34 billion in funding across four non-education agencies through interagency agreements (IAAs).²⁹ 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. Additionally, among the risks associated with the dismantling of the Department are the abdication or undermining of federal requirements on states and local educational agencies (LEAs) that ensure K-12 students' access to quality educators.³⁰

Recent news reports on the Administration's use of IAAs to dismantle the Department indicate that many of these concerns have already materialized. The first set of IAAs (career, technical, and adult education programs) experienced significant disruptions: funding transfers took weeks longer than anticipated and several states experienced technical issues shifting to the Department of Labor's grant management systems.³¹ Moreover, transfers of programs housed in the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) have followed a similar pattern, with reporting as of February 2026 finding that the Department of Labor's internal grant management system had not been updated to accommodate OPE programs, forcing the Administration to keep an upcoming grant competition inside the Department of Education's own system.³² As the Education Department's acting chief of staff acknowledged, they "are not in a position yet to move to the new grant system." Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have taken note of these IAAs, directly challenging how the transfers improve efficiency, save money, or deliver better outcomes.³³

To ensure that funding is delivered efficiently and on time, duplication and burden are avoided, students' civil rights are protected, and technical assistance is readily available, we ask that you include legislative language that requires education programs that were operated by the Department before January 1, 2025, be fully housed and administered within the Department.

Together, these investments and recommended statutory protections 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) include legislative language 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
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Psychological Association
Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
Breakthrough Collaborative
Californians Together
CAST
Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education
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 (COPAA)
EDGE Partners
EdTrust
EduColor
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
ETS
Feminist Majority Foundation
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE)
Learning Forward
National Art Education Association
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
National Association for Media Arts Education
National Association for Music Education
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
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 (NCTE)
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Dance Education Organization
National Latino Education Research and Policy Project
National Rural Education Association
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Advocates
Rural Schools Association of New York State
TEACH.org
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
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: [CTQ Fact Sheet: Dismantling the Department Harms Access to Quality Educators](#)

Endnotes

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