

# knowledge alliance

December 3, 2021

Secretary Miguel Cardona  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona,

Knowledge Alliance, a non-profit, non-partisan organization, is comprised of leading education organizations that share the belief that high-quality, relevant research is critical to solving the education problems facing our country today. Collectively, we have spent the last 50 years working to elevate the creation and use of rigorous research and evidence for systems change, sustainable resources, equitable public education and access to opportunity for all.

Critical to systemic educational improvements and COVID-19 response and recovery is a strong research and technical assistance infrastructure that includes programs at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) – such as the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and the Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D) program – coupled with the Comprehensive Centers (CCs) and the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program at the U.S. Department of Education (ED). It is through these programs that new knowledge is created, replicated and disseminated to States, districts and schools to help improve the use of evidence to raise student outcomes. We appreciate the proposed increase in funding provided by the House and Senate Democrats in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 for these critical programs. We hope these historic programmatic increases are funded when a final bill is negotiated and ask that you help weigh in with Congress to support the proposed levels for IES, RELs, CCs and EIR, particularly the levels proposed in the Senate Democrat bill.

As you begin work on ED's FY 2023 budget proposal, we ask that you continue to propose increases for IES (and particularly the RD&D line item within IES), RELs, CCs and EIR. Specifically, we ask that ED provide at least a ten percent increase over final FY 2022 levels for each of these programs. A steadily growing investment must be provided to ensure the existing Federal education research and development (R&D) infrastructure can continue to support on-the-ground efforts to address the impacts of the pandemic, while also providing State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) continued research and technical assistance support that will help them build their systems-level capacity to address local needs. Unfortunately, IES is only able to fund one out of every 10 applications it currently receives due to the limitations in its budget, despite a far greater percentage of such applications being rated excellent and worth funding. In order to fill this gap and fund all exceptional grant applications within IES, there must be a larger investment in education research. Lastly, investments in other research agencies across the Federal government are much more significant than those provided to IES; increases are needed to fill this gap to prioritize education research at a time when it is needed most.

Federal resources are consistently needed to address State and local needs for education research and technical assistance. Funding from Federal programs have been used to help States and school districts during this critical time as requests have come in for assistance. Additionally, during the pandemic, ED leadership has looked to the RELs and CCs for help in supporting States and districts to effectively leverage research and evidence-based strategies and interventions to address learning recovery. ED engaged all RELs and CCs to inform the [Safer Schools and](#)

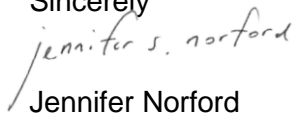
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[Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) and asked the National Comprehensive Center to lead the [Summer Learning and Enrichment Collaborative](#). Collectively, these efforts were part of the first steps to address accelerated learning opportunities and embark on educational recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. RELs and CCs have also been at the forefront of providing evidence-based [resources and guidance](#) about teaching and learning in a remote environment, among other issues schools are facing. Increased funding in FY 2023 will help ensure that these efforts are maintained, and expanded, to meet the needs of students nationwide.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will follow our nation's youth for years to come and it is critical that the education research infrastructure is maintained throughout this time to provide support. We believe that this continued, strong support and investment in the education R&D infrastructure will help improve outcomes for students and effectively leverage scarce Federal resources. Furthermore, it will empower States and local school districts to develop and implement the innovative, evidence-based approaches that work best for students in their communities as they continue the long journey of education recovery from the COVID- 19 pandemic. This is why we urge ED to provide these programs with at least a ten percent increase over final FY 2022 levels in its FY 2023 budget request.

Please let me know if Knowledge Alliance can be of any further assistance as ED continues work on its FY 2023 budget request.

Sincerely



Jennifer Norford  
Chair, Knowledge Alliance