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Knowledge Alliance Supports Innovative and Fundamental Research

Knowledge Alliance (KA), a non-profit comprised of leading education organizations, strongly supports the significant increase in funding in FY23 for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), including the additional \$40 million for quick-turnaround, high reward scalable solutions intended to significantly improve outcomes for students. KA joins IES in recognizing this funding as an opportunity for transformative research that enables dramatic advances in teaching and learning. Over the past 20 years, IES has produced evidence that explored and answered foundational questions about learning and education. For example, IES has over 25 [Practice Guides](#) that provide educators with the best research evidence available and offers specific recommendations to address education challenges. Such research demonstrates that we stand at a moment of truly unprecedented promise to make an impact, which is particularly critical given evidence of how heavily the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted student learning. This knowledge also challenges us to ask: How can we scale evidence-based practices? What more can we do to accelerate the pace of breakthroughs in education research? What investments can make research produce results faster? How can we narrow education inequities, improve the quality of instruction, and address the pressing needs of students and teachers?

Transformational advancements in health can serve as a valuable example as education tackles these challenging questions. Progress in medicine and health in recent decades has been driven by two powerful forces: pathbreaking fundamental research and a vibrant commercial biotechnology sector. What if education researchers and developers came together in a similar way? Such a collaboration could be truly transformational. Both fields have much to offer the other and would greatly benefit from collaboration and the cross-pollination of ideas. KA believes that funding partnerships with this funding can be truly transformational, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of how students learn and to innovative ways to support their growth and success. Just like in health, where consistent funding for fundamental research questions in biology and medicine leads to breakthroughs that the commercial sector can use to develop products for market, KA is eager to see that IES RD&D funds are also used to continue investments in foundational IES research programs.

As IES develops its plans for the uses of this funding, KA recommends that IES adopt the following principles for a successful approach to developing quality, scalable research that centers the work on the needs and outcomes of all learners.

Innovative Partnerships. Through partnerships, that a minimum includes researchers, evaluators, and a consortium of SEAs or LEAs, IES will have the ability to spur education innovations that have increased probability of scaling, that meet the needs of the field, and that have rigorous evidence of impact. KA encourages IES to leverage the longstanding relationships that Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and Comprehensive Centers (CCs) have with stakeholders at the state, local, and regional levels to

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assess how an innovation would be incorporated into the operating environment of the school and district.

Ensure Projects Are Directly Connected to the Needs of Students. The learning needs of students, particularly students with disabilities, English learners and learners, most impacted by learning loss, must be front and center. Applicants should be required to demonstrate that their proposed project is informed by learners' needs. One-way IES could increase grantees' probability of both meeting the needs of students and scaling and transitioning their innovations would be an embedded Entrepreneur Model (EP) which requires both stakeholder need sensing and how the envisioned end product will integrate into existing systems

Fuel High-Quality Innovation Through Competition and Transparency. Through a competitive process, IES will have the ability to gain insight on the range of ideas in the field and allow the highest-quality and highest-potential-impact proposals to receive funding. Transparency throughout the competitive process and implementation should be a priority.

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