

# knowledge alliance

August 11, 2023

The President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

To the President of the United States,

I am writing on behalf of Knowledge Alliance to express the qualifications and attributes we believe should be considered when appointing the next Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Director. [Knowledge Alliance](#) (KA), a non-profit, non-partisan organization, is comprised of leading education organizations committed since 1971 to the greater use of high-quality and relevant data, research, evaluation, and innovation in education policy and practice at all levels. Collectively, KA and its members promote the use of rigorous research to figure out what works to improve student outcomes and then share those findings with policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

KA believes that careful consideration of the outlined qualities in this letter is paramount to securing the strongest candidate possible. By prioritizing these qualities in the selection process, we believe this will ensure the appointment of an IES Director who will lead IES with integrity and a dedication to strengthening innovation and collaboration across the research community.

## Understanding of Government

IES's mission is "to provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to share this information in formats that are useful and accessible to educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public." To better facilitate collaboration between research stakeholders and government, the future Director should have experience in education, applied research *and* government. They must have a strong understanding of the Hill and a willingness to build connections with Congress. They should exude political savviness and must understand how to navigate bureaucracy to achieve results. They should recognize the importance of IES's independence from the U.S. Department of Education but engage with policy and program offices to produce relevant work. In addition, the future Director should be committed to creating efficiencies within IES to expedite how evidence is shared with stakeholders. An ideal candidate would understand and value private and public collaboration.

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## **Commitment to Education Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D)**

The Director’s role is critical in guiding Federal research, evidence, evaluation, data collection, assessment, technical assistance and dissemination that is needed for continued improvement of teaching and learning for all students across the country. As such, we believe that the next Director must have a strong understanding of research methodology and education data. The next IES Director must be familiar with the full spectrum of education research and methods, including a variety of issue areas and must demonstrate respect and esteem for researchers in the field. We encourage the Administration to prioritize these qualities by selecting a nominee who has experience working in research at the local, State and national level. Most significantly, we ask that you select a nominee that demonstrates a deep connection to the research practice even as they ascend in their responsibilities.

## **Strong Leadership**

As the current Federal research and development infrastructure continues to expand and grow with the changing needs of our education systems, we believe it is critical to have an IES Director who is a strong and visionary leader. The next Director should be capable of pushing forward new and innovative ideas while also respecting and valuing the existing educational research infrastructure and systems. While fostering a culture of creativity and exploration, the next Director should also recognize the importance of building upon the existing evidence base. In order to be most impactful in the Director role, KA also believes the next IES Director should be someone who understands the importance of creating strong, sustained relationships with practitioners in the field as well as other stakeholders in this work. KA believes that by appointing someone who is entrepreneurial, strategic, impact focused and able to pursue bold ideas, IES can be most effective in serving the needs of educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public.

## **Inclusive**

It is important that the next Director has experience engaging in meaningful ways with different stakeholders, including teachers and families. An ideal candidate would have experience bringing together communities of voices from diverse perspectives and have done work in collective partnerships. As we seek the next IES Director, it is crucial to recognize the importance of diversity and the need for a broad range of perspectives. To ensure that IES remains at the forefront of promoting inclusive and equitable education practices, we encourage that the selection process include the consideration of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Embracing diversity in leadership not only fosters a more inclusive environment within the organization but also enriches the quality of research and decision-making processes.



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We ask that, as the Administration begins the search for a new IES Director, they take these recommendations for qualifications and attributes into consideration. We believe that with the evolving needs of students, families and communities and the increasingly rapid development of new innovations, IES can be at the forefront of providing scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy. However, we know that it is essential to have a strong leader that has a deep understanding of government and our nation's education research infrastructure. Thank you for your attention to this matter and your consideration of Knowledge Alliance's recommendations.

Sincerely,



Rachel Dinkes  
President and CEO