

December 4, 2025

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515-3701

The Honorable Brian K. Fitzpatrick
271 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515-3801

Dear Representatives Bonamici and Fitzpatrick,

We, the undersigned, write in support of the New Essential Education Discoveries (NEED) Act. This legislation will strengthen education research and development (R&D) to improve student learning and sharpen the United States' competitive edge in an increasingly technology-rich world. At a time when academic proficiency is on the decline and artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are on the rise, the NEED Act's investment in education research and innovation is more important than ever. The future of American education must be shaped by data, evidence of what works, and bold new approaches harnessing technological advances so that students are prepared to thrive in work and life.

The NEED Act will establish a National Center for Advanced Development in Education (NCADE) at the Institute of Education Sciences. NCADE is modeled after the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a renowned R&D incubator that has produced groundbreaking innovations like the internet and GPS. While many sectors, like health and agriculture, have DARPA-inspired advanced R&D agencies, education does not. Recognizing that education is in need of transformative, evidenced-based approaches and tools, NCADE will have the hiring flexibility to attract creative and nimble project managers to lead multidisciplinary teams engaged in informed-risk, high-reward R&D projects. Specifically, NCADE will fund teams to develop cutting-edge practices, breakthrough technologies, and innovations in the responsible use of AI to enhance teaching and learning.

Given that data infrastructure is the backbone of effective R&D, The NEED Act will also expand and upgrade the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program. This will help states better track students' progress through K-12 and into the workforce, integrate data across multiple domains, ensure the privacy of students' education records, and generate high-quality data in actionable formats. The modernization of SLDS will ensure that state data systems can be an effective tool to inform use-driven and translational research, resulting in meaningful and measurable benefits in school districts and postsecondary institutions.

Thank you for your leadership in education research and innovation. We look forward to working with you to advance the NEED Act and ensure U.S. students receive the high-quality education they deserve.

Sincerely,