

# knowledge alliance

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member, Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education &  
Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education &  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of [Knowledge Alliance](#) (KA) we urge you to include robust funding for education research, development and dissemination (RD&D) at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) in the fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations bill. KA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization composed of the leading education groups dedicated to empowering schools, districts and all 50 States with the tools and resources needed to improve learning and outcomes for every student. KA members partner with States and districts to strengthen their education goals and address their pressing academic issues like literacy and math performance and overall school improvement. KA members' work provides information needed for parents and families to help their students succeed.

Federal education RD&D is more than a singular program or investment; it is a coordinated engine that enables the entire education field to fuel students' success. Like any engine, it only works when all of its interconnected blades move together: rigorous research, high-quality data systems, technical assistance, innovation, evaluation, and dissemination. At the center the engine are students, parents, educators, and State and district leaders who rely on trusted evidence to make critical decisions for students every day about some of the most pressing education issues related to literacy instruction, math achievement, career pathways, and student supports. Federal investment provides cross-State coordination that no individual State can replicate alone. When Congress funds the engine, States, districts, teachers, and communities have the resources and supports to address challenges, strengthen systems, scale improvements, and make decisions rooted in evidence rather than guesswork to improve outcomes for all students.

Federal education RD&D delivers value:

- **For parents:** Ensures they have trustworthy data about their child’s learning and confidence that schools are using approaches proven to help students succeed.
- **For teachers:** Provides teachers with practical tools, professional learning, and instructional strategies that strengthen classroom practice.
- **For State and local policymakers:** It provides rigorous data, independent evaluation, evidence building, implementation supports, and cross-State learning to guide responsible investments and continuous improvement.

A strong education RD&D infrastructure is critical because it meets every community where they are, delivering tailored support, whether through faster access to information, scaling of proven practices, professional development, or evaluation of program impact. A robust RD&D system is what ensures that investments translate into real improvements for students. It bridges the gap between promising ideas and actual results in classrooms, helping turn isolated successes into widespread progress.

To support this system, KA asks that you include the following levels for these priority programs in bill language in a final FY 2027 bill. Specifically:

- **At least \$900 million for IES; specifically,**
  - **\$258 million for the Research Development and Dissemination (RD&D) program at IES**
  - **\$65 million for the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) Program;**
- **\$58 million for the Comprehensive Centers (CCs);**
- **\$284 million for Education Innovation and Research (EIR); and**
- **ensure that these programs and funding levels are included in the FY27 bill text to ensure they are funded as intended by Congress.**

Maintaining and strengthening education RD&D through these programs ensures that other Federal investments in education—whether through Title I, IDEA, or competitive grants—are better equipped to improve learning and outcomes for students by ensuring that the implementation of these programs is research-grounded and evaluation-informed. While investments in education RD&D represent only a small fraction of the overall Federal education budget, the return on these investments maximizes the impact of every other dollar spent, making them indispensable.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please let me know if Knowledge Alliance can be of any further assistance during the appropriations process.

Sincerely,



Rachel Dinkes  
President and CEO

## ***FY27 Appropriations Addendum***

### **Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D) at the Institute of Education Sciences**

**(IES):** IES was created in 2002 by the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) in 2002 and has four centers, each of which fulfill a unique need within the education research landscape. The IES RD&D funds two of IES' centers: the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) and the National Center for Education Research (NCER).

NCEE is responsible for building evidence about “what works” at scale in education policy and practice and then mobilizing that knowledge so educators and decisionmakers can use it to benefit learners. NCEE operates:

- **Federal program evaluation**, which evaluates the implementation of Federal programs at the State, local, and institutional levels and the impact of Federal policy and policy-relevant intervention strategies
- The **What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)**, which reviews high-quality research on education policies, programs, products and practices to inform decisionmakers
- The **Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)**, which serves as the nation’s free, public, online bibliography of education research

NCER is charged with funding rigorous research that contributes to the solution of significant education problems in the United States, and with building a research infrastructure for the education sciences. Through its research investments, NCER generates evidence that is intended to result in high-quality education for all children, improvement in student academic achievement, reduction in the achievement gap between high performing and low-performing students, and increased access to and opportunity for postsecondary education. NCER, with support from Congress, has been developing a portfolio of risk-informed, high reward, rapid turnaround studies modeled on DARPA and other “ARPA-like” agencies throughout the Federal government.

**Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs)** are research partners that work directly with State and Local Education Agencies to conduct rigorous, actionable research and evaluation aligned to the priorities identified by the field. They are the only Federally funded entities dedicated to providing research, evaluation, and research-related technical assistance determined by State and district needs. For more than fifty years, RELs have helped States and districts generate evidence and knowledge to improve outcomes in areas such as teacher retention, literacy, math achievement, and career readiness. The most recent REL projects were supporting States on issues including math and literacy improvement, college and career readiness, and career and technical education, among others. One of which is the REL toolkits, which provide professional development materials and resources to help educators implement evidence-based instructional practices in their schools.

**Comprehensive Centers (CCs)** focus on capacity-building and implementation support. While RELs help determine what works, CCs help ensure that those strategies can be effectively put into practice and sustained over time. CCs provide high-quality technical assistance, facilitate

strategic planning, and offer practical support to help States and districts close achievement gaps and improve instruction. Each CC's scope of work is driven by the priorities of the States it serves and informed by a diverse advisory board including the chief State school officer or designee, plus stakeholder groups such as educators, policymakers, researchers, and business and other community leaders. The most recent CC projects are supporting States on their expressed priorities on issues including math and literacy improvement, school improvement, teacher retention, and others.

**Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grants** fund evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student outcomes. The EIR program consists of three different types of grants (early, mid-phase and expansion grants) that allocate increased investments as the level of evidence increases—an efficient and smart investment of Federal funds. This dedicated funding for ground-up innovation is an essential component of Federal education RD&D to maintain. The current EIR projects are working on innovations in many areas but specifically on evidence-based literacy instruction.