



April 1, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs Cole and Collins, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Vice Chair Murray,

The Alliance for Learning Innovation (ALI), a bipartisan coalition building a more innovative and evidence-based education system, respectfully writes to request robust funding for education research and development (R&D) in the fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations bills.

We are grateful for the bipartisan commitment Congress demonstrated in the FY 2026 appropriations process to preserve funding for federal education R&D, including the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the Department of Education's (ED) Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program, data and career-connected learning efforts at the Department of Labor (DOL), and the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorates for STEM Education and Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP). Congressional appropriators sent a strong signal that evidence-based education policy remains a national priority. We urge Congress to build on that commitment in FY 2027 by restoring and strengthening investments in education R&D.

The need for increased investment in education R&D has never been more urgent. The 2024 Nation's Report Card revealed that student performance has declined to historic lows in key subjects and grade levels. Forty-five percent of 12th graders scored below the basic level in math, and 32 percent scored below basic in reading—the highest percentages ever recorded. Achievement gaps between the highest- and lowest-performing students have widened, and only one-third of graduating seniors demonstrated readiness for entry-level college math. These results demand a robust, evidence-based response powered by a federal education R&D infrastructure that supports states and local education efforts.

Federal investments in education R&D have produced proven results. Large-scale IES investment in the science of reading has generated evidence-based practice guides for teaching foundational reading skills and innovative curricula for students with disabilities. NSF-funded research has led to the establishment of the Discovery Research PreK-12 (DRK-12) Resource Center on Transformative Education Research and Translation (CTERT), a concept that ALI championed from appropriations report language through statutory authorization in the CHIPS and Science Act to a funded cooperative agreement.

Education R&D equips state and local decision-makers with the evidence they need to choose programs that work for their students. This approach respects local autonomy while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are directed toward strategies with proven outcomes. Modernizing Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS), leveraging artificial intelligence and technology platforms, and providing technical assistance to states are all essential components of a functioning education R&D ecosystem that requires continued and expanded federal support.

Strong investment in IES, EIR, and the education and workforce programs at DOL and NSF will ensure that R&D continues to drive evidence-based, innovative improvements to teaching and learning and bolster career pathways that prepare the future workforce.

Within the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-H) bill, we respectfully request that Congress provide:

- **At least \$900 million for the Institute of Education Sciences.** This level of investment is necessary to restore and sustain the agency's research, data collection, and dissemination functions following significant changes to agency staffing and contracts. Within this amount, ALI requests continued support for the Accelerate, Transform, and Scale (ATS) initiative, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS), the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs), Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D), and the School Pulse Panel. Congress should also ensure adequate staffing levels for IES and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to fulfill their statutory responsibilities.
- **At least \$284 million for the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program,** restoring funding to its FY 2023 level and reversing the downward trend from the program's peak. EIR supports the development, testing, and scaling of innovative practices and programs, including career-connected learning opportunities, teacher pathways, and the integration of evidence-based approaches in K-12 education.
- **At least \$12 million for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)** to strengthen the connection between education R&D and workforce development. This effort should also support the Department's effort to establish an AI Workforce Research Hub.

Within the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) bill, we urge Congress to provide:

- **At least \$1.17 billion for the NSF Directorate for STEM Education.** This funding supports critical programs, including DRK-12, NSF TIP-EDU cross-directorate collaboration, and Centers for Transformative Education Research and Translation (CTERT). Congress should champion these programs alongside continued investment in translational STEM education R&D.
- **At least \$1 billion for the NSF Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP).** This funding would address the limited opportunities for translating research into real innovations that work for individual communities and schools.

ALI strongly encourages congressional directives to ensure that FY 2027 funding is allocated by program line item to provide transparency and accountability.

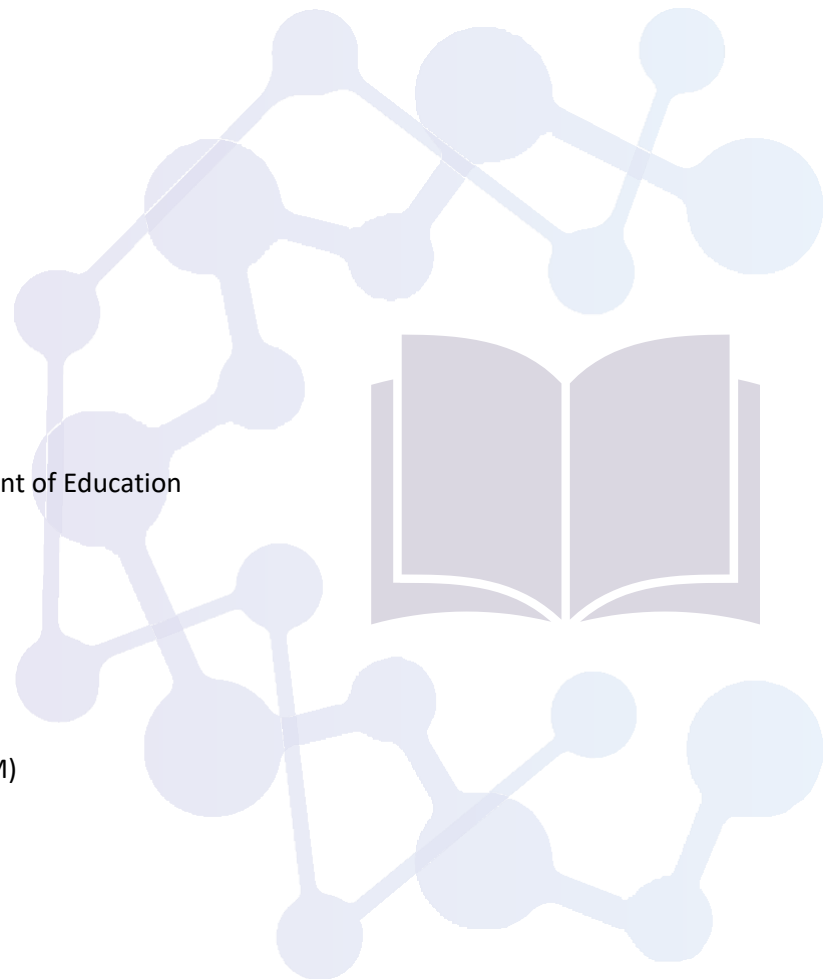


To illustrate the nationwide reach and impact of federal education R&D investments, ALI has developed the [Education R&D Funding Explorer](#), a publicly accessible tool showing how federal education research dollars have supported researchers and institutions in every state. We welcome the opportunity to brief your offices on this data and on the critical role that federal education R&D plays in improving student outcomes across the country.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Learning Innovation

Accelerate-The National Collaborative for Accelerated Learning
Advanced Education Research and Development Fund (AERDF)
All4Ed
America Forward
American Chemical Society
AnLar
Association of Public Data Users
CAST
Data Quality Campaign
Dr. Sydnee Dickson, Former State Superintendent of Public Instruction
EDGE Partners
EdTrust
Education Knowledge Broker Network
Education Reform Now Advocacy
Education Reimagined
Evidence Advocacy Center
Foundation for Deeper Learning
FullScale
High Tech High Graduate School of Education
Hope Squad
Imagine Network
Improvement Scholars Network
In Tandem
InnovateEDU
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Institute for Learning Innovation
jeffweldLLC
Jim Shelton, Former Deputy Secretary US Department of Education
Knowledge Alliance
Leadership Lady
Leanlab Education
LearnerStudio
Learning Heroes
Lehigh University
Modern States Education Alliance
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)





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