



Learning and Education Academic Research Network
Advancing the Sciences of Teaching and Learning

The Honorable John Kline
The Honorable George Miller
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 201515

April 7, 2014

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

On behalf of the LEARN Coalition (The Learning and Education Academic Research Network), a coalition of Deans of leading research colleges of education, we are writing to express our support for H.R. 4366, The Strengthening Education through Research Act. This legislation fortifies the already strong foundation of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in supporting high-quality education research aimed at improving academic and learning outcomes. We urge Members of the Committee to offer their bipartisan support for this legislation.

In expressing our support for the bill, we want to thank the Committee for several provisions that would maintain and improve the operation of IES, including both its research and evaluation functions. First, the LEARN Coalition strongly supports the continued independence of IES that is required by this legislation. As with current law, a strong and independent IES permits research to be conducted in a non-political and scientific environment. This allows those conducting IES research to get to the answers that our education community needs to improve student achievement and college attainment results without undue or improper influence.

A key component of this independence is also the continued reliance on a sound definition of the principles of scientific research. We thank the Committee for recognizing that the direction provided by this definition will continue to produce research aimed at driving better outcomes for our nation's students.

Coupled with independence and a strong definition of the principals of scientific research, is the need for increased funding for all of IES, but especially its research and evaluation functions. We appreciate the increased authorization levels in the long-term for both IES and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER), however, we would prefer more robust levels, especially for Fiscal Year 2015 when the research and NCSEER levels are flat-funded compared to FY 2014 funding. Authorization amounts in this legislation should showcase the Committee's commitment to additional future resources and put NCSEER back on track to regain losses in funding from several years ago. We respectfully request that the Committee consider

increasing these levels, especially for Fiscal Year 2015, as the bill proceeds to consideration by the full House.

In addition to funding, the bill maintains the strong research focus of IES through its National Center for Education Research, along with expanding the evaluation role of IES for Department of Education programs. Both research and evaluation are critical elements to improving the effectiveness of federal funds provided for education. Ensuring that both are prominent and distinct functions in this legislation recognizes the importance of the activities they support.

Even with strong research and evaluation functions, much would be lost without a strong dissemination role and effort by IES. We are pleased that the Committee recognized the need for IES and the field to continue to disseminate research and evaluation findings in a timely way to make it useable for state and local education officials and most importantly, practitioners in the classroom. As a coalition we are committed to ensuring our work winds up in the hands of those that need it to improve their education practices to gain better results. We strongly support the Committee's recognition of the role of dissemination through specific legislative language.

Lastly, the bill recognizes that evaluation is only the beginning of improving the use of federal education resources. The bill language takes advantage of numerous opportunities to reinforce that the results of evaluations need to be put to use to improve the operation and outcomes of federal education programs. We are pleased that this focus has been systemically embedded in the statute and look forward to its resulting in better use of federal resources to improve education and learning.

Thank you again for your leadership moving H.R. 4366. We look forward to this bill passing Committee and the full House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

Sincerely,
Co-chairs of the LEARN Coalition:

Dean Gerardo M. Gonzalez
Indiana University, School of Education

Dean Donald E. Heller
Michigan State University, College of Education

Dean Donna L. Wiseman
University of Maryland, College of Education