



April 30, 2024

Senator Tammy Baldwin
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Washington, D.C.
20510

Representative Robert Aderholt
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Washington, D.C.
20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, the undersigned organizations urge you to provide meaningful funding levels for the federal programs that support equitable student access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce. Further, we ask you to find the appropriate funds necessary to support educators and address teacher shortages while avoiding cuts to funding for other education-related programs.

The Coalition for Teaching Quality represents national civil rights, disability, parent, student, community, and education organizations advocating together to ensure that all students have access to well-prepared and effective teachers and school leaders. This school year, 2023-24, all 50 states reported teacher shortages in at least one subject area. Nearly every state is facing a shortage of teachers in high-need subjects, with 43 states reporting shortages of special education teachers, 38 in math teachers, 37 in science teachers, and 27 in language teachers¹ A study conducted by researchers at the Learning Policy Institute in 2023 found that in addition to 27,844 vacant teaching positions nationally, 286,290 teachers did not meet state certification requirements, together representing 1 in 10 teaching positions nationwide.² While some states are taking research-based approaches to stabilize and grow the educator workforce, others are lowering the bar, for example, allowing those without bachelor's degrees to teach.^{3,4}

¹ <https://tsa.ed.gov/#/home/>

² Franco, M., & Patrick, S. K. (2023). *State teacher shortages: Teaching positions left vacant or filled by teachers without full certification*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-teacher-shortages-vacancy>

³ Harrell, G. (2022, July 21). *Veterans can now teach in Florida with no degree. School leaders say it lowers the bar*. The Gainesville Sun. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2022/07/21/florida-education-programmilitary-veteransteach/10117107>

⁴ Merod, A. (2022, July 13). *Arizona law removes bachelor's degree requirement for teachers*. K-12 Dive. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/arizona-law-removes-bachelors-degree-requirement-for-teachers/627128/>

Meanwhile, in an effort to stem shortages, some districts are moving to four-day school weeks.⁵

We know that inequitable access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce impacts underserved students the most. In fact, prior to the pandemic, historically underserved students were disproportionately taught by inexperienced teachers or teachers on substandard licenses (e.g. long-term substitutes, emergency credentialed, or out-of-field teachers). Moreover, teacher turnover rates were 50% higher in schools with concentrated poverty than in wealthy schools and 70% higher in schools serving high concentrations of students of color compared to schools serving high concentrations of white students.⁶

Research has shown that teachers who enter the profession through less comprehensive preparation pathways – such as emergency and alternative pathways that do not offer student teaching and a full curriculum for teaching – are two to three times more likely to leave than those who receive comprehensive preparation. Access to comprehensive pre-service teacher preparation, along with effective recruitment efforts and ongoing, high-quality professional development, are the key ingredients to ensuring that students have access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce.

Thus, we urge you to make the following investments in FY 2025 that support student access to a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce, which are summarized and described in more detail below.

- **\$1 billion for the Teacher Quality Partnership program**
- **\$300 million for the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program**
- **\$300 million for the Individuals with Disabilities Act Part D Personnel Preparation program**
- **\$3 billion for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program, Title II, Part- A of ESEA**
- **Update the TEACH Grant Program and Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program to make access to comprehensive educator preparation affordable.**
- **\$10 million to fund, for the first time, grants under the Graduate Fellowships to Prepare Faculty in High Need Areas at Colleges of Education program to help address critical teacher pipeline issues.**

Provide \$1 billion to the Teacher Quality Partnership program.

The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grant program funds comprehensive educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education that pair intensive student teaching under the supervision of an expert mentor teacher with coursework in children’s learning and development, as well as curriculum and teaching methods, including how to differentiate instruction. TQP funds comprehensive preparation programs including teacher residencies, school leader preparation, and undergraduate- and graduate-preparation programs, all of which feature partnerships with underserved school districts. Comprehensive preparation, coupled with induction support, is effective at keeping teachers in the profession. In fact, teachers who enter the profession through programs that bypass intensive student teaching and coursework are 2 to 3 times more likely to leave the profession than those who enter through comprehensive preparation programs.⁷

⁵ Lopez, B. (2022, July 19). *Rural Texas districts struggling to attract teachers are switching to four-day school weeks.* The Texas Tribune. <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/07/19/texas-schools-four-day-weeks/>

⁶ Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/454.278>.

⁷ Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L. & May, H. (2012). Retaining teachers: How preparation matters. *Educational Leadership*, 69(8), 30-34. Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to

Increased investments in TQP would help expand comprehensive preparation programs, preparing educators for success, keeping them in schools and classrooms longer, and improving conditions for students.

Provide \$300 million to the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program.

The Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program is specifically designed to support comprehensive teacher preparation at programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) of higher education. Teacher preparation programs at these institutions are a long-standing source of well-prepared and diverse teachers.⁸ For example, despite making up just 3% of institutions of higher education,⁹ HBCUs prepare 50% of the nation's Black teachers.¹⁰ Further, nearly half of all Latino/a teachers with a bachelor's degree earned their degree at an MSI. Roughly 35% of Asian Americans, 50% of Pacific Islanders, and 35% of Native Americans with a bachelor's degree in education graduated from an MSI.¹¹ Research demonstrates that educators of color benefit all students and can have a significant positive impact on students of color,^{12,13} including higher levels of student achievement.¹⁴ More than a decade after its enactment, Congress finally provided funding for Hawkins in FY 2022 (\$8 million) and again in FY 2023 (\$15 million) and FY 2024 (\$15 million), but a much larger investment is needed.

Provide \$300 million to the Individuals with Disabilities Act Part D Personnel Preparation program.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part D personnel preparation program is designed to comprehensively prepare specialized instructional support personnel, special educators, early educators, and the higher education faculty and researchers that support their preparation. Researchers at institutions of higher education have found innovative ways to facilitate partnerships, develop programs, and implement interventions to attract, prepare, and retain high-quality special education professionals. Even so, funding for this program pales in comparison to the need and, as such, threatens the vital work of teacher educators. This academic year, almost every state reported shortages of special education teachers. Additionally, prior to the pandemic, all areas of teacher shortage, including those of special education teachers, were more severe in schools serving higher populations of students of color.¹⁵ There is a clear and immediate need to address these shortages by better investing in this program.

Attract and Retain Excellent Educators. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute

⁸ Gasman, M., Castro Samayoa, A., & Ginsberg, A. (2016). *A rich source for teachers of color and learning: Minority serving institutions*. Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions.

⁹ Lomax, M. (2015, December 14). 6 reasons HBCUs are more important than ever. *Medium*.

<https://medium.com/@DrMichaelLomax/6-reasons-hbcus-are-more-important-than-ever-6572fc27c715>.

¹⁰ Fenwick, L. (2016). *Teacher preparation innovation and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*. Howard University School of Education.

¹¹ Gasman, M., Castro Samayoa, A., & Ginsberg, A. (2016). *A rich source for teachers of color and learning: Minority serving institutions*. Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions.

¹² Dee, T. (2004). Teachers, race and student achievement in a randomized experiment. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86(1), 195–210

¹³ Gershenson, S., Hart, C.M.D., Lindsay, C.A., & Papageorge, N.W. (2017). The long-run impacts of same race teachers. Bonn, Germany: IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Discussion Paper Series

¹⁴ Egalite, A., Kisida, B., & Winters, M.A. Representation in the classroom: The effect of own race teachers on student achievement, *Economics of Education Review*, 45 (April 2015), 44–52.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Prevalence of teacher without full state certification and variation across schools and states. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/oepdp/ppss/reports.html#tq>.

Provide \$3 billion for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program, Title II, Part- A of ESEA.

Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is designed to support student learning by growing the skills and expertise of educators through high-quality professional development, preparation, support for new educators such as induction and mentoring programs, changes to teaching and learning conditions such as lowering class sizes, and more. Access to high-quality professional development is an essential element to ensure that educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support all children in meeting college and career-ready standards. Moreover, research shows that supportive working environments that support educators to be effective with their students result in educators who are also more likely to stay in the profession, thus making Title II, Part A all the more important at a time of high educator shortages. Yet, current funding for Title II-A is approximately \$800 million lower in unadjusted dollars than it was in 2010 (\$2 billion lower in current dollars). To reach 2010 levels, it would need to be funded at about 4.1 billion.¹⁶ A robust federal investment in Title II, Part-A of ESEA will play a pivotal role in supporting states and local entities to recruit, prepare, support, and retain qualified and effective educators.

10 million to fund grants under the Graduate Fellowships to Prepare Faculty in High Need Areas at Colleges of Education program.

Section 258 of the Higher Education Act (HEA) provides the Department with the authority to award Graduate Fellowships to Prepare Faculty in High-Need Areas at Colleges of Education. The purpose of this program is to provide graduate fellowships to individuals to become education faculty that prepare individuals to become elementary school and secondary school teachers in high-needs subject areas. Graduate fellowships provided under this section support individuals in pursuing postbaccalaureate study, which results in a degree related to teacher preparation and pedagogy in one of the following areas: science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM); special education; and instruction of EL students, including postbaccalaureate study in language instruction educational programs. The twin shortages of teachers and higher education faculty loom large, threatening our nation's capacity to deliver mandated services. Further compounding this national shortage is that projections estimate that nearly 50,000 teachers exit the labor force every year, in addition to the 54,200 that transfer professions.¹⁷ An investment in graduate fellowship programs can support rebuilding our nation's pipeline of well-qualified, profession-ready educators.

Make access to comprehensive educator preparation affordable and effectively raise educator salaries by addressing student loan debt burdens.

One barrier to the development of a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce is the high and rising cost of comprehensive educator preparation. Research shows that college students' potential debt burdens influence their career decisions, making them less likely to pursue a career in education,¹⁸ where teachers earn about 26% less than similarly credentialed professionals in other fields.¹⁹ Similarly, student loan debt burdens impact retention as they put further strain on educators' already low pay.

Approximately two-thirds of those earning a degree in education had to borrow money to pay for their higher education, resulting in an average debt of \$28,580 for those with a bachelor's degree²⁰ and over

¹⁶ Darling-Hammond, L., DiNapoli, M., Jr., & Kini, T. (2023). *The federal role in ending teacher shortages*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/649.892>

¹⁷ Elka Torpey, "Projections for teachers: How many are leaving the occupation?," *Career Outlook*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 2018.

¹⁸ Rothstein, J. & Rouse, C.E. (2011). Constrained after college: Student loans and early-career occupational choices. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95.

¹⁹ Allegretto, S. (2023). *Teacher pay penalty still looms large: Trends in teacher wages and compensation through 2022*. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/teacher-pay-in-2022/#epi-toc-9>

²⁰ Thomsen, E., Peterson, C., Velez, E. D., & RTI International. (2020). One year after a bachelor's degree: A profile of

\$54,000 for those with a master's degree.²¹ Further, the high cost of college and the burden of student loans disproportionately impacts students of color.²² For example, data from the National Center for Education Statistics reveals that 91% of Black students and 82% of Latino/a students who prepared to teach took out federal student loans, compared to 76% of white students.²³ This echoes findings from a recent study from researchers at the Learning Policy Institute, who found that while most teachers have taken out student loans and many are still repaying loans, beginning teachers, special education teachers, and Black teachers are more likely to have taken out loans and still have a balance.²⁴

Service scholarship programs and loan forgiveness programs that help cover the cost of comprehensive educator preparation are found to be effective for the recruitment and retention of teachers when, among other important features, they cover all or a significant amount of the cost of preparation and are well-designed and implemented.²⁵

The TEACH Grant and Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program – both created in a bipartisan fashion – are our nation's service scholarship and loan forgiveness programs specific to educators. The TEACH Grant provides a maximum award of about \$4,000 in aid per year to undergraduate and graduate students who commit to teaching a high-need subject in an underserved elementary or secondary school for four years. The Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) Program provides up to \$5,000 in loan forgiveness for teachers who serve in underserved schools for five consecutive years. Teachers who serve in underserved schools and teach the high-need subject of special education or secondary math and science can earn up to \$17,500 worth of loan forgiveness. In the nearly 20 years since neither program has been updated to align with the skyrocketing cost of higher education. For example, since 2007, when the TEACH Grant program was created, student loan debt has increased by \$1 trillion.²⁶

Through the FY 2025 appropriations process and through other legislative action, Congress can take the following steps to align these programs to today's preparation costs, dire educator shortages, and low educator pay:

- For the TEACH Grant Program: end the annual cuts to grant awards for educators in training, which are scheduled to continue through 2029, double the program's award, expand the program to early educators, and reform or eliminate the loan conversion penalty.
- For the TLF Program: ensure all educators serving in underserved districts and early education programs can access the program, remove administrative burdens that keep educators under student debt for longer periods of time by allowing them to concurrently earn credit toward TLF and Public Service Loan Forgiveness and have the federal government pay the monthly student loan bills of educators while they teach and retire their debt after 5 years of service.

2015–16 graduates. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020341.pdf>

²¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Percentage of graduate degree completers with student loan debt and average cumulative amount owed, by level of education funded and graduate degree type, institution control, and degree program: Selected years, 1999–2000 through 2015–16. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_332.45.asp

²² Scott-Clayton, J. & Li, J. (2016). Black-white disparity in student loan debt more than triples after graduation. *Evidence Speaks Reports*, 2(2).

²³ National Center for Education Statistics, “Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study,” <https://nces.ed.gov/b&b/> (accessed on 06/2019).

²⁴ García, E., Wei, W., Patrick, S. K., Leung-Gagné, M., & DiNapoli, M. A., Jr. (2023). *In debt: Student loan burdens among teachers*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/497.986>

²⁵ Podolsky, A. & Kini, T. (2016). How Effective Are Loan Forgiveness and Service Scholarships for Recruiting Teachers? (policy brief). Learning Policy Institute.

²⁶ New York Federal Reserve (n.d.). Center for Microeconomic Data. <https://www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/hhdc/background> The Federal Reserve Fund of New York data shows that in quarter 4 of 2007, student loan debt stood at \$550 million. In quarter three of 2021 it stood at \$1.58 trillion.

Together, these investments will provide our country with a well-prepared, diverse, experienced, and stable educator workforce that is equipped to teach the students furthest from opportunity.

On behalf of civil rights, disability, parent, student, community, and education organizations advocating for all students to have access to fully prepared and effective educators, thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Co-Chairs of the Coalition for Teaching Quality, Kaitlyn Brennan (kbrennan@kbstrategies.org) and Kuna Tavalin (ktavalin@exceptionalchildren.org), for additional information.

Sincerely,

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

AFT

Alliance for Quality Education

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

American Psychological Association

American Psychological Association Services

Breakthrough Collaborative

California Association for Bilingual Education

Californians Together

CAST

Center for Learner Equity

Children Now

Coalition for Community Schools

Council for Exceptional Children

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

EDGE Consulting Partners

Education Reform Now

EduColor

First Focus Campaign for Children

GLSEN

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE)

Institute for Educational Leadership

KnowledgeWorks

NAACP

National Association for Music Education

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of School Psychologists

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Teacher Residencies

National Council for the Social Studies

National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National Rural Education Association
National Women's Law Center
NYS Alliance For Quality Education
PDK International/Educators Rising
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Advocates
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
TEACH
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (TED)
The Education Trust
TNTP
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CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair; The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair; The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair; The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member; The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman; The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D., Ranking Member; The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman; The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Ranking Member