

Honorable Arlen Specter, Chair
Honorable Tom Harkin, Ranking Member
And Members of Senate Subcommittee on Labor,
Health, Human Services, and Education Appropriations

March 16, 2005

Dear Senators:

The Intersocietal Group for Education Research (IGER) is a coalition representing researchers and educators that advocates for high quality research in the resolution of pervasive education problems. IGER believes the following Congressional actions are imperative in the 2006 appropriation:

- The Education Research, Development and Dissemination program must be funded at \$180 million.
- Appropriation language should be provided that requires funding of the national education research centers to be competed by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at a minimum of \$4 million each.
- Continue funding for the Regional Education Lab at the \$70 million funding level.
- Fund the new National Center for Special Education Research funding at \$91 million.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires state and local education agencies use scientifically based research to guide their decisions about which education interventions to adopt. IES is working to provide sound information to educators, but additional resources are needed to fund research that answers fundamental scientific questions about the development of reading and reading comprehension, math and science education, teacher quality, and cognition and effective interventions. To strengthen the education research enterprise, new opportunities are needed for investigator-initiated studies that move the field forward with proven innovative methodologies and research ideas.

National Research Centers

The long-established national education research centers, representing the core of federal research activities in education, require your support in the FY 2006 appropriation to sustain their vitality. Language and resources must be provided to assure the centers funded through this program are truly national in scope and have the capacity to work with school systems and policy makers to develop and assist implementation.

There are many successes achieved by these centers. Following are a few examples:

- The Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk is raising achievement through Success for All in schools serving over one million students.
- The Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing has developed assessment software vital to assessment of

school improvement efforts that is currently in use in over 1,000 schools and in all 50 states.

- The Consortium for Policy Research in Education has designed innovative teacher pay systems and worked to establish them in over 25 states in order to help retain our best teachers.

The national research centers are authorized to address general areas of national need through a comprehensive research program. Their strength is the expectation and capacity to identify and address developing issues within each center's research mission. Providing flexibility and linkage to practitioners and policy makers ensures that the federal education research program will produce high quality work relevant to the education community. By establishing a minimum funding level of \$4 million for each newly competed center, Congress will assure that resources are available to continue this successful program, and to initiate new work that meets Congressional expectations of rigorous, scientifically-based research.

Regional Educational Laboratories

The regional labs are the nation's key institutions for applied education research and development. The labs work on a regional level to best address the needs and challenges of their geographic area. The priorities for each lab are determined by a local board made up of educators, parents and business representatives. There is tremendous need for scientifically based answers to our nation's education problems and the labs are essential in getting scientific evidence into the classroom.

National Center for Special Education Research

When Congress reauthorized IDEA last year, it moved the research function out of the Office of Special Education Programs and into this newly created center in IES. The need for research based practice in special education is critical to ensure that students with disabilities have appropriate instruction, accommodations and assessments.

We appreciate your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to support and improve the federal education research enterprise.

Sincerely,

American Educational Research
Association
Association of American Geographers
American Psychological Association
Consortium of Social Science
Associations
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological,
and Cognitive Sciences
Higher Education Consortium for
Special Education

National Association for the Education
of Young Children
National Education Association
National Education Knowledge Industry
Association
Society for Research in Child
Development