

June 07, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the Senate works to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations (LHHS-ED) bill, the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to make the necessary critical investments in the academic, social, and emotional needs of the nation's children. Specifically, we ask that you accept language in the FY 2020 LHHS-ED Appropriations bill passed by the House Appropriations Committee which provides \$260 million in funding for a new social and emotional learning initiative, \$53 million for Teacher Quality Partnership grants that could incorporate social and emotional learning in teacher residency programs as well as report language which clarifies funds can be used to develop educator competencies in supporting student academic, social and emotional development and disseminating evidence-based strategies to a broad range of stakeholders. This funding would represent an unprecedented federal commitment to supporting state education agencies, universities, community-based organizations, school districts, schools, and researchers in significantly accelerating and scaling work that is being conducted to educate the whole child for success in school, work, and life.

Research shows that social and emotional learning promotes improved academic achievement for students and increases positive life outcomes.¹ Social and emotional learning also promotes positive outcomes for adults starting with improved graduation rates and employment prospects along with reduced toxic teacher stress that may lead to decreased teacher and school leader retention rates, improved classroom instruction, and a safer and more productive school climate.² Yet, only 22 percent of educators feel they are very prepared to teach social and emotional learning in the classroom, which creates a significant gap between community demand and community preparedness.³ This is not surprising when looking at new knowledge about human development from neuroscience and the sciences of learning and development that demonstrates

¹ Mahoney, J.L., Durlak, J.A., & Weissberg, R.P. (2018). An update on social and emotional learning outcome research. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (4), 18-23.

² Greenberg, M. & Weissberg, R. (2018). "Social and Emotional Development Matters: Taking Action Now for Future Generations" Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center, Pennsylvania State University.

³ McGraw Hill Education. (2018). *Social and emotional learning report*. Retrieved from <https://www.mheducation.com/prek-12/explore/sel-survey.html>

how effective learning depends on secure attachments; affirming relationships; rich, hands-on learning experiences; and explicit integration of social, emotional, and academic skills.⁴

Therefore, we recommend that the FY 2020 Senate LHHS-ED bill commit to a strong focus on evidence-based “whole-child” approaches to education by including:

- \$170 million within the Education Innovation and Research program for grants for evidence-based, field-initiated innovations that address student academic, social, and emotional needs;
- \$25 million within the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant program for teacher professional development and pathways into teaching that provide a strong foundation in child development and learning, including skills for implementing social and emotional learning strategies;
- \$53 million for the Teacher Quality Partnerships (TQP) to improve the quality of teachers working in high-need schools and early childhood education programs by creating model teacher preparation and residency programs which can be used to support teachers in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students.
- \$25 million within the School Safety National Activities program to make schools safer through a new competition that will help local educational agencies (LEAs) directly increase the number of mental health and child development experts in schools; and
- \$40 million for Full-Service Community Schools to provide comprehensive services and expand evidence-based models that meet the holistic needs of children, families, and communities.

We also recommend that FY 2020 Senate LHHS-ED bill include the following clarifications and directives in the accompanying report language:

- Explicitly state that Title II–A funding under ESSA can be used to develop educator competencies in supporting student social, emotional, and cognitive development into licensing and accreditation requirements for teachers, school leaders, administrators, and counseling staff.
- Direct the Department of Education to brief the Committees on Appropriations on the Office of Effective Teaching and Social and Emotional Learning’s plans for disseminating the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety’s clearinghouse of evidence-based strategies to internal and external stakeholders, including SEAs and LEAs, and the office’s plans for leveraging the Center’s knowledge of evidence-based SEL strategies to inform fiscal year 2020 grant competitions.

Our knowledge of the collective outcomes of social and emotional learning builds off a generation of research from respected, nonpartisan organizations such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, & Academic Development, the Learning Policy Institute, the American Institutes for Research, and the RAND Corporation.

⁴ Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

We appreciate your tremendous leadership in providing adequate resources to the Department of Education. While we understand the fiscal constraints you are under, we know the inclusion of funding for these kinds of initiatives in the FY 2020 Senate LHHS-ED appropriations bill will further encourage innovation and understanding of the integrated nature of social, emotional, and academic development that will ensure that all children have the skills they need to learn and thrive.

Sincerely,

National Organizations in Support

Afterschool Alliance

Alliance for Excellent Education

American Psychological Association

America's Promise Alliance

Big EQ Campaign

Buck Institute for Education/PBL Works

Center for Reaching & Teaching the Whole Child

Center for Resilience and Wellbeing in Schools

Center for Responsive Schools

Citizen Schools

City Year, Inc.

Coalition for Community Schools

Committee for Children

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Democrats for Education Reform

E3: Education, Excellence & Equity

EDGE Consulting

EDGE Partners LLC

EL Education

Engaging Schools

Erikson Institute

Facing History and Ourselves

GLSEN

Hatching Results

Hope for the Day

Inner Explorer

Institute for Educational Leadership

International Center For Social Emotional Peace Learning

International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Graduate School

International Observatory for School Climate and Violence Prevention

Learning Forward

Lions Clubs International

Mental Health America

Mindset Works

National Afterschool Association
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform
New Teacher Center
Operation Respect
Parents as Teachers
Pure Edge, Inc.
REAL Prevention LLC
Research and Assessment Design (RAD) Science Solutions
Ripple Effects
School-Connect
School Social Work Association of America
Search Institute
SEL Launchpad
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators
Social Development Research Group
Social Emotional Learning Alliance of the United States (SEL4US)
TASH
Teach Plus
Transformative Educational Leadership
Transforming Education
Tribes Learning Communities, Inc.
Wings for kids
xSEL Labs

State and Local Organizations in Support

California:

California Social-Emotional Learning Alliance
EduCare Foundation
Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley
Sacramento City Unified School District
UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies Center for the
Transformation of Schools, UCLA

Connecticut:

INSIGHTS Intervention, LLC
Mutt-i-grees Curriculum—Pet Savers Foundation—North Shore Animal League of
America and Yale University
The School of the 21st Century, Yale University

Florida:

School District of Palm Beach County

Georgia:

Atlanta Public Schools

Illinois:

Chicago Public Schools
Dupage County Regional Office of Education
Rush University Medical Center

Maryland

Johns Hopkins School of Education
School of Nursing at Johns Hopkins University

Minnesota:

Minneapolis Public Schools

Mississippi:

Mississippi Department of Education

Missouri:

Wyman Center

Montana:

Southwest Montana School Services
Western Montana Professional Learning Collaborative (WMPLC)

Nevada:

Washoe County School District

New Jersey:

Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab
SEL4NJ

New York:

Fordham University
Department of Psychology, Fordham University

Ohio:

Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Community and Youth Collaborative Institute, College of Social Work at Ohio State
University
The Ohio State University LiFEsports Initiative

Oregon:

SEL4OR

Texas:

Austin Independent School District
Dallas Independent School District

Virginia:

Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning – Curry School of Education and
Human Development, University of Virginia
The Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia
Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP)
The UVA Center to Promote Effective Youth Development
Youth-Nex: The University of Virginia Center to Promote Effective Youth Development

Washington:

School's Out Washington
Senator John McCoy - Washington State Senator (38LD)
Washington Association of School Social Workers
Washington School Counselor Association
Washington State Association of School Psychologists