



September 18, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the states of California, Oregon, and Washington, we are writing to urge Congress to maintain funding for Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in the fiscal year (FY) 2018 appropriations act.

As you may know, the Administration has recommended eliminating funding for this critical education program, claiming that it has not demonstrated success in contributing to improved teacher quality or student outcomes. As we describe below, we strongly disagree with those assertions. Although the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill would not provide funding for Title II, we hope that, as the process continues, Representatives and Senators from our states will work to continue funding for this program at least at the Senate Appropriations Committee funding level of \$2.056 billion.

Consistent research has demonstrated that effective teaching has a larger impact on student achievement than any other aspect of public education. Congress responded to the national imperative to improve teaching by reauthorizing Title II as part of ESSA in 2015 as a sole federal program specifically focused on strengthening teaching. Title II supports, among other things, high-quality, evidence-based educator training; the development of systems for measuring educator performance; the reform of teacher certification systems; improvements in the distribution of effective educators across schools and districts; and efforts to recruit teachers to take positions in hard-to-fill subjects or in the most challenging schools.

Our states use Title II, Part A resources to build the capacity of our educators to successfully implement our standards and frameworks while emphasizing the importance of meeting the specific, and often multiple, learning needs of its diverse students including, but not limited to, English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth, and low-income students. It is used for instructional coaching to improve teacher effectiveness, and for mentoring and leadership opportunities for new teachers and administrators to reduce educator turnover, improve instructional and leadership practices and increase student learning and growth, particularly in high-poverty schools.

Local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools in our states, public and private, rely on the funds provided under Title II, Part A to help teachers and principals implement more rigorous standards-based curriculum that prepares students for college and careers and to provide critical resources used to mitigate teacher and leader shortages. LEAs rely on Title II funds to support educators at all stages of their careers, from induction of new teachers and leaders, through ongoing professional learning for educators, to leadership and career development strategies. Title II funds are used to facilitate both intra- and inter-district networks and partnerships with other LEAs and professional learning providers to build the instructional capacity of educators to support student achievement.

At the state level, Title II, Part A funds are used to provide a variety of statewide professional learning supports that promote high-quality teaching and leadership, for improvements to teacher and administrator evaluation systems, and to expand use of evaluation data to drive professional learning focus areas. Title II, Part A funding is also used to promote equitable distribution of educators so that those students with the greatest need have equitable access to excellent teachers.

As state education leaders of California, Oregon, and Washington, we must also point out that Title II directs resources to states that have been net “donors” to the Federal treasury, that is, that pay more in taxes than they receive back in federal funding.

- Key Policy Data, a project of Public Choice Analytics, also found that our three states sent more money to Washington DC than they received in return—California, they found, gets back 81 cents for every dollar sent to the Federal Government, Oregon gets 91 cents, and Washington receives 92 for every dollar sent.

Maintenance of Title II funding would help California, Oregon, and Washington to at least retain some of the education funding we currently receive relative to our disproportionate contribution to the federal treasury. We ask that you look out for tax payers on the West Coast. If we continue to be net “donors” to the feds, we ask that you work hard to defend the critical education funding we currently receive.

If we can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California



Salam Noor  
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Oregon



Chris Reykdal  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Washington