



The Hon. Robert Aderholt  
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor HHS  
Education Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Hon. Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor HHS  
Education Appropriations  
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April 14, 2023

Dear Chairman Aderholt, Representative DeLauro and Members of the Subcommittee:

These are tough times for students and teachers, who are doing their best to recover from pandemic learning disruptions. Teachers and principals need your support to keep up the good work and make sure that every student succeeds, no matter where they start. That's why I'm writing to urge your support for continued meaningful investments in Title II-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by providing an additional \$210 million for this program in FY2024. This is the only federal K-12 education program dedicated exclusively to educators' professional learning, which helps teachers and principals know how to address the big challenges we're facing, like pandemic learning loss.

I was alarmed to hear that rather than talking about increasing investments in Title II-A, which Learning Forward strongly supports, some Members of Congress are advocating for cuts. Secretary Cardona's March 17, 2023, letter to Ranking Member DeLauro paints a chilling portrait of the damage that would occur to multiple key federal education programs should FY2024 funding levels be reduced to FY2022 levels or 22 percent below FY2023 enacted levels. For Title II-A, the Secretary's letter warns:

*"a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut more than \$35 million for these activities; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut more than \$500 million in annual support for teachers and students, curtailing learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders, and hampering school districts' efforts to promote a well-rounded education for students in safe schools."*

Our 80,000 Learning Forward stakeholders nationwide know firsthand that strong professional learning is the foundation for teacher retention, academic recovery, and improved working conditions for educators. It is also the most effective way to improve teaching and learning for all. Countless studies have shown a link between well-prepared educators and student achievement, with many noting that the rigorous professional learning promoted and supported by Title II-A makes a significant difference. For instance, a 2021 [study](#) by the American Institutes for Research found that high-quality professional learning is associated with equitable and improved outcomes for all students.

Furthermore, ESEA’s definitional language ensures that Title II-A’s funds are used to support rigorous, meaningful professional learning, requiring “activities that ...are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom focused.” In keeping with the strictures of the law, many school districts have used Title II-A funds to engage instructional coaches and mentor teachers and to establish vibrant Professional Learning Communities, which research shows are the kinds of in-service professional learning opportunities that improve teaching and leadership and make a difference for students.

Providing educators with professional learning opportunities is also a key strategy for enhancing educator working conditions and thereby helping stem the nation’s persistent educator shortage. I know from my own experiences as a teacher and principal how the excellent professional learning I received made me feel well-supported in my practice and prepared me to take the next step in my career. The importance of these experiences is not unique to me, though, as there is ample evidence that well-supported teachers can enhance teacher retention efforts. A 2019 [study](#) by the Economic Policy Institute concluded: “By failing to provide teachers with broad access to effective training and professional development, as well as to learning communities where their professional judgment is considered, we hurt teachers’ effectiveness, sense of purpose, and career advancement opportunities. This likely plays a role in the teacher shortage.”

For all these reasons, plus the fact that continuing inflation increases school costs year over year and makes it harder for schools to provide the professional learning educators need and deserve, I urge you to support a \$210 million increase for Title II-A in the forthcoming FY2024 Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill and not to enact Draconian cuts to it and other education programs.

I appreciate your time and concern for our nation’s students and educators.

Yours sincerely,



Frederick Brown  
President & CEO

cc. Members of House Subcommittee on Labor HHS Education Appropriations