

June 26, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you negotiate your subcommittee's spending bill for Fiscal Year 2020, we urge you to maintain the funding level of \$53.1 million for the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant program as passed in the U.S. House of Representatives. The TQP program, authorized under Title II of the Higher Education Act, is the only federal initiative targeted directly to higher education-based teacher preparation programs, and it is designed to help ensure that high-need schools are staffed with profession-ready teachers. As institutions of higher education prepare and support nearly 90% of all teachers, an increased federal investment in reforming and strengthening these programs is critical. TQP helps to ensure that high-need schools are staffed with profession-ready teachers. This program has not received an increase in funds since Fiscal Year 2015.

At a time when the profession faces declining enrollment, teacher shortages, and retention challenges, and increased federal investment in solutions such as the TQP grant program are vital. TQP grants support intensive partnerships between high-need school districts, high-need public schools, institutions of higher education, and other eligible entities to prepare profession-ready teachers. These grants leverage federal dollars by requiring a 100% match and can be used to reform undergraduate preparation programs or to develop teaching residency programs at the graduate level. These partnerships require that programs include at least one year of clinical experience, which research has shown to be crucial for teacher effectiveness and teacher retention. Grantees are required to offer no less than two years of induction for their graduates and offer professional development to the entire school where they are teaching. In addition, grantees must prepare new teachers to teach students with disabilities and English language learners, to use research and data to inform instruction, and to have literacy teaching skills so that upon program completion teachers are fully prepared for the rigors of providing daily classroom instruction. Furthermore, graduates of TQP-funded residency programs must fulfill a three-year teaching obligation in the high-need district in which they were prepared.

TQP grantees have had a major impact on teacher preparation reform and on the quality of teaching in communities across the country. In fact, Old Dominion University, a 2009 grantee, solved the STEM teacher shortage in its partner district and continues to address workforce needs to this day. Through the over 70 programs that have received funding via the TQP grant over 500 high-need public schools are seeing improvements in the quality and retention of their teachers, and in the quality of their students' learning experiences and achievements. It is essential to maintain funding for this program so that we can continue the important work of transforming teacher preparation throughout the country while deepening the partnerships with the communities in which they serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that America's students have a profession-ready teacher in every classroom.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Council on Education
Association of Education Service Agencies
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education

Association of Teacher Educators
Code.org
Council of Academic Deans of Research Education Institutions
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Joint National Committee for Languages
National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Council for Languages and International Studies
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National Rural Education Association
National Science Teachers Association
Public Advocacy for Kids
Rural School and Community Trust
STEM Education Coalition
Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children