

April 22, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), thank you for the work you do on behalf of our nation's educators and students. I am writing to urge you to include robust funding for the programs outlined below as you begin work on the fiscal year 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill to address the pipeline of teachers entering the field and to increase the diversity of the profession.

AACTE is a national alliance of educator preparation programs (EPPs) dedicated to high-quality, evidence-based preparation that assures educators are profession-ready as they enter the classroom. Our nearly 700 member institutions include public and private colleges and universities in every state, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. AACTE elevates education and educator preparation through research, professional practice, advocacy, and collaboration. AACTE members are committed to meeting the needs of America's schools for diverse, well-prepared educators across a range of specialties. More information about AACTE's mission and vision is available at www.aacte.org.

As you know, the nation faced a shortage of well-qualified, profession-ready teachers before COVID-19. The pandemic has exacerbated the shortage, as individuals are leaving the field either to change careers or retire early due to the stress of working remotely and/or feeling unsafe to return to the classroom. Unfortunately, students with disabilities, English learners, and other underrepresented students will feel the impact of this shortage the most, while all students will need help addressing their social and emotional needs as they navigate through this difficult year.

While Congress has invested in many of the programs important to AACTE and its members, much more needs to be done to ensure that the pipeline of individuals entering the field is robust, that we increase diversity within our profession, and teachers are well-prepared to enter the classroom. AACTE urges Congress to include funding for the following programs in the fiscal year 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill:

➤ **\$2.5 billion for Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

Title II is composed of a state allotment (Part A) and competitive grant programs (Part B). The allotment of Title II-A funds for each state is administered by the state education agency, and 95% of the allotment goes to local education agencies for programming, with the other 5% at the state level for programming. The law offers 16 allowable uses of funds at the local level and 21 allowable uses of funds at the state level. In addition, Title II offers national competitive grant programs: the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program, Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation, American History and Civics Education, and Programs of National Significance. Multiple opportunities exist for educator preparation to engage with PK-12 partners and other stakeholders to strengthen and transform programs through the Title II-A grants that go to each state.

➤ **\$100 million for Teacher Quality Partnership Grants under the Higher Education Act**

TQP Grants provide support for critical innovations in teacher preparation, requiring partnerships between high need PK-12 schools and educator preparation programs to prepare promising students to be teachers in shortage areas—math, science and special education—in high need schools. All teachers prepared by these partnerships, no matter what their field, must be skilled in teaching both students with disabilities and English language learners. The partnerships support one-year residency programs and require participants to teach for at least three years in a high need school upon completion of their preparation—an important return on investment for the federal government and our nation’s students.

➤ **\$300 million for Special Education Personnel Preparation (Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**

The Personnel Preparation program under Part D of IDEA is critical in preparing the workforce required to carry out the mandate of IDEA. Special educators, early intervention specialists, special education administrators, special education higher education faculty, and specialized instruction support personnel are all prepared using these funds. The critical shortage of fully prepared special educators grows by the day, and a significant investment is needed in the pipeline to ensure the workforce of tomorrow. A successful recovery from the pandemic for students with disabilities requires a well-trained professional workforce, including school counselors and school psychologists who are prepared through this program.

➤ **\$650 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)**

IES conducts broad types of research and work that addresses school readiness and education from infancy through adulthood and includes special populations such as English language learners and students with disabilities.

➤ **Double the Maximum Pell Grant Award**

The Pell Grant program is the nation’s foundational investment in higher education. Pell Grants help nearly 7 million low- and moderate-income students attend and complete college annually. Students from all 50 states and all corners of the country—from rural areas to cities to everywhere in between—rely on the Pell Grant program to build their future. Pell Grants are especially critical for students of color, with nearly 60% of Black students, half of American Indian or Alaska Native students, and nearly half of Latinx students receiving a Pell Grant each year. However, the share of college costs covered by the grant

is at an all-time low. At its peak, the maximum grant covered three-quarters of the cost of attending a four-year public college. Now, it covers less than one-third of that cost.

Students from low- and moderate-income families are in critical need of additional grant aid to pay for college. Doubling the maximum Pell Grant—and permanently indexing the grant to inflation to ensure its value does not diminish over time—will boost college enrollment, improve graduation rates and honor the history and value of these grants as the keystone federal investment in college affordability.

➤ **Double the amount of the TEACH grant from \$4,000 per year to \$8,000 per year**

This grant program is intended to encourage individuals to enter the teaching profession by providing recipients with grants of up to \$4,000 annually to pursue coursework that leads to a certification in teaching. However, because of the increasing costs of attending college and devastating economic effects of COVID-19, these grants are more important to helping students finance their degrees and joining the teaching field with as little debt as possible. Doubling the grants will also help minority candidates entering the field since they tend to borrow more to attend college and have larger debt upon graduation.

Again, thank you for all the work you do on behalf of our nation's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn M. Gangone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn M. Gangone, Ed.D.
President and CEO