

Advocates for Literacy

February 10, 2017

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of Advocates for Literacy, a coalition of over 60 organizations focused on increasing the federal commitment to improved literacy instruction through evidence-based practices, we are writing to urge the new Administration to continue to support the implementation and funding of the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) program as authorized in the bipartisan *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). This comprehensive literacy initiative supports statewide, evidence-based literacy instruction and interventions for students from early childhood through high school. LEARN connects policy and practice directly by providing state education agencies the flexibility to select the interventions necessary to improve literacy instruction for all students in their states.

The skills our students need today are much more complex than they were 50 years ago. Creating a globally competent workforce depends on students using their reading and writing skills to develop important abilities in such areas as math, science, technology, and manufacturing. In order to fill these jobs, students will need to have the literacy skills that will allow them to use manuals and read programming, and they will need to have the writing ability to communicate what is working, how much it costs, and how to improve processes. Yet, currently, about 61 percent of employers request or require high school graduates to get additional education or training to make up for gaps in their ability to read and write effectively. Private industry spends an estimated \$3.1 billion annually to bolster the literacy skills of entry-level workers.¹

America must educate and prepare our children for today's economy. If our graduates cannot read and write as well as others and, therefore, cannot compete in the world market, we will continue to lag behind our global competitors. We urge the new Administration to support the LEARN program as you set goals for the Department of Education and make budget recommendations for the balance of the fiscal year. LEARN supports states in a comprehensive, systemic approach to strengthen evidenced-based literacy and early literacy instruction for children from preschool age through high school and supports district capacity to accelerate reading and writing achievement for all students.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to meeting with and supporting Secretary DeVos and the staff at the U.S. Department of Education as they continue to implement ESSA as well as new Administration-led initiatives. Our groups hope we can be a resource to the Administration as we all work to improve the outcomes for American students and their families.

Sincerely,

1. Academic Language Therapy Association
2. ACT
3. Advocacy Institute
4. Alliance for Excellent Education
5. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
6. American Occupational Therapy Association
7. Association for Career and Technical Education

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8. Association of American Publishers
9. Association on Higher Education and Disability
10. Association for Middle Level Education
11. American School Counselor Association
12. Council for Exceptional Children
13. Education Northwest
14. Early Care and Education Consortium
15. Easterseals
16. Every Child Reading
17. First Five Year Fund
18. First Focus Campaign for Children
19. Grimes Reading Institute
20. Higher Education Consortium
21. HighScope Educational Research Foundation
22. Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
23. Institute for Educational Leadership
24. International Dyslexia Association
25. International Literacy Association
26. Keys to Literacy
27. Knowledge Alliance
28. Learning Ally
29. Learning Disabilities Association of America
30. Literacy How, Inc
31. National Adolescent Literacy Coalition
32. National Association for the Education of Young Children
33. National Association of Elementary School Principals
34. National Association of School Psychologists
35. National Association of Secondary School Principals
36. National Association of State Boards of Education
37. National Association of State Directors of Special Education
38. National Black Child Development Institute
39. National Center for Families Learning
40. National Center for Learning Disabilities
41. National Coalition for Literacy
42. National Council of Teachers of English
43. National Down Syndrome Congress

44. National Down Syndrome Society
45. National Education Association
46. National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform
47. National Head Start Association
48. National Title I Association
49. National Urban Alliance for Effective Education
50. National Women's Law Center
51. National Writing Project
52. Nemours Children's Health System
53. Parent Child Home Program
54. Parents as Teachers
55. Reading Partners
56. Reading Recovery Council of North America
57. Scholastic Inc.
58. School Social Work Association of America
59. TASH
60. TESOL International Association
61. The Arc
62. United Way Worldwide
63. WestED
64. ZERO TO THREE

Cc: Jason Botel
Robert Goad

ⁱ S. Graham and D. Perin, *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools*, a report to Carnegie Corporation of New York (Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007), <http://all4ed.org/reports-factsheets/writing-next-effective-strategies-to-improve-writing-of-adolescents-in-middle-and-high-schools/> (accessed December 20, 2016).