TESOL International Association Response to FY2015 Federal Budget Proposal

A Statement from TESOL Executive Director Rosa Aronson, PhD, CAE

Alexandria, VA (7 March 2014) — TESOL International Association shares the President’s belief that education offers a path to opportunity and success in the United States and is pleased to see a requested increase in discretionary spending for education from the previous fiscal year. The association especially appreciates the important themes guiding the budget request: increasing equity and opportunity for all students; strengthening support for teachers and school leaders; early learning; improving affordability, quality, and success in postsecondary education; and making schools safer, all of which are critical for English learners (ELs) and their teachers in U.S. schools.

Several of the new initiatives in the budget proposal hold great promise, such as the new Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity Fund and the new ConnectEDucators proposal to provide funding to help educators leverage technology. TESOL is especially pleased to see the administration continue its commitment to supporting teachers and school leaders with programs such as the Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund; the School Leadership Program; and the Recognizing Education Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching (RESPECT) Initiative. These programs could provide a real opportunity to address the critical shortage of trained English-as-a-second-language (ESL) and bilingual education specialists in the United States. As these programs become more fully developed, TESOL International Association strongly urges the Obama administration to ensure that the programs address the needs of ESL and bilingual education specialists and their students.

In addition, the association continues to support the President’s proposal to provide high quality preschool to every child in the United States. High quality early childhood education is often out of reach for the most disadvantaged student populations, which in many places throughout the United States includes ELs. Statistics have shown that 70–80% of ELs in U.S. schools are born in this country and thus would be directly served as part of the Preschool for All program. Because ELs continue to be the fastest growing population among school-age students in the United States, the administration must directly address the needs of young ELs in this and all other program that focus on early childhood education.
Although these new programs hold promise, the association is disappointed that two of the most important programs for ELs and their teachers continue with minimal changes. Both Title III of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) are the most critical federal programs for English language teaching in the United States. Despite the steady increase in ELs in the United States, these programs remain either level-funded or have minimal increases. Both of these programs supplement state and local funds, which have seen significant cuts in recent years. When the Congress begins its debate on appropriations for the U.S. Department of Education for FY2014, we hope they will consider increasing funds for both Title III of ESEA and Title II of WIA.

TESOL International Association and its members stand ready to work with the President and Congress to ensure that the current and newly proposed education programs support the needs of ELLs, their parents, and their teachers.

**About TESOL International Association**

Founded in 1966, TESOL International Association is a professional community of educators, researchers, administrators, and students committed to advancing excellence in English language teaching for speakers of other languages worldwide. With more than 13,000 members representing over 150 countries, TESOL fosters the exchange of ideas, research, and peer-to-peer knowledge, and provides expertise, resources, and a powerful voice on issues affecting the profession. Through professional development programs, its international conference, special interest groups, and publications, TESOL engages tens of thousands of professionals to collaborate globally and create a world of opportunity for millions of people of all ages who want to learn English. For more information, please visit [www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org).

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