

Senator Tammy Baldwin
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Robert Aderholt
Chair, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 2, 2023

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We, the undersigned 163 organizations, are writing to urge you to include \$2 billion in the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget for Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—the federal formula grant program intended to support English learners (ELs) in every state and territory. Grants are based on each state’s share of EL students and recent immigrant student population. ELs make up 10% of K-12 public school students in the U.S. and are one of the fastest-growing student populations. The number of ELs in the U.S. grew 35% between the fall 2000 and fall of 2019.ⁱ As of 2019, there were [5.1 million English learners](#) enrolled in public schools.ⁱⁱ While increasing numbers of late-entrant students—students with interrupted education—and refugee children are enrolling in schools, it is important to note that most EL students are U.S.-born citizens.

Research shows that ELs perform better when they have qualified teachers and high-quality learning materials (including digital curriculum), and their schools have adequate financial resources. Evidence indicates that these factors contribute to narrowing opportunity gaps on indicators such as graduation rates, college attendance rates, and enrollment in advanced placement classes. Despite the evidence, however, these resources are drastically lacking for English learners.

While federal funding to support the education of ELs was first established in 1968 through the Bilingual Education Act, which later evolved into Title III in the 2002 reauthorization of the ESEA, funding has failed to keep up with the needs of the nation’s EL population. Title III funding has increased marginally since the inception of the program in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002, increasing 34% between FY2002 and FY2023 (from \$664 million to \$890 million). The FY23 level of \$890 million leaves schools with approximately \$173 per EL in federal funding – an inadequate amount to support their needs. Even more concerning is that when adjusting for inflation, Title III funding has decreased by 9% since 2008.ⁱⁱⁱ In FY08, Title III was funded at \$700 million, which is roughly \$978 million in 2023 when adjusted for inflation.

Years of underinvestment in Title III has had a disproportionate impact on students of color, low-income students, immigrant families, and students with disabilities. Not only has the EL population grown, but it is increasingly more linguistically and culturally diverse as suburban, exurban, and rural districts have seen dramatic increases in their EL populations. While the majority of EL students are Latino (77%), 10% are Asian and 7% are White.^{iv} States list over 50 commonly spoken languages, including Chinese, Arabic, and Vietnamese.^v Approximately 16% ([792,039](#)) are also identified as students with disabilities.^{vi}

The lack of adequate funding to support ELs has contributed to the persistence of wide opportunity gaps. According to the [2022 National Assessment of Education Progress](#), 10% of ELs in 4th grade scored at or above proficient in reading compared to the national average of 32%, and only 4% of ELs in 8th grade scored at or above proficient in math compared to the national average of 26%. In addition, the Office of English Language Acquisition reports that while 85% of students nationwide graduated from high school on time in 2018, the rate was only [68% for ELs](#).

In order to support ELs to reach their full potential and maximize their contributions to the U.S. economy, ELs need additional targeted resources, ranging from tutoring, summer and afterschool programs, multilingual language development services to social and emotional support for challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Additionally, the nation's growing EL student population needs a robust teacher workforce equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach them. To improve academic progress and meet the social and emotional needs of EL students, we make the following recommendations for Congress:

Appropriate \$2 billion for Title III in the FY24 federal budget. Funding Title III at this level would increase federal support for ELs to \$400/per pupil, as well as provide resources in other key areas, including:

- \$100 million to create a discretionary grant program for the development and adoption of native language assessments to leverage the full repertoire of linguistic, cultural, and cognitive resources that ELs bring to school and to better inform equitable and higher-level instruction.
- Support for more teachers to attain their English Language Development or Bilingual certification and professional development for teachers of ELs through the National Professional Development program within Title III.
- Culturally and linguistically responsive engagement with EL families.
- Community and family initiatives to support summer and after-school academic and social programs for English learners.
- Sustainable innovative programs that support bilingual and dual language education, and leverage the unique linguistic, cultural, and cognitive capital of ELs to promote higher levels of academic and socio-emotional outcomes.

The undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to consider the recommendations outlined above and support \$2 billion for Title III in FY24. We are committed to supporting English learners—our nation's future—to ensure that they have access to a high-quality education. Our prosperity as a nation beyond the pandemic depends on their success. Should you have any questions, please contact Amalia Chamorro, Director of the Education Policy Project, UnidosUS at achamorro@unidosus.org.

National Organizations

AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education)

ACTFL

All4Ed

American Federation of Teachers

Arab American Institute

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

ASPIRA Association

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)

Center for Applied Linguistics
Children's Defense Fund
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC)
Education Reform Now
Empowering Latino Futures
English Learners Success Forum
GLSEN
Green Dot Public Schools National
IDRA
ImmSchools
Institute for Educational Leadership
Joint National Committee for Languages
KIPP Public Schools
Latinos for Education
MomsRising
MALDEF
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Association for Bilingual Education
National Association of English Learner Program Administrators (NAELPA)
National Association of School Psychologists
National Center for Families Learning
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities (CNLD)
National Council for Languages and International Studies
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Education Association
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association
National Parents Union
National PTA
National Urban League
New Leaders
Our Turn
Teach Plus
TESOL International Association
The Education Trust
TNTP
UnidosUS
United Migrant Opportunity Services/UMOS Inc

Mid-Atlantic Region

CASA

Southwest Region

Cesar Chavez Foundation

Arizona

Aliento Education Fund

ALL In Education

Arizona Center for Empowerment

Arizona School Boards Association

Comite de Bien Estar

Corazón Arizona

Friendly House Inc.

Promise Arizona

California

Alliance for a Better Community

Building Healthy Communities- Monterey County

Building Skills Partnership

California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)

Californians for Justice

Californians Together

Canal Alliance

Center for Equity for English Learners

Early Edge California

Eastmont Community Center

El Sol Academy

Innecare

La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc.

La Raza Community resource Center

Para Los Ninos

Parent Institute for Quality Education

PUENTE Learning Center

Sobrato Early Academic Language

The Wall Las Memorias

Colorado

Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization

Latino Community Foundation of Colorado

Mi Casa Resource Center

Delaware

Latin American Community Center

District of Columbia

Central American Resource Center

Florida

Enterprising Latinas Inc.
Florida Policy Institute
Haitian Neighborhood Center Sant La
HISPANIC SERVICES COUNCIL INC
Hispanic Unity of Florida
Housing and Education Alliance, Inc.
Latino Leadership, Inc.
LULAC Florida
Mexican American Council
Rural Neighborhoods

Georgia

Latin American Association
Ser Familia, Inc.

Hawai'i

Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Hawai'i Scholars for Education and Social Justice
Hawai'i TESOL
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!
HI Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Immigrant Services Division - County of Maui
University of Hawai'i - Leeward CC

Illinois

Acero Schools
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Centro Romero
Illinois Migrant Council
Instituto del Progreso Latino
LULAC Illinois
The Resurrection Project

Kansas

El Centro, Inc.

Massachusetts

East Boston Community Council
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

Michigan

Hispanic Center of Western Michigan
Southwest Economic Solutions

Minnesota

El Colegio Charter School

Nebraska

Nebraska Commission on Latino-Americans

Nevada

CSNV

New Mexico

New Mexico Public Education Department

New York

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Inc.
Dominico-American Society of Queens
Ibero-American Action League
National Network for Arab American Communities
New York Immigration Coalition
Next100
The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

North Carolina

ASPIRA of the Mid-Atlantic
El Centro Hispano

Ohio

El Centro de Servicios Sociales, Inc.
Esperanza, Inc.
Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development
Ohio Hispanic Coalition

Oregon

El Programa Hispano Catolico

Pennsylvania

Centro Hispano Daniel Torres Inc.
Congreso de Latinos Unidos
Education Law Center Pennsylvania
LCH Health and Community Services
SPANISH AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Puerto Rico

Corporación Desarrollo Económico, Vivienda y Salud (CODEVYS)
Friends of Puerto Rico
Instituto Pre-Vocacional e Industrial de PR Inc.
One Stop Career Center of PR Inc

South Carolina

ASPIRA of the Mid-Atlantic
Hispanic Alliance

Tennessee

Centro Hispano de East Tennessee
Conexion Americas

Texas

THE CARE PROGRAM, Inc.
AVANCE, Inc.
Avenida Guadalupe Association
Breakthrough Central Texas
Every Texan
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
Latino Texas Policy Center
MULTICULTURAL FAMILY CENTER
Northside American Federation of Teachers
Project Vida
Proyecto Vida Digna
Texas Association for Bilingual Education
Texas State Teachers Association
The Education Trust in Texas

Virginia

Edu-Futuro

Washington

Sea Mar Community Health Centers

Wisconsin

La Causa Charter School

ⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, Table 204.20, [English learner \(EL\) students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2019](#) (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

ⁱⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, Table 204.20, [English learner \(EL\) students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2019](#) (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

ⁱⁱⁱ UnidosUS calculation based on Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator and U.S. Department of Education and NCES data.

^{iv} National Center for Education Statistics, English Learners in Public Schools (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

^v National Center for Education Statistics, English Learners in Public Schools (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

^{vi} U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, English Learners: English Learners with Disabilities (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2021).