

Modernizing the Teaching Profession for Student Success

Congressional Priorities
for FY2027 and Beyond



**TEACH
+PLUS**



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About Teach Plus

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that advance equity, opportunity, and student success.

In pursuing our mission, Teach Plus is guided by our Student Opportunity Mandate: All students should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in an education system defined by its commitment to equity, its responsiveness to individual needs, and its ability to prepare students for postsecondary success.

About the National Teacher Policy Cabinet

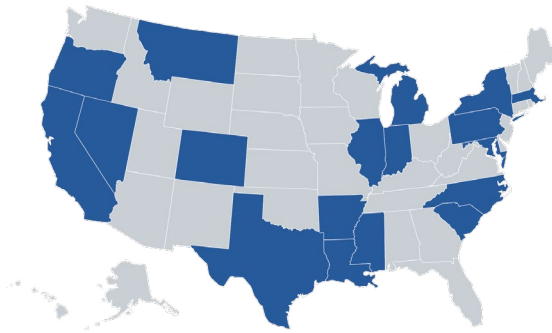


“After 14 years in the classroom and nearly a decade of working on efforts to retain excellent educators, I’m excited to keep building on what’s worked and scaling those successes at the federal level. I care deeply about making sure policy actually works for the people it affects most—students and teachers—and that is why I am looking forward to Teach Plus’s continued collaboration and partnership with Congress.”

-Melina Recio, Texas

The [National Teacher Policy Cabinet \(NTPC\)](#) is a fellowship of nationally-recognized teacher leaders who use their experience to drive systemic changes, bridging the gap between the classroom and federal education policy. We have proven excellence in schools and rigorous training in legislative analysis and policy. As members of the National Teacher Policy Cabinet, we provide legislators with the essential expertise of those most impacted by their policy decisions.

The NTPC would like to express its gratitude to the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate and their efforts to allocate funds to educational programs, to the congressional staff who have created spaces for our cabinet members to speak about educational policy, and to the Members of Congress who boldly serve the nation’s teachers, students, and school staff. The NTPC looks forward to strategic federal investments in our workforce through policy that will create effective educational experiences for all students and teachers nationwide.



- + *Arkansas* - **Cara Maxwell**, pre-kindergarten teacher
- + *California* - **Tess Carlson**, high school science teacher
- + *Colorado* - **Lorelei Jackson**, K-8 special education specialist
- + *Illinois* - **Calvin Epps**, high school special education mathematics instructor
- + *Indiana* - **Steve Dull**, high school mathematics teacher
- + *Louisiana* - **Keisha Harris**, 7th-grade mathematics teacher
- + *Maryland* - **Jevons Liu**, high school mathematics and special education teacher
- + *Massachusetts* - **Danielle Jo White Yelito**, high school science teacher
- + *Michigan* - **Frances Lazette**, Teach Plus Teacher in Residence and middle school U.S. history and French teacher
- + *Mississippi* - **Elizabeth Maxcey**, high school special education teacher
- + *Montana* - **Taylor Spieker**, high school multilingual educator
- + *Nevada* - **Emma Muth**, second-grade teacher
- + *New York* - **Sharon Collins**, high school mathematics teacher
- + *North Carolina* - **Jordan Vogel**, K-12 special education teacher
- + *Oregon* - **Carolyn Breedlove**, K-5 special education teacher leader
- + *Pennsylvania* - **Leon Smith**, high school social studies teacher
- + *South Carolina* - **Reneé Atkinson**, high school English language arts teacher
- + *Texas* - **Melina Recio**, 10th and 11th grade pre-AP English II and AP Language and Composition teacher

Call to Action: Modernizing the Teaching Profession for Student Success

As nationally recognized teacher leaders representing 18 states, the Teach Plus National Teacher Policy Cabinet (NTPC) believes we must act boldly to create the conditions where every student can imagine their future—and experience an education that delivers the opportunity to realize it. For our students and our colleagues, that bold action requires modernizing the profession to move beyond the traditional one-teacher, one-classroom model. Reframing the K-12 experience to center both teacher and student outcomes requires a partnership between Congress and the educators navigating these shifts every day.

We call for federal action to scale strategic staffing models coupled with the integration of high-quality instructional materials, providing the funding and legislative framework necessary to modernize the workforce and address the systemic instability in our schools.

Across the country, educators are working in an outdated, isolated model, often teaching without sufficient opportunities for collaboration or shared problem-solving. We have defined strategic staffing as a new blueprint for our profession: this innovative approach moves away from teachers working in isolation toward teachers working collaboratively. By leveraging flexible federal funding, such as Title II, schools can move beyond traditional silos to create a culture of shared expertise and support.

As educators, we recognize that teachers are the single most important in-school factor impacting student achievement. Yet, our current system is not equipped to support them. In Teach Plus's blueprint, pairing strategic staffing with High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), professional learning, and expert teacher leadership ensures we accelerate teacher development without losing pace with our student needs.

Our colleagues nationwide are signaling that the status quo is no longer sustainable. Educator satisfaction is at an all-time low, with only 16% of teachers recommending the profession in 2025. This crisis is visible in our classrooms, where one in eight positions remains vacant or filled by uncertified personnel—impacting six million students and stalling academic progress. Our students and colleagues cannot afford to wait for the system to catch up.

The National Teacher Policy Cabinet calls the 119th United States Congress to action. By working with teacher leaders to modernize the classroom experience, we can build a comprehensive legislative and appropriations strategy that prioritizes strategic staffing. Teach Plus believes that modernizing teaching and learning through effective national policy will transform educational opportunities for every student in every state.

In Partnership,

The Teach Plus National Teacher Policy Cabinet | 2026

Teach Plus and the Center for Inspired Teaching and Exceptional Learning (CITEL)

For over a decade, Teach Plus has focused on amplifying teacher voice in policy, grounded in the belief that those closest to students should shape the decisions affecting their profession. However, to truly modernize education, we must go a step further. The **Center for Inspired Teaching, Exceptional Learning (CITEL)** adds a new dimension to our field-proven model: teachers must also play a role in redesigning the conditions inside schools so they can do their best work.

The CITEL Hypothesis: Breaking the Silos

CITEL is an initiative to test a fundamental redesign of how teaching works. Historically, two movements in education have run on parallel tracks: the push for **High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)** and the effort to **redesign teacher roles** to make the job sustainable. While both are promising, they often hit a wall with scale and implementation because they operate in isolation.

Our hypothesis is that neither piece works effectively without the other. **Instruction without collaborative structures** leads to uneven implementation; **teaming without HQIMs** results in professional time that doesn't translate to student success.

CITEL is testing what happens when you commit to both. When schools integrate HQIM, diverse teacher teams led by experts, and protected time for curriculum-based learning, the results are twofold:

1. **For Students:** They are much more likely to experience rigorous, grade-level instruction every day.
2. **For Teachers:** The job becomes a collaborative, sustainable profession where teams aren't struggling to decide what to teach, but are instead mastering how to ensure every student can access it.

The Blueprint for a Modernized Profession

In this model, HQIMs become the anchor for all collaboration. Coaching becomes more frequent and useful because it is rooted in the actual lessons being taught. This isn't just a classroom shift—it is a holistic redesign of our education system.

To achieve this at scale, we must align our policy environment with these on-the-ground realities. **Strategic staffing** and **team-based models** are the essential levers required to move beyond the traditional “one-teacher, one-classroom” model. Together, we can create a system where HQIMs and collaboration work in tandem to deliver on the promise of a high-quality education for every student.

Our Legislative Priorities

NTPC's Policy Framework

The NTPC believes our work to modernize classrooms is a dual strategy:

- + Promote legislation that creates long-term, sustainable systems for children and teachers
- + Promote robust appropriations funding and language that fuels effective programs that are currently stabilizing our classrooms and protecting student opportunity



Legislation

Our current legislative endorsements for the 119th Congress include:

- + The National Teacher Appreciation Week Resolution of 2026
- + The Strengthening Educator Workforce Data Act
- + The New Essential Education Discoveries (NEED) Act of 2025
- + The Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools (PATHS) to Tutor Act
- + The Open Books, Open Doors Act

+ [The National Teacher Appreciation Week Resolution of 2026](#)

Summary: The National Teacher Appreciation Week Resolution honors our nation's teachers and commemorates National Teacher Appreciation Week. This bipartisan resolution recognizes the important work of teachers across the nation and thanks them for their efforts to prepare students for success.

Sponsored by: Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)

+ The Strengthening Educator Workforce Data Act

Summary: The Strengthening Educator Workforce Data Act would establish a permanent, national mechanism to collect teacher and principal data at the school district level to assist in the recruitment and retention of educators. Current solutions to address both educator workforce shortages and representation gaps use incomplete data that is not easily accessible. Without a national dataset, legislators cannot identify which schools need the most help, nor can they evaluate the effectiveness of federal investments in recruitment and retention programs like the Teacher Quality Partnership and the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence. Access to educator workforce data is necessary to track the impact of federal dollars in schools, as well as boost efforts to build a robust and representative educator workforce.



Sponsored by: Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. Eric Sorenson (D-IL)

“Teachers across the country are constantly looking for ways to innovate given the ever evolving demands they face in their classrooms. The NEED Act bolsters those efforts as it improves the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems to gather accurate data that will inform the field of the challenges we see in classrooms and identify opportunities to advance innovative practices to better serve our students. We applaud the efforts of Rep. Bonamici and Rep. Fitzpatrick to bring forth meaningful investments that innovate and advance teaching and learning.”

-Kira Orange Jones, Teach Plus CEO

+ The New Essential Education Discoveries (NEED) Act of 2025

Summary: The New Essential Education Discoveries (NEED) Act of 2025 would improve student learning by creating a National Center for Advanced Development in Education (NCADE) to promote informed-risk, high-reward education research. The new national center would focus on developing and disseminating effective practices and tools to improve students’ academic performance and close longstanding achievement gaps. The NCADE would be the fifth center under the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and follow a successful model similar to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

Sponsored by: Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

+ The Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools (PATHS) to Tutor Act

Summary: The bipartisan Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools (PATHS) to Tutor Act would expand access to one-on-one and small group tutoring for students in underserved communities. The legislation leverages the existing workforce pool and strengthens the pipeline for future teachers by placing aspiring teachers in these tutoring roles.

Sponsored by: Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV) and Rep. David Valadao (R-CA); Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)

+ [The Open Books, Open Doors Act](#)

“Literacy is the foundation of all future learning, yet for too many children, the simple lack of access to books remains a barrier to success. The Open Books, Open Doors Act is a critical step toward erasing ‘book deserts’ and ensuring that every child, family, and community, regardless of zip code, has the tools they need to read and thrive. We applaud the efforts of Senator Andy Kim and look forward to working with Congress to turn this vision into a reality for children across the nation.”

-Kira Orange Jones, Teach Plus CEO

Summary: The Open Books, Open Doors Act tackles literacy gaps by establishing a federal grant program within the Department of Education to support state and local efforts in communities with the greatest need. The bill requires at least 70 percent of grant funding to support programs serving book deserts, and would help expand access to diverse, high-quality, and accessible reading materials in multiple languages; support family literacy efforts; increase coordination on tackling literacy across federal agencies, and more.

Sponsored by: Senator Andy Kim (D-NJ)

FY2027 Appropriations Requests

Because policy is only as effective as the resources behind it, we also advocate for continued, robust federal appropriations for programs that support educators and children nationally.

Within the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-H) bill, we respectfully request that Congress provide robust funding for:

- + Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (Title I, Part A)
- + Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants (Title II, Part A)
- + Full-Service Community Schools (Title IV, Part F)
- + The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY-Title IX, Part A)
- + The Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program (TSL)
- + The Supporting Effective Educator Development Grant (SEED)
- + The Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
- + The Education Innovation and Research Program (EIR)
- + National Activities to Improve Education of Children with Disabilities (IDEA, Part D)
- + The Teacher Quality Partnership Program (TQP)
- + The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)

Within the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) bill, we urge Congress to provide robust funding for:

- + The National Science Foundation Directorate for STEM Education
- + The National Science Foundation Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP)

We are committed to securing robust funding for all these essential programs, with a special focus on the following programs that directly support our strategic staffing and HQIM initiatives.

Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants (Title II-A): Title II-A serves as the backbone of educator development, and as [a recent GAO report highlights](#), states are using this flexibility to pioneer practices aligned to strategic staffing models. A recent [Dear Colleague Letter](#) from the Department of Education also explicitly affirmed that Title II-A funds can be used to implement strategic staffing models, and those funds could be used for differential pay for lead teachers, team-based planning, and paid teacher residencies. While these funds are the primary tool for developing and modernizing the profession, Title II-A has seen [flat funding](#) of \$2.19 billion for three consecutive funding cycles (FY 24, FY25, FY26).

Increasing Title II-A investment allows states to pivot from reactive hiring to proactive workforce design. Congress should provide guidance on modernizing the workforce through strategic staffing models.

The Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program (TSL): The TSL program provides states and districts funding to support teacher recruitment and retention in high-need schools and has historically served as a critical incubator to fund educator leadership pathways and performance-based compensation in high-need schools. In FY24, the TSL program was funded at [\\$173 million](#). The decision to halt new competitions in 2025 and reduce TSL funding to \$60 million during the FY25 and FY26 funding cycles derailed a highly successful initiative. As noted in the [FY 2027 Congressional Justification](#), the program has delivered results, with 82.4% of TSL-assisted educators meeting or exceeding effectiveness standards—outperforming federal targets by more than 10%.

Renewing TSL investments will accelerate the momentum of successful district-led innovations in educator recruitment and retention.

The Supporting Effective Educator Development Grant (SEED): The SEED program increases the number of highly effective educators by supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices that prepare, develop, or enhance the skills of educators. These grants allow eligible applicants to develop, expand, and evaluate practices that can serve as models to be sustained and disseminated. In the most recent funding cycles (FY24 and FY23), grantees leveraged funds to expand teacher preparation practices, including apprenticeships and grow your own programs. According to [performance data from the 2022 and 2023 cohorts](#), 12,014 participants were part of the SEED program, exceeding the target recruitment number of 11,563. In FY26, Congress appropriated \$90 million for the SEED grant, a move that maintains funding levels from the previous three funding cycles.

Investing in SEED grants beyond level funding will allow more districts to adopt these validated evidence-based practices and modernize their educator pipelines.

The Teacher Quality Partnership Programs (TQP): The Teacher Quality Partnership program is designed to foster collaboration between high-need local educational agencies, high-need schools, institutions of higher education, and various entities, including state officials, educational organizations, businesses, and alternative teacher certification programs. As a response to the worsening national teacher shortage, the [FY 2022 TQP competition](#) included an additional invitational priority for proposed Grow Your Own (GYO) projects that encourage members of the community to pursue teaching careers. While the Department of Education rescinded funds for grantees in 2025, Congress continued to appropriate \$70 million for TQP. TQP [performance data](#) reveals a high level of participant persistence.

Sustained investment in the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) program and the opening of new grant competitions are essential to cultivating a stable, long-term educator workforce equipped to meet modern classroom demands.



Historic Appropriations for Education Funding

	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25 (Enacted)*</u>	<u>FY26</u>	<u>President's FY27 Budget Proposal</u>
Title I, Part A	\$18,400,000,000	\$18,406,000,000	\$18,426,000,000	\$18,426,000,000
IDEA Funding	\$15,460,000,000	\$14,210,000,000	\$15,490,000,000	\$15,990,000,000
Full-Service Community Schools (Title IV, Part F)	\$150,000,000	\$150,000,000	\$150,000,000	\$0**
Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants (Title II, Part A)	\$2,190,000,000	\$2,190,000,000	\$2,190,000,000	\$0
The Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program (TSL)	\$60,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$60,000,000	\$0
The Teacher Quality Partnership Program (TQP)	\$70,000,000	\$10,500,000	\$70,000,000	\$0
The Supporting Effective Educator Development Grant (SEED)	\$90,000,000	\$0	\$90,000,000	\$0
The Institute of Education Sciences (IES)	\$793,100,000	\$793,100,000	\$789,600,000	\$261,300,000



	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25 (Enacted)*</u>	<u>FY26</u>	<u>President's FY27 Budget Proposal</u>
The Education Innovation and Research Program (EIR)	\$259,000,000	\$259,000,000	\$235,000,000	\$0
The Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$0	\$0
The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)	\$146,280,000	\$146,280,000	\$146,280,000	\$102,300,000
The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY)	\$129,000,000	\$129,000,000	\$129,000,000	\$0**
The NSF Directorate for STEM Education	\$1,172,000,000	\$1,172,000,000	\$938,000,000	\$427,700,000
The NSF Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP)	\$918,000,000	\$618,000,000	\$870,000,000	\$350,000,000

*Explanatory statement not released for FY25 appropriations

**Consolidated into MEGA Grant