



March 28, 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

As you and your colleagues deliberate on FY 2013 appropriations, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) urges you to continue the federal government's support for the reform of higher education-based preparation of school personnel.

While AACTE is encouraged by the President's FY 13 budget request to increase discretionary spending for federal programs in the U.S. Department of Education by \$1.7 billion, we remain concerned about the proposed consolidation of proven programs. The Administration's proposal would diminish the key role played by institutions of higher education, which prepare nearly 90% of all new teachers. Over the last decade, these institutions have changed significantly to better respond to the needs of today's diverse P-12 classrooms by expanding partnerships with P-12 schools, strengthening partnerships with the arts and sciences, developing effective alternate preparation pathways, enhancing the clinical components of their programs, and investing in outcome-based teacher performance assessments. At this time when local, state, and federal governments are facing significant budget constraints, it is even more important to ensure that education funding is focused on programs and entities that have the capacity to carry out the important work of preparing the next generation of educators.

Programs such as the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants, Transition to Teaching, School Leadership Grants, and Math and Science Partnerships support the high-quality preparation of educators. The majority of these grants are led by higher education institutions in partnership with local education agencies and schools. We do not support the Administration's proposal to eliminate these school personnel preparation programs because they increase the quality and quantity of educators for P-12 classrooms.

We encourage Congress to restore funding to FY 11 levels for the Math and Science Partnerships and the Transition to Teaching program, and to level-fund School Leadership Grants. We also urge Congress to maintain funding for the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grant program (Title II, HEA), a program critical to the transformation of educator preparation. AACTE recommends that Congress continue to level-fund the TQP program at \$43 million, the same amount provided in FY 10, FY 11, and FY 12. If this program were to be eliminated, current grantees would lose their funding in year four of their five-year grants. This would be a significant setback for the more than 10,000 teachers being prepared at these institutions.

TQP grants can be used both to reform undergraduate preparation programs and to develop teaching residency programs at the graduate level. At the graduate level, one-year master's degree programs – geared toward career-changers and recent college graduates – place the teacher candidate in a high-need classroom for a whole year teaching alongside a mentor teacher, while completing the graduate course work necessary to be certified. Additionally, teaching residents earn a living wage during their residency.

In these difficult economic times, during massive lay-offs and a shrinking job market, teaching residency programs are ideally structured to recruit and support newly unemployed citizens who are seeking a long-term and rewarding job.

TQP grants have the potential to transform our current teacher pipeline by better preparing teachers for the realities of high-need classrooms and by providing the necessary support to keep them in the teaching profession. If allowed to complete their five-year grants, the 40 TQP programs will have a major impact on communities across the country. The teacher candidates who graduate from these programs will enter the workforce in more than 500 high-need schools across the country. The effectiveness of the graduates of the TQP grant program will also soon be measurable, as programs that receive these funds are required to follow their graduates and report on their effectiveness in the classroom. The grants also ensure that federal funding is spent efficiently by requiring a 100% match from institutions that are awarded grants.

We urge you to maintain funding for TQP grants and other school personnel preparation programs during the FY 13 appropriations process. If we may be of any additional assistance on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Jon Gentile at jgentile@aaacte.org. Thank you for your consideration of the perspective of AACTE and its membership of 800 private, state, and municipal colleges and universities – large and small – located in every state, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam. We look forward to working with you to ensure that America's students have a well-prepared, high-quality teacher in every classroom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon P. Robinson".

Sharon P. Robinson, Ed.D.
President and CEO

cc: Members of the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations