

Policy Recommendations for the 115th U.S. Congress

June 2018

TESOL International Association (TESOL) represents approximately 10,000 English language teaching professionals across the United States, including educators in early childhood through adult education. Issues and policy areas TESOL strongly supports include:

- *Sufficient and effective funding* for federal education programs serving all English learners and newcomers, from birth through adult education.
- Improved professional development and career pathways for existing and future English language teachers to gain the skills required to meet the needs of the country's diverse English learner population of over 4 million students.
- *Fair immigration policies* that do not discriminate or favor individuals based on their country of origin and seek to promote welcoming environments within schools and communities.

To support these priorities, TESOL asks the 115th Congress to act on the following issues:

I. PreK-12 Education & Teacher Preparation

- Fully fund Title III of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) at the FY 2019 authorized funding level of \$785 million. Title III provides supplemental funding for the instruction of English learners, with guidance from the Office of English Language Acquisition.
- Fully fund Title II of ESSA at the FY 2019 authorized funding level of \$2.3 billion. Title II provides states with funding for professional development for educators and school leaders.
- Pass the *Reaching English Learners Act* (H.R. 4838), which addresses the nation's critical shortage of English language teachers by providing grants for the training and development of future teachers of English learners.
- Exercise its oversight authority to ensure that the Office of English Language Acquisition within the U.S. Department of Education remains a separate office and is not reorganized or absorbed into a larger office, which would seriously diminish the office's unique ability and expertise to serve the nation's English learners and teachers.

II. Adult Education

- Fully fund Title II of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) at the FY 2019 authorized funding level of \$664.5 million. Title II of WIOA funds adult and family literacy programs across the country, improving the English language proficiency skills that many immigrant families depend upon to become successful members of their communities.

III. International Education and Cultural Exchange

- Reject the administration's proposed cut for FY 2019 to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the U.S. Department of State and maintain ECA funding at FY 2017 levels. Educational and cultural exchange programs overseen by ECA such as the Fulbright Program and the Office of English Language Programs support U.S. foreign, economic, and security policy objectives and serve a critical role in diplomacy.

IV. Immigration Reform

- Passage of the *Bar Removal of Individuals Who Dream of Growing Our Economy* (BRIDGE) Act (H.R. 496 & S. 128), bipartisan legislation that allows people who have received or are eligible to receive relief from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, authorization to continue living in the U.S.
- Passage of the *Dream Act of 2017* (H.R. 3440 & S.1615), bipartisan legislation that provides a pathway to permanent citizenship for recipients of DACA and other undocumented immigrants who arrived to the United States as children or young adults.