



JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

December 9, 2008

Dear Presidential Transition Team for Education,

We at the **Johns Hopkins Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE)** believe that all of America's children and teachers deserve the tools they need to succeed. For this success to be possible, our schools must move away from using what is popular or trendy to *using what works*. As a transformative figure in American politics, we are confident that President-Elect Obama will usher in a new era of effectiveness in education.

High standards are important, but unattainable without ensuring that teachers and students have proven tools for success. By renewing our focus on the research and development of programs proven to be effective through rigorous research, we can put the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on a trajectory for further success. We suggest that whatever your administration does in education, *keep asking for the evidence*. If evidence exists, then follow it, and encourage educators and state and local policy makers to do so. If the evidence base is weak, then commission research to evaluate the most promising solutions in existence, and commission development (and then evaluation) of programs and policies that have potential to produce better outcomes for children. In order to reach these goals, CRRE would like to make the following recommendations:

Short Term

- Work with states on an administrative level to **encourage the use of research proven programs in School Improvement Grants** to ensure this large investment yields meaningful results for children.
- **Invest an additional \$50 million in IES's Research, Development, and Dissemination** fund for Fiscal Year 2010 to jump-start a new generation of high quality rigorous research that can be implemented on a meaningful scale in America's public schools.

Long Term

- Reauthorize the ESEA with a renewed commitment to placing research proven programs in our classrooms by authorizing states to **prioritize grant proposals that intend to use research proven programs** in all appropriate competitive grant programs. Such a



proposal garnered bipartisan interest in the 110th Congress when Sens. Lugar and Bingaman introduced S. 1118, the Proven Programs for the Future of Education Act.

- **Place IES's Research, Development, and Dissemination fund on a trajectory for long term success, by planning to reach an annual total of \$100 million in new funding over the next four years.** This fund should be targeted to fundamental needs such as effective teaching methods for reading, math, and science, effective programs for English language learners, and effective means of increasing high school graduation and college readiness.

These four, simple, straightforward goals will help to not only develop new classroom practices that are proven to be effective, but will also encourage their use in classrooms across the country. Further, **this renewed commitment by the federal government will spur private and academic research in the marketplace of ideas, ultimately providing more high quality choices for schools.**

The practice of education is too important to be left up to guesswork, ideology, and marketing, which have long dominated education reform. **Our nation leads the world in science and technology because of our commitment and skills in innovation and research. We can lead the world in education by following the same path.**

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these ideas with you further. If you have questions, or would like to schedule a meeting, please contact Lauren Gibbs, our Senior Federal Policy Analyst, at 202-731-7131 or lgibbs@jhu.edu. We look forward to working with you in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Robert Slavin, PhD.
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Johns Hopkins University