

Policy Recommendations for the 116th U.S. Congress

June 2020

TESOL International Association (TESOL) is the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching. With over 10,000 members, TESOL fosters the exchange of ideas to advance the expertise of those teaching English while supporting equity, diversity, and multilingualism. Issues and policy areas TESOL strongly supports include:

- *The creation of dedicated funding streams* that will help address the impacts of COVID-19 on PreK-12, post-secondary, and adult English learners and teachers.
- *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 5 million K-12 students.
- *Fair immigration policies* that do not discriminate or favor individuals based on their country of origin, English language skills, education level, race, religion, or sexual orientation and seek to promote welcoming environments within schools and communities.

To support these priorities, TESOL asks the 116th Congress to act on the following issues:

I. Emergency COVID-19 Funding Relief for English Learners at All Levels of Education

- Pass the HEROES Act in the Senate (H.R. 6800) that will provide \$100 billion to PK-12 and adult education, as well as post-secondary education institutions who are facing severe funding shortfalls due to the pandemic. As school districts, adult education programs, and institutions of higher education are struggling to provide equipment, access, and training for online learning, the funding in this bill will help support English learners at all levels of education across the country.

II. PK-12 Education & Teacher Preparation

- Reject the president's proposals to cut \$5.6 billion from U.S. Department of Education and combine 29 separate funding streams of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in the FY21 federal budget.
- Pass the Reaching English Learners Act (H.R. 1153, S. 545), which addresses the nation's critical shortage of English language teachers by providing grants for the training of future teachers of English learners.
- Pass the Supporting Providers of English Language Learners (SPELL) Act (H.R. 4389), which increases student loan forgiveness amounts for English language teachers. This bill also designates English language teachers as valued educators by putting them on the same level as math and science teachers, who are currently eligible for increased student debt forgiveness amounts.
- Fund Title III ESSA at \$985 million for FY 2021. Title III provides supplemental funding for the instruction of English learners, and has never received full funding, despite both inflation and the population of eligible students having increased.

III. Adult Education

- Fund Title II of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) at \$693 million for FY 2021. 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.

IV. Immigration Reform

- Pass the *American Dream and Promise Act of 2019* (H.R. 6) and *Dream Act of 2019* (S.874), legislation that provides pathways to citizenship for DACA recipients and other undocumented immigrants who arrived to the United States as children or young adults.