

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26th, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Congress
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Congress
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As your Subcommittee considers the Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations bill for the Department of Education, we urge you to maintain the investment in the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant program under the Fund for the Improvement of Education. IAL provides competitive awards to school libraries and national not-for-profit organizations, including partnerships that reach families outside of local educational agencies, for providing books and childhood literacy activities to children and families in high need communities. The program also supports parental engagement and focuses on promoting student literacy from birth through high school.

The importance of this grant program was recognized when \$28.6 million was first appropriated for IAL in FY12 and **\$25 million** each year thereafter has been directed to this essential childhood literacy initiative. In September 2012, the U.S. Department of Education awarded two-year IAL grants to 46 nonprofit organizations and school districts in 21 states and the District of Columbia. In 2014, the Department made 32 new awards to national non-profits and school libraries.

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) was a 2012 grantee and their Summer Success Model is an evidence-based solution stemming from a two-year research study under the IAL program. The study holds promise in boosting children's reading achievement by implementing effective, scalable and affordable summer reading strategies. RIF's model showed that more than half of children in the study saw statistically significant increases in Lexile reader measures over the summer. Of the 41 participating school districts in 16 states, the most underserved districts showed the most gains, including rural populations. In the population of 33,000 second- through fourth-grade students, the lowest performing students made the greatest gains. Over three-fourths of children that had scored below the 10th percentile either met or exceeded expected gains and nearly 60 percent of those children who had scored below the 25th percentile met or exceeded expected gains.

Todd County, KY, School District utilized its IAL grant to fund a book distribution to help build home libraries for preschool, kindergarten, and first grade students. During the two-year grant period, 10,303 books were distributed. Care was taken to select books to fit individual student needs, interests, and reading levels. The books were distributed through each school's library media center.

Todd County also was able to use its grant to develop technologically advanced media centers with high-quality, student-friendly digital tools and resources. The centers were designed to engage students to improve reading skills and produce multimedia projects. The program also allowed librarians to work more efficiently from school or at home. Providing current, up-to-date technologies in the media centers helped reduce gaps between the technology “haves and have-nots”.

Ensuring children’s access to books is a critical component of our nation’s effort to promote life-long learning and remains a key aspect of early childhood literacy. For American families living in poverty, access to reading materials is severely limited. Children living in poverty have fewer books in their homes than their peers, and this unfortunate reality hinders their ability to prepare for school and stay on track. We also recognize the importance of effective school library programs in promoting literacy and advancing student achievement.

Congress has taken an important step in supporting the needs of disadvantaged students by providing IAL funding for book distribution, early literacy services, and effective school library programs. We ask that you maintain this investment in the FY16 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission


Member of Congress

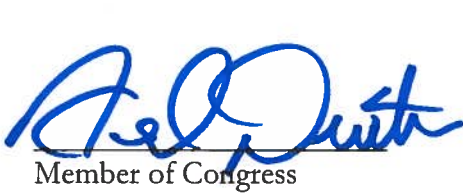

Member of Congress

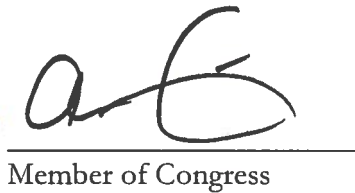

Member of Congress


Member of Congress

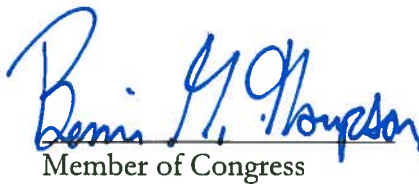

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

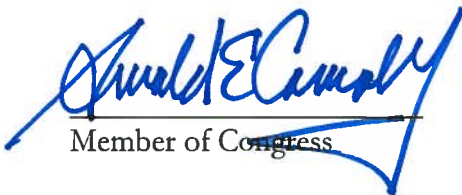

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

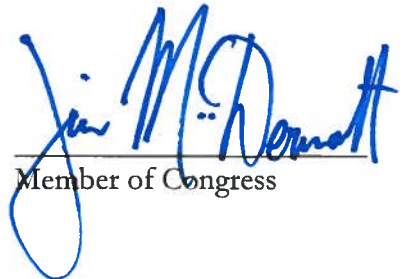

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission

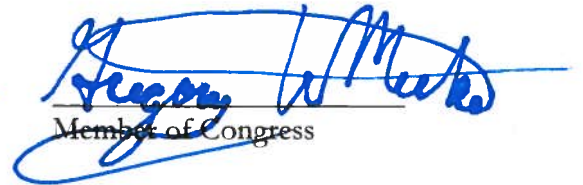

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

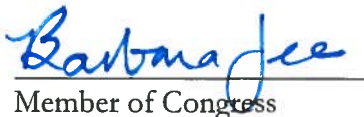

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission

Michael E. Capron
Member of Congress

Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress

ES
Member of Congress

Kristen Simone
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Jon Vargas
Member of Congress

Grace F. Neglitano
Member of Congress

[Signature]
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

Brenda Laurence
Member of Congress

Ch Van Hark
Member of Congress

Mike Brown
Member of Congress

[Signature]
Member of Congress

Scott Wells
Member of Congress

Felicia
Member of Congress

K. Zell. M. V
Member of Congress

[Signature]
Member of Congress

Jamie Hahn
Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Shafiq
Member of Congress

Shirley Telus
Member of Congress

Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress

Richard Schul
Member of Congress

Mark DeSantis
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Walter
Member of Congress

Lois
Member of Congress

Josephine Castro
Member of Congress

Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone
Member of Congress

A. Z. De
Member of Congress

Jim Langevin
Member of Congress

Ann M. Fudge
Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission

Don O. Mabui
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Everett Helm
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Paul Ryan
Member of Congress

Bob Latta
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Dan Rostenkowski
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

John L. Dingens
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell Jr.
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Jim V. Cooper
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress


Wm. Royce Latta
Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission



Member of Congress

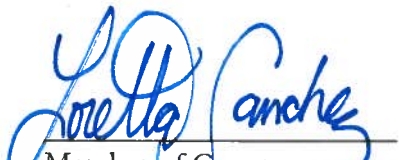

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

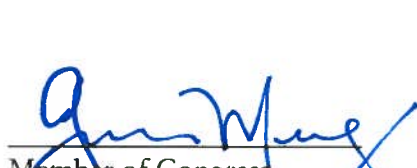

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress



Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy FY16 Appropriations Submission


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

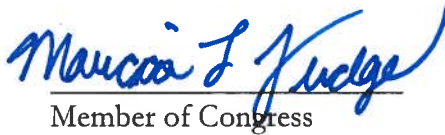

Member of Congress


Member of Congress

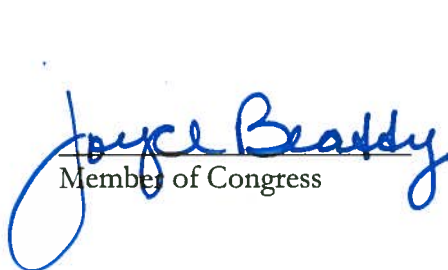

Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress


Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Innovative Approaches to Literacy, FY16 Appropriations
List of Signatories
March 26, 2015

Karen Bass	Marcia L. Fudge	Richard E. Neal
Joyce Beatty	John Garamendi	Eleanor Holmes Norton
Earl Blumenauer	Al Green	Frank Pallone Jr.
Suzanne Bonamici	Gene Green	Bill Pascrell Jr.
Madeleine Bordallo	Raúl M. Grijalva	Scott Peters
Mike Bost	Luis V. Gutiérrez	Collin C. Peterson
Corrine Brown	Janice Hahn	Chellie Pingree
Julia Brownley	Alcee L. Hastings	Stacey E. Plaskett
G.K. Butterfield	Denny Heck	Mark Pocan
Lois Capps	Jim Himes	Charles Rangel
Michael Capuano	Rubén Hinajosa	Cedric L. Richmond
Tony Cárdenas	Sheila Jackson Lee	Mike Rogers
André Carson	Eddie Bernice Johnson	Raul Ruiz
Matt Cartwright	Henry C. "Hank" Johnson	Bobby L. Rush
Kathy Castor	Walter B. Jones	Loretta Sanchez
Joaquin Castro	Bill Keating	John Sarbanes
Judy Chu	Robin Kelly	Jan Schakowsky
David N. Cicilline	Joe Kennedy	Adam B. Schiff
Katherine Clark	Ron Kind	David Scott
Yvette Clarke	Ann Kirkpatrick	Terri Sewell
Wm. Lacy Clay	Ann McLane Kuster	Brad Sherman
Emmanuel Cleaver II	James R. Langevin	Kyrsten Sinema
Steve Cohen	Brenda Lawrence	Albio Sires
Gerald E. Connolly	Barbara Lee	Louise Slaughter
John Conyers	John Lewis	Adam Smith
Jim Costa	Daniel Lipinski	Eric Swalwell
Joe Courtney	David Loebsack	Mark Takai
Joseph Crowley	Zoe Lofgren	Mike Thompson
Elijah E. Cummings	Michelle Lujan Grisham	Dina Titus
Danny K. Davis	Ben Ray Luján	Paul D. Tonko
Susan Davis	Stephen Lynch	Niki Tsongas
Peter DeFazio	Carolyn B. Maloney	Chris Van Hollen
Diana DeGette	Sean Patrick Maloney	Juan Vargas
John Delaney	Doris O. Matsui	Marc Veasey
Mark DeSaulnier	Jim McDermott	Filemon Vela
Ted Deutch	James P. McGovern	Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Debbie Dingell	Jerry McNerny	Maxine Waters
Robert J. Dold	Martha McSally	Peter Welch
Donna F. Edwards	Gregory W. Meeks	Frederica S. Wilson
Keith Ellison	Grace Meng	John A. Yarmuth
Elizabeth Esty	Gwen Moore	Don Young
Chaka Fattah	Jerrold Nadler	
Lois Frankel	Grace Napolitano	