

December 21, 2020

Dear Biden Transition Team:

The undersigned associations congratulate President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris on winning the 2020 presidential election. We look forward to working with the Biden administration and the U.S. Department of Education in realizing the goal of a well-rounded education for all students, including robust learning opportunities in the arts, humanities, and social studies.

To that end, we recommend the following actions of the new administration:

1. Request that the National Assessment Governing Board (“Governing Board”) immediately reinstate the previously scheduled arts, foreign language, geography and economics assessments to the National Assessment for Educational Progress (“NAEP”) calendar. In 2019, the Governing Board removed these assessments from the calendar, citing the need to focus their limited resources on the subject areas of math and reading, and on the online administration of assessments. In doing so, the Governing Board dismantled the only national assessments in these content areas, limiting the nation’s ability to measure rigor in these content areas, recognized by the U.S. Congress as part of a well-rounded education under the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015.
2. Request that the U.S. Congress appropriate additional funds to the National Center for Education Statistics for NAEP assessments in the arts, foreign language, geography and economics during the FY 22 budgeting process. In addition, each assessment should include accurate, disaggregated, statistically significant state-level data on student proficiency for every state, on student academic achievement in public and private elementary schools and secondary schools in grades 4, 8, and 12, for these subject areas. While the undersigned associations are ready and willing to help support these reinstated assessments, we understand and affirm the need for additional funding to help build rigorous, thorough and robust assessments in these content areas. These are critical and necessary investments to make to ensure that the American education system remains competitive in a global society.
3. Create, fund and staff content specialists for the arts, humanities, and social studies within the U.S. Department of Education (“USDOE”). We strongly believe that the USDOE needs content specialists in these disciplines to collect accurate data and report on issues of equity and access; to share exemplars of practice from across the country, including through federally funded projects; to build policy recommendations and guidance to further all students having access to a well-rounded education as envisioned by the Every Student Succeeds Act; and to promote meaningful student preparation and engagement in civic life. Each of these goals for content specialists will ensure that USDOE provides for a well-rounded education as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

We are excited about the opportunity to support a well-rounded education for our nation's students in partnership with the USDOE, the Governing Board, and the new administration. We invite your questions and look forward to an opportunity to meet with you to discuss our recommendations. Thank you for your commitment to equity and access to a well-rounded education. We are available to meet as a group with USDOE officials during this transition period, and welcome open dialogue with the USDOE and Governing Board.

Sincerely,

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Americans for the Arts

Educational Theatre Association

League of American Orchestras

National Art Education Association

National Association for Music Education

National Council for the Social Studies

National Dance Education Organization

State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education