

TESOL Statement on the U.S. President's FY 2019 Budget Proposal

27 February 2018 (*Alexandria, VA*) - TESOL International Association is deeply concerned by the U.S. president's proposed FY 2019 federal budget, which recommends deep cuts to crucial education programs impacting students and teachers across the United States and around the world.

Representing 12,000 English language teaching professionals, TESOL is committed to quality English language teaching and learning opportunities worldwide. We value professionalism, integrity, and respect for equity, diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individuals' language rights.

Access to a high-quality education serves as a pillar to any well-informed and civically engaged society, so it is alarming that the administration is proposing more than \$3.6 billion in cuts to the U.S. Department of Education and \$516 million in cuts to educational and cultural exchange programs within the U.S. Department of State.

While TESOL appreciates that the proposed budget maintains funding for the Office of English Language Acquisition at current levels, the president's request to completely eliminate a number of programs within the Department of Education is worrisome. Programs such as Title II-A state grants, international education for language studies programs, preschool development programs, and Title IV enrichment programs help our teachers become better educators and ensure that our students – including 5 million English learners – will be prepared for success in a growing global economy.

In addition, the following proposed cuts will also greatly and negatively affect immigrant and English language teachers and students, preventing them from ensuring a healthy and quick integration into our society:

- The significant funding cuts for adult, career, and technical education, including state grants funded under Titles I and II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which help to prepare thousands of adult English language learners to enter the workforce or obtain a higher education degree. Any reduction in funding would be harmful to the thousands of individuals and families who receive job training and English language education services from these WIOA funded programs.
- Slashing the funding for educational and cultural exchange programs at the Department of State by over 75%. These programs serve a vital role in public diplomacy and help support English language teaching and learning in countries around the world. Given the importance of intercultural understanding and diplomacy in the current sociopolitical climate, these proposed cuts are the exact opposite of what is needed to foster global stability.

- The proposed elimination of 50 full-time staff positions at the Office for Civil Rights within the Department of Education. This office plays a vital role in ensuring that all students in the United States—including English learners—have access to the educational opportunities to which they are entitled under federal law. With the office now facing a greater case load than ever before, more resources are needed to support these efforts, not fewer.

TESOL calls on members of the U.S. Congress from both parties to reject this proposal and enact a more realistic and responsible budget that demonstrates a steadfast commitment to education and provides all students, including the nation’s growing population of English learners, with the support that they and their teachers need to thrive.