



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

July 1, 2014

Dear Colleague:

I write today to request your feedback on the focus and work of the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs). The current five-year REL contracts will end in January 2017, and we are beginning to plan the next REL competition.

The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences supports 10 RELs, each of which serves a legislatively designated region in the United States or affiliated entity. The RELs are charged with building the capacity of educators and policymakers to use data and research to improve student outcomes. Specifically, the RELs conduct applied education research; offer opportunities for educators to learn about findings from credible, up-to-date research in education; and provide training and other support on education research design, data collection and analysis, and reporting of findings. Their work spans early learning, K-12 education, and postsecondary education.

Central to the work of the current REL contracts are researcher-practitioner partnerships, known as *research alliances*. Currently, the RELs work with more than 70 research alliances comprised of education practitioners and policymakers at the local, district, and/or state levels. Working with their RELs, research alliance members identify specific education challenges that can be better understood and addressed by using data and research.

In September 2009, I wrote a similar letter requesting your feedback on the REL program. The vision for the current REL program was informed by your feedback. Now, as we refine our vision for the next REL program competition, we again need to hear from you about what is working, what needs to be improved, and the kinds of resources and services related to data and research that are most needed by educators.

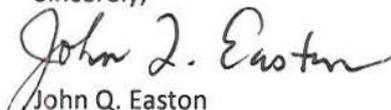
We particularly seek feedback that is practical, specific, and actionable, and that demonstrates a familiarity with the mission and work of the RELs since January 2012. We are especially interested in your responses to the following:

- What types of support for using data and research are most needed by educators and policymakers?
- Should research alliances continue to be a centerpiece of the REL program?
- In what ways can RELs best serve the entire country as well as their designated regions?

Please send your comments to Comments.REL@ed.gov by **September 5, 2014**. All responses received by this date will be considered during the development of the new competition. I also encourage you to forward this request to anyone interested in providing suggestions on how to make the REL program as effective as possible.

Thank you for taking time to help us continuously improve.

Sincerely,


John Q. Easton
Director