



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

National Center for Education Research  
National Center for Special Education Research

August 14, 2014

Dear Colleague,

We write to request your feedback on the focus and work of the Institute of Education Science's two research centers: the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). We will use this feedback to help us plan our future work.

The mission of NCER is to support rigorous research that addresses the nation's most pressing education needs, from early childhood to postsecondary and adult education. Similarly, NCSER sponsors a comprehensive program of special education research designed to expand the knowledge and understanding of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. NCER and NCSER accomplish their missions mainly by inviting applications for research grants in education or special education. Expert panels review and score the applications, and awards are made based on merit and available funds.

We are proud of the work we have funded to date and the accomplishments of NCER and NCSER grantees. At the same time, we want to make sure that the two centers are contributing to significant advances in research and building knowledge that is useful to education policymakers and practitioners. Looking forward, we want to make sure we do all we can to ensure that NCER- and NCSER-funded studies meet high scientific standards *and* contribute to meaningful improvements in students' school readiness and academic outcomes. We welcome your responses to the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of education and special education studies that have had the most influence on policy and practice during the past 10 years? What lessons can we draw from these studies to inform NCER's and NCSER's future work?
- What are the critical problems or issues on which *new* research is needed?
- How can NCSER and NCER target their funds to do the most good for the field?

Concrete suggestions that reflect the mission and goals of the two research centers will be most helpful. Please send your comments to [Comments.Research@ed.gov](mailto:Comments.Research@ed.gov) by October 31, 2014. We also encourage you to forward this request to anyone interested in providing suggestions on how to make NCER and NCSER as effective as possible. We will use the feedback to help us make improvements in existing programs and plan future research competitions.

Sincerely,

Joan McLaughlin  
Commissioner,  
National Center for  
Special Education Research (NCSER)

Thomas Brock  
Commissioner,  
National Center for  
Education Research (NCER)