Policy by The People Agenda for the 117ᵗʰ Congress

This policy agenda is the Institute for Educational Leadership's inaugural Policy by the People agenda, which reflects the direct input via surveys and focus groups of hundreds of leaders across IEL's networks that we engaged in 2020. These leaders span the roles of parents/family, youth age 18 and under, district leaders, nonprofit leaders, state and local government representatives, people with disabilities, and elected officials across dozens of communities in the United States.

Our policy agenda is guided by the following policy principles:

- *Greater voice in decision-making particularly from families, people with disabilities, and young people*
- *Prioritization of populations that have historically experienced systemic racism, discrimination, and/or disinvestment*
- *Cross-Sector partnerships and collaboration that reflect the interdependent, overlapping nature of our work*

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Education

Early Childhood

- Provide universal, high-quality pre-kindergarten for all 3 and 4-year-olds, prioritizing the lowest-income children.

K-12:

- Increase funding for the Full-Service Community Schools program and increase funding for programs that support core community school components/pillars: Titles I, II and IV-A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant), 21st Century Community Learning Centers, & Statewide Family Engagement Centers in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Fully fund IDEA to fulfill the federal promise to provide 40 percent of the extra cost of special education as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) passed in 1975.

- End the school to prison pipeline/school pushout crisis through stronger enforcement of civil rights protections and incentives for a restorative approach including restorative justice, trauma-informed practices, and hiring additional school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.
- Strengthen the educator workforce, specifically: increase funding through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA) for educator preparation and professional development; invest in culturally responsive and trauma-informed teaching; diversify the workforce to reflect the populations of our students including through increasing investments in teacher and leader preparation programs at minority-serving institutions of higher education.

Higher Education

- Make college more affordable and accessible. Expand programs that increase access and affordability including GEAR Up, TRIO, etc.

Workforce Development

- Expand strategies and funding that expose and connect young people to careers, including career pathways, work-based learning, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, and career-focused mentoring like IEL's successful RAMP and Right Turn programs.
- Increase resources and training to support young people to attain competitive, living-wage jobs. Prioritize populations that face multiple barriers including disability discrimination and systemic racism.
- Achieve the dream of the Americans with Disabilities Act by ending the practice of subminimum wage for people with disabilities and ensure competitive integrated employment for all working-age adults.
- Ensure that American Job Centers, Job Corps, and other workforce service provider agencies are physically and programmatically accessible.
- Through incentives like tax credits and small business set-asides, support growth of strong job markets in communities that have experienced a disinvestment in jobs.
- End all forms of discrimination in the workplace from hiring to wages to advancement based on sex, race, disability, age, or other status.

Foundational Supports

- Raise the minimum wage to $15/hour and/or establish a universal basic income
- Increase affordable housing through federal incentives and limit evictions
- Expand SNAP and other food assistance programs
- Increase access and funding for mental health services (for youth and adults)
- Expand public transportation and invest in public-private transportation partnerships in communities that have no or inadequate public transportation
- Increase funding for the E-rate program to ensure all students can participate in distance learning
- Cut child poverty in half through a child allowance and other research-based strategies