



May 13, 2020

Ashley Brizzo  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E325  
Washington, DC 20202

RE: Agency Docket ID ED-2020-OESE-0025

Dear Ms. Brizzo,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the priorities proposed by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program, authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Aurora Institute is pleased to submit comments in reference to the Department of Education's Proposed Priorities for Education Innovation and Research on Teacher-Directed Professional Learning Experiences.

The mission of the Aurora Institute is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all. The Aurora Institute publishes best practices, provides research and resources, develops quality standards, and provides policy advocacy to transform K-12 education. With over 5,000 front-line members, we are supporting the largest active community of innovative practitioners transforming the future of learning.

We applaud the Department for demonstrating its commitment to flexibility and innovation and recognizing the need to ensure that educators have access to high-quality professional learning experiences. We support prioritizing the need to customize professional learning for educators with a federal investment. These proposed priorities align with the need to provide educators with professional development that is highly personalized and allows educators to take ownership in designing learning experiences and pathways that reflect their needs.

Many states, districts, and schools across the country are transitioning toward a system of education that focuses not only on basic literacy and numeracy, but also on more complex outcomes like systems thinking, applied problem-solving, and civic and social awareness. Preparing students to achieve new outcomes requires developing teachers with new skill sets. Many educators will require new skills to design and provide instruction anytime, anywhere. The shift to student-centered learning in K-12 education



demands modernized preparation, professional learning, and ongoing development for teachers and school leaders. These proposed priorities are a step in the right direction of aligning teaching with the opportunities and systems of supports needed to be successful in an equity-oriented, student-centered, competency-based learning environment.

Particularly, we would like to highlight the Department's suggestion of state education agencies incorporating a micro-credential program to fulfill licensure requirements. Micro-credentials can provide pathways to specific skills and knowledge that closely align with the goals of the local district as well as the educator's professional goals. While many states have begun promising work in policy to support micro-credentials, this support from the Department may open additional opportunities for states to continue developing micro-credentials.

Again, we applaud the Department for considering crucial flexibility to modernize professional learning for educators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan D. Patrick".

Susan D. Patrick, CEO  
Aurora Institute