

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Miguel A. Cardona, PhD  
Secretary of Education

The Honorable James Kvaal  
Under Secretary of Education

U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona and Under Secretary Kvaal,

The postsecondary sample studies conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) within the U.S. Department of Education provide invaluable insights about postsecondary pathways, affordability, and outcomes to inform policymaking, field-driven research, and ongoing efforts to promote student success. For more than 30 years, the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS), and the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B) have yielded comprehensive insights about how students pay for college, their progress through college to degree completion, and their employment and loan repayment experiences after graduation. Unlike other data sources, these studies are nationally representative and allow data to be broken out by a range of student characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and financial background. Any actions to scale back or eliminate these federal surveys weaken our ability to glean data-informed insights about students' experiences and outcomes.

We, the 45 undersigned organizations and individuals, are deeply troubled by IES' unilateral decision to discontinue the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study. B&B is the only nationally representative source for insights into what happens to students after they earn a bachelor's degree, including the value students receive from their postsecondary investment. At a time when policymakers want more information about the return on investment of postsecondary education, IES should strengthen, not eliminate, tools that help institutions, researchers, and advocates answer critical questions about graduates' experiences.

We urge the U.S. Department of Education to reinstate B&B and restart collection of data that shed light on the experiences of graduates over time. We also urge IES to preserve NPSAS and BPS, including by at least maintaining a collection frequency of the full-scale NPSAS every four years and the administrative data collection every two years.

As the Biden-Harris Administration develops its fiscal year 2025 budget proposal, we urge the agency to request sufficient funding to continue conducting—and strengthening—the postsecondary sample studies. Now is the time to protect and preserve the tools that enable robust understanding of students' postsecondary experiences. Without them, we lose a vital evidence base to inform policy development to support college access, affordability, and success for all students.

Sincerely,

**Organizations:**

American Association of State Colleges and Universities  
American Association of University Women  
American Federation of Teachers  
Association for Institutional Research  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
American Institutes for Research  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Center for American Progress  
Complete College America  
Data Quality Campaign  
Excelencia in Education  
Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce  
Higher Learning Advocates  
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)  
Jobs for the Future  
National College Attainment Network  
National Skills Coalition  
National Women's Law Center  
New America Higher Education Program  
NCHEMS  
Penn AHEAD  
Results for America  
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association  
The Century Foundation Higher Education Team  
The Education Trust  
The Hope Center at Temple University  
The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)  
The McBee Institute of Higher Education  
Third Way  
UnidosUS  
Veterans Education Success  
Young Invincibles

**Individuals:**

Amanda R. Tachine, Assistant Professor, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College-Arizona State University  
Andre M. Perry, Senior Fellow, Brookings  
Angela Boatman, Associate Professor of Higher Education, Boston College  
Charlie Eaton, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of California, Merced Co-founder, Higher Education, Race, and the Economy (HERE) Lab  
Christian Michael Smith, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of California, Merced  
Donald Heller, Retired Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, University of San Francisco  
Eric Bettinger, Professor, Stanford University School of Education  
Jason Houle, Associate Professor of Sociology, Dartmouth College  
Judith Scott-Clayton, Professor of Economics & Education, Teachers College-Columbia University  
Laura Hamilton, Professor and Chair of Sociology, University of California, Merced  
Lindsay Page, Annenberg Associate Professor of Education Policy, Brown University  
Nicholas Hillman, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Susan Dynarski, Patricia Albjerg Graham Professor, Harvard University

CC: The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Senate Appropriators

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Chair  
House Education and Workforce Committee

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Ranking Member  
House Education and Workforce Committee

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chair  
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Ranking Member  
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Neera Tanden, Director  
Domestic Policy Council  
The White House

Shalanda Young, Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
The White House

Mark Schneider, Director  
Institute of Education Sciences  
U.S. Department of Education