August 27, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As members of the Global Campaign for Education - US, a diverse coalition of more than 70 organizations working to fulfill the right to a quality education for all, we write to both acknowledge the pivotal role USAID is playing in this area and to urge you to demonstrate U.S. leadership for the most vulnerable children around the world by including $925 million for global Basic Education, including $800 million for basic education and an additional $125 million for the Global Partnership for Education, in your fiscal year 2016 budget request to Congress.

Around the world, nearly 58 million children are still out of primary school and 250 million children – nearly 40 percent of the world’s children of primary school age – are failing to acquire even basic literacy and numeracy skills. The world has made astounding progress since 1999, when 108 million primary school aged children were out of school. However, progress has stagnated in the last several years.

We cannot end extreme poverty unless we all step up our efforts to reach the last 58 million children and ensure that all children are learning. Education is fundamental to your Administration’s goal to end preventable maternal and child deaths – a child born to an educated mother is more than twice as likely to survive to the age of five. Education is also a prerequisite for economic growth, with no country having achieved continuous growth without a literacy rate of at least 40 percent. Many countries are still below this rate. We must invest in strong educational systems to build the foundation for all development goals.

U.S. leadership is needed now more than ever to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn. We are very grateful that First Lady Michelle Obama recently highlighted the importance of investing in girls’ education at home and abroad, and we appreciate USAID’s exciting Let Girls Learn effort. We urge you to match this ambition and energy in your FY16 request for global Basic Education.

We welcome your Administration’s announcement at the recent Global Partnership for Education pledging conference of increased annual contributions of $40 million in FY14 and $50 million in FY15 to the Global Partnership. The FY16 budget request provides a key opportunity for the United States to step up to help bridge the financial gap that remains after the pledging conference as the Global Partnership seeks to support 29 million children’s access to a quality education in the poorest countries around the world. As part of an overall request of $925 for global Basic Education, we urge you to include $125 million for the Global Partnership for Education.

The Global Partnership for Education has a strong track record of effectiveness and a clear foundation of country-ownership and national-level commitment of partner countries. This was emphasized by the
commitments that developing country partners made in Brussels to increase domestic financing for education by an incredible $26 billion. Additionally, recent improvements to the Global Partnership, including the hiring of a new Chief Technical Officer, an innovative new financing model based on results and data, and increased efforts toward transparency, give us great confidence in the Global Partnership’s ability to deliver effective results. A substantially increased contribution to the Global Partnership would ensure U.S. education aid dollars contribute to the development of sustainable national education systems owned and led by developing country partners, ensuring all children have the opportunity to learn.

Congress has recognized the importance of these investments and championed U.S. financial support for global Basic Education and for the Global Partnership for Education. Leading up to June’s pledging conference, more than 80 Members of Congress from both parties sent letters calling for a strong U.S. pledge to the Global Partnership. Additionally, the House of Representatives included in their FY15 Appropriations bill $800 million for education programs internationally and “not less than $50 million” for the Global Partnership. We urge the Administration to join the Hill this year by showing even stronger support in FY16.

While we recognize the challenges of the current budget environment, we strongly support increased funding for the entirety of poverty-focused development accounts. We urge this funding not come at the expense of other effective humanitarian and development assistance, which work together to serve the common goal of building a safer and more prosperous world. Quality education is the foundation for all development goals and we encourage you to help create opportunity for all children by including $925 million for global Basic Education, including $800 million for basic education and an additional $125 million for the Global Partnership for Education, in your FY16 budget request to Congress.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edwin H Gragert
Executive Director
Global Campaign for Education United States Chapter

AND THE UNDERSIGNED COALITION MEMBERS OF GCE-US:

Association for Childhood Education International
Africa Schoolhouse
Building Tomorrow