June 8, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Services Markup

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, representing more than 10,000 public school system leaders across the country, I write ahead of the markup of the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Services proposal to urge you **to oppose this harmful measure** that fails our nation's public schools and the 50 million children they serve.

School districts are facing severe budget constraints as enrollment declines, student needs increase and prices continue to rise across the country. A survey of our members last month indicated that the increase in the cost of diesel alone is forcing some districts to cut student services, layoff staff and delay facility maintenance[i]. Congress must meet this moment with increased funding for schools to ensure superintendents have the resources they need to close achievement gaps, provide mental health supports for students, and address staffing shortages. Instead, this proposal's $8 billion (10%) cut to the Department of Education—achieved through program eliminations, rescissions of already-enacted funds, and a drastic reduction to Title I, Part A—represents an astounding divestment in education. While we appreciate the small increase for IDEA, Part B, the added $25 million is negligible when compared to the cuts elsewhere.

Title I, Part A (Title I) is the backbone of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the premier federal K-12 education law. The breadth and depth of Title I make it uniquely positioned for supporting districts in their work to support children—particularly those in poverty—in meeting challenging state academic content and achievement standards. Districts rely on Title I funds to provide students essential services like reading and math programs and additional direct instructional supports. Title I is not optional: it is the foundation of our nation's promise that a child's zip code should not determine their educational opportunity. This proposal, cutting $1.9 billion from the program, abandons that promise.

The proposed elimination of Title II, Part A (Title II) and Title III, Part A (Title III) would cut another $3 billion from district budgets and the critical supports these funds provide to students and teachers. Title II provides necessary resources to grow the skills and expertise of current teachers and provide mentoring programs for new educators that keep them in the classroom. Title II enables educators to stay current with evolving instructional practices and technologies, such as the science of reading and artificial intelligence. Title III is essential for school districts to ensure English learners have access to the resources they need to attain English language proficiency and meet the same challenging academic standards as their English-proficient peers. Title III levels the playing field and helps ensure children leave school ready to be successful in whatever path they choose.

AASA is particularly concerned about the Committee's proposal to once again rescind $1.6 billion in advance funding for Title II. District leaders are expecting to draw down these funds in October and have already incorporated them into district budgets for the upcoming school year. Any changes to funding after it is enacted will have a devastating impact on students, educators and communities across the nation—forcing cuts to programs, services and staff essential to providing a high-quality education. These efforts undermine confidence in federal education funding and constrain district leaders' ability to budget resources effectively. District leaders need the ability to create budgets that not only meet immediate needs but also support long-term strategic investments to best serve the children and families in their communities, which requires stable and sufficient federal investment.

As the CEOs of their school systems, AASA members understand implicitly the challenge of planning budgets with competing demands and limited funds. However, drastically cutting K-12 education funding is not the solution. This shortsighted proposal compromises the future of our nation by jeopardizing the education of our next generation. America's children only get one shot at a K-12 education. As a country, we must prioritize and invest in their growth and success. Educators work hard every day to fulfill America's promise of public education—and it's time Congress does the same. **We implore you to reject this proposal**.

Sincerely,

Tara Thomas

Tara Thomas
Senior Government Affairs Manager

CC: Members of the House Appropriations Committee

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[i] Ellerson Ng, Noelle. "Impact of Diesel Costs on District Budgets". May 2026. https://www.aasa.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/aasa-asbo-napt-diesel-impact-may-2026.pdf?sfvrsn=e3acc392_1