

Representative Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Nita Lowey
Chairwoman, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 1, 2020

Dear House Leadership,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing the nation’s educators and education policy leaders—those doing the critical, challenging work of keeping our nation’s students learning and supported in these unprecedented circumstances—we write to affirm our continued commitment to ensure that any federal support and response include funding critical to states and districts as they continue to navigate never-before-seen demands. As Congress negotiates a fifth emergency supplemental in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative any package includes significant, robust and flexible funding for our nation’s public schools, staff and students.

Thank you for your leadership in the COVID emergency response packages to date, and for the clear signal of your support for education with the inclusion of \$175 billion in K12 funds within the revised HEROES Act. The revised proposal represents a significant investment commensurate with the ongoing work and efforts of schools to open their doors and safely support staff and student teaching and learning in the midst of the pandemic.

Collectively, our groups have consistently advocated for the needs of our nation’s public schools. Our recommendations for how the federal government can support district work in this realm fall in five areas, many of which are reflected in the latest House proposal:

- Provision of Emergency Funding Directly to States to Support Local Education Agencies: Building off the education stabilization fund included in the CARES Act earlier this year, the fifth emergency COVID response must include an investment of at least \$175 billion for K12 education at the state level to help bolster state budgets, stimulate the economy in the short term and invest in education and other essential public services to ensure the long-term economic health of our nation.
- Provision of Support for Federal Categorical Programs: Recognizing the devastation facing state and local economies, it is clear that when schools open their doors, their student population will be significantly needier, with more students coming from families living at or near poverty and students with disabilities in need of significant supports and services. We urge Congress to provide \$13 billion for IDEA and \$12 billion for Title I, funds to help school districts address the litany of needs for these students, playing catch up in the aftermath of COVID.
- Emergency Funding for Technology for Remote Learning: Outside of and in addition to the fiscal stabilization fund, Congress must make a significant investment in funds for connectivity, similar to the \$12 billion investment in the revised HEROES Act for the E-rate program. As schools and families find themselves in the never-before-found situation of wide-spread home-based learning as schools are closed or hybrid, it has highlighted a long-documented and persistent inequity as it relates to access to broadband. In the context of our students, this is called the “homework gap”.
- Infrastructure Funding Must Include Explicit Support for Schools: In a time of economic uncertainty and downturn, federal financial support for state and local efforts to modernize our nation’s school facility infrastructure would greatly assist local communities to build, repair and renovate our nation’s schools, including upgrades to ventilation systems consistent with health and safety protocols to mitigate COVID.

- Recognize School Districts As Employers: Include Public Employers in Payroll Tax Credit: When it comes to employer subsidies, Congress must treat state and local government—including public school districts, the nation’s largest employer—in the same manner as businesses and non-profit agencies by including them in the benefits of payroll tax credit for “emergency paid leave” for our public employees affected by the coronavirus. Just like businesses and nonprofit agencies, state and local government employers, including school districts, will be providing emergency family and medical paid leave and emergency paid sick leave.

Thank you for your leadership and this revised proposal, which can be used as a first step in a renewed push for bipartisan support for a fifth COVID emergency supplemental. We appreciate your attention to these critical education priorities within a broader COVID response.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Federation of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of School Business Officials International
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of Great City Schools
International Society for Technology in Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Education Association
National PTA
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
National School Boards Association

CC: Senator Mitch McConnell
Senator Chuck Schumer
Senator Richard Shelby
Senator Patrick Leahy
Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Roy Blunt
Representative Bobby Scott
Representative Virginia Foxx