

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2020

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

The undersigned organizations, representing principals, teachers, other educational leaders and families, urge House and Senate conferees on the FY2021 Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill to recede to the House's approved funding level of \$2,154,330,000 for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants Program, or Title II-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Title II-A supports state and school district efforts to recruit, prepare, mentor, and provide professional development for their teachers, principals, and other educators. While we believe that this program should be funded at an even higher level, and had requested previously a \$500 million increase in line with the House-approved figure in FY2020, even a smaller increase of \$22.5 million would be very helpful as educators work to keep students learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. With uncertainty surrounding additional COVID relief funding for schools, every dollar from annual education appropriations is more valuable than ever before.

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended the education landscape and how schools deliver instruction, increasing the need to boost Title II-A to better support educators during this tumultuous period. Educators have done a heroic job in adjusting their practice to educate students in this pandemic environment, but more support in the form of professional learning is needed, as educators have continued to provide online only or in-person/online hybrid instruction. A recent poll of K-12 superintendents found that while nearly 80% intended to provide professional development on online learning, only 24% of respondents indicated that 91-100% of their instructional staff are currently equipped to deliver online learning. Educators will continually need to develop and refine their effective use of technology, address any equity gaps in learning, and provide personalized instruction during this period that will present a continually changing learning environment. While the CARES Act's Education Stabilization Fund certainly helped, those dollars have been largely exhausted and Title II-A annual appropriations remain the only federal funds solely dedicated to these growing needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and its impact on state and local resources, has shown us that federal investments in professional development remain at the forefront of providing equal educational opportunity. We believe that the federal government must provide the funding necessary to support states and districts in building long-term capacity to meet the challenges to student learning posed by the pandemic. Providing Title II-A with a significant investment of \$2,154,330,000 will provide educators

with the professional learning opportunities necessary to best serve students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Thank you for your leadership on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Federation of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association
ASCD
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
Bell Xcel
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Committee for Children
Common Sense Media
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
International Society for Technology in Education
Learning Forward
National Association for Music Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Black Justice Coalition
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Education Association
National PTA
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
National School Boards Association
National Science Teachers Association
National Superintendents Roundtable
National Writing Project
New Leaders
NYS Alliance for Quality Education
PDK/Educators Rising
Sperling Center for Research and Innovation
Student Voice
Teach for America
Teach Plus
The Arc of the United States
TNTP

