

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

July 1, 2020

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

The undersigned organizations, representing principals, teachers, other educational leaders, and parents, urge you to fund The Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants Program, or Title II-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), at \$2.6 billion for FY 2021. Title II-A supports state and school district efforts to recruit, prepare, mentor, and provide professional development for their teachers, principals, and other educators. These funds are imbued with even greater importance now as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of educators acquiring the technological and pedagogical skills necessary to keep their students learning online this past school year and into the next.

While we are pleased that Congress approved a \$76 million increase in Title II-A funding for FY 2020, we were disappointed that it fell short of the \$500 million increase the House originally passed for this program. Increasing Title II-A for FY 2021 becomes even more important with the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altering the education landscape. While educators have done a heroic job in immediately adjusting their practice to educate students in our new context, more support in the form of professional learning is needed to navigate this rapidly increased reliance on virtual instruction in the short- and long-term. 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. The CARES Act's Education Stabilization Funding can help in this regard, but Title II-A appropriations are 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 \$2.6 billion 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,

American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education
American Federation of School Administrators
American Psychological Association
ASCD
Association for Middle Level Education
AzTEA
BellXcel and Sperling Center for Research and Innovation
Center for Black Educator Development
Code.org
Common Sense Media
Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
Educators for Excellence
GLSEN
HundrED
InnovateEDU
International Society for Technology in Education
Learning Forward
National Association for Music Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council for the Social Studies
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Disability Rights Network
National Institute for Excellence in Teaching
National PTA

National Science Teaching Association
National Summer Learning Association
National Writing Project
National Youth Leadership Council
New Hampshire Society for Technology in Education
New Leaders
New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education
PDK International
Public Advocacy for Kids
School Social Work Association of America
SchoolHouse Connection
The Education Trust
TNTP
WEMTA Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association