

October 19, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Blunt and Ranking Members Leahy and Murray:

National PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in the United States. For over 120 years, we have worked to ensure that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in their child's education. A federal program critical to that mission is the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) grant program that was authorized at \$10 million in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). National PTA and our nearly four million members ask you to support funding SFECs at \$10 million in the final FY 2018 appropriations package.

Family engagement has always been, and continues to be, a bipartisan issue in Congress. In May, a bipartisan group of 28 Senators signed a [Dear Colleague letter](#) to support funding for SFECs. Then in September, the U.S. House of Representatives included a bipartisan amendment to fund SFECs at \$10 million in their FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act (H.R. 3354).

Research shows that family engagement improves academic outcomes for our nation's children and drives increases in student achievement. Schools would need to increase spending by over \$1,000 per pupil to gain the same results as effective family engagement practices which SFECs can support.

An investment in SFECs is critical to ensuring that families can support our nation's students in becoming fully prepared for higher education, workforce and career opportunities in the 21st century. Also, with ESSA implementation underway, states, school districts, school leaders and parents need the resources and services offered through the SFECs program to

effectively engage parents as stakeholders and successfully implement the law as Congress intended.

Our association and its members request that you use your influential role on the Senate Appropriations Committee and Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee to include SFEC funding at \$10 million in the final FY 2018 appropriations package.

National PTA seeks to empower family-school partnerships to positively impact student achievement and school improvement across our great nation. If you have questions about the SFECs program or family engagement in schools, please do not hesitate to reach out to either one of us or to Jacki Ball, National PTA director of government affairs, at [jball@PTA.org](mailto:jball@PTA.org) or (703) 518-1243.

Sincerely,



James L. Accomando  
President  
National PTA



Nathan R. Monell, CAE  
Executive Director  
National PTA