

July 7, 2020

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
Chair, 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

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

The 130 undersigned organizations write in support of no less than \$15 million for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) grant program in the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, a \$5 million increase over FY 2020. We very much appreciate the Subcommittee's leadership in funding this program in FY 2020 and urge the adoption of this increase in FY 2021.

The SFECs program builds capacity for states and school districts to systematically embed family engagement policies and practices in their education plans. SFECs also provide much needed professional development for educators and school leaders to strengthen school-family partnerships and parent teacher relationships. Additionally, the SFEC program provides direct services to families to give them the tools to effectively partner with their child's school to improve their child's academic outcomes and overall well-being.

Thirteen states have SFECs up and running now thanks to the initial investments of \$10 million in FYs 2018, 2019 and 2020. The \$5 million increase would enable the Department to fund additional SFECs, enabling more states to create systemic family engagement programs. Without an increase in the SFEC program, no new centers can be established. This means 41.7 million K-12 students and their families will be unable to benefit from enhanced engagement supports and services provided by SFECs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, K12 schools have worked diligently to move instruction online and face the possibility of having to at least partially continue online instruction when the new school year starts later this year. Parents, as well as superintendents, principals and teachers all across the country, have seen the challenges of transitioning to online instruction, and have experienced firsthand the new challenges in engaging families in the education of their children.

High-impact family engagement, supported by the SFEC program, is critical to mitigating the expected learning loss from school closures and ensuring that students are attending classes and getting support from home. Especially now, parents who do not have an SFEC in their state need this additional funding to ensure the benefits of high impact family engagement are available to all.

As the appropriations process moves forward, we urge the consideration of added funding for the SFECs program. The SFEC program provides much needed assistance to foster meaningful engagement with families to further the academic and developmental progress of children. With the advent of COVID-19 and the need for many parents to step into the role of their child's teacher while instruction is online, family engagement has become even more critical than before. Thank you for your consideration of our request and we look forward to working with you to ensure this important program receives no less than \$15 million in FY 2021.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Advocates for Justice and Education
African American Ministers In Action
African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Inc.
Afterschool Alliance
American Counseling Association
American Federation of School Administrators
ASPIRA Association, Inc.
Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA)
Center for Family Involvement (Virginia)
Community Inclusion & Development Alliance
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Easterseals
EDGE Consulting LLC
Family Resource Center for Disabilities & Special Needs/Parent Training & Resource Center
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Healthy Teen Network
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
Institute for Educational Leadership
Justice For Families
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Learning Disabilities Association of America
NAACP
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
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 Center for Families Learning
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National Military Family Association
National Organization for Women
National PTA
Network for Public Education
NW Disability Support
PACER Center
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)
Parents as Teachers
Parents Helping Parents
PEAL Center
Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center
Sandy Hook Promise
SchoolHouse Connection
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
Stone Soup Group
TASH
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
THRIVE Center

State Organizations

Advocates for Children of New York (New York PTI)
Alabama PTA
Alaska Parent Teacher Association
Arizona PTA
Arkansas PTA
Association for Special Children and Families (NJ CPRC)
Baltimore County Council PTA
California State PTA
Center on Disability Studies at University of Hawaii-Manoa (Hawaii)
Colorado PTA
Connecticut PTA
Delaware PTA
European PTA
Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans
Family Connection of South Carolina (SC PTI)
Family Resource Center on Disabilities (Illinois)
Families Together, Inc. (Kansas)

Family Voices NJ
Federation for Children with Special Needs (MA PTI)
Florida PTA
Georgia PTA
HUNE, Inc. (PA CPRC)
Idaho PTA
Illinois PTA
IN*SOURCE (Indiana)
Kansas PTA
Kentucky State PTA
Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawaii
Louisiana State Parent Teacher Association
Maine Parent Federation
Maine PTA
Maryland PTA
Massachusetts PTA
Michigan PTA
Minnesota PTA
Mississippi PTA
Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers
Montana PTA
Nebraska PTA
Nevada PTA
New Jersey PTA
New Mexico PTA
New York State PTA
North Carolina PTA
Ohio PTA
Oklahoma PTA
Oregon PTA
Parent Information Center of Delaware
Parent to Parent of Georgia
Parent to Parent of Miami
Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc. (WY PTI)
Pathfinder Services of ND (North Dakota PTI)
Pennsylvania Congress of Parents & Teachers, Inc
President, Utah PTA
Puerto Rico PTA
Rhode Island Parent Information Network
Rhode Island PTA
South Carolina PTA
South Dakota Parent Connection
South Dakota PTA
Southwest Human Development (Arizona)
State Education Resource Center (Connecticut)
STEP, Inc. (Pennsylvania)

Tennessee PTA

Texas PTA

The Parents' Place of MD

Vermont Family Network

Vermont PTA

Virginia PTA

Washington State PTA

West Virginia Parent Teacher Association

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education Training and Support

Wisconsin PTA

Wyoming PTA