

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 8, 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

National PTA is writing to express support for the school infrastructure portions of H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act of 2020 and to thank the House for passing this important legislation last week. National PTA is comprised of over 3 million parents, teachers and other child advocates who work toward bettering the lives of every child in education, health and safety. This legislation would fund school infrastructure that will enable more of our students to attend schools without health and safety risks and be educated in buildings that can support the technology for modern and essential digital learning.

There are about 100,000 public K-12 school facilities across the country. On any given school day, about 20% of Americans spend time in a school building. However, the average public school is nearly 50 years old. Local districts and states have shouldered the vast majority of costs associated with school infrastructure needs.

In recent history, the federal government has provided virtually no support for school infrastructure. Due to this, school infrastructure has largely remained a local issue. We believe now is the time to explore how best to utilize local, state and federal resources to improve school facilities. However, even if local districts find innovative and creative ways to finance infrastructure projects, some districts will inevitably be left behind¹. Similar to the federal role in upgrading roads and bridges, there must be a federal role to help eliminate the extreme inequities that currently exist in school facilities.

Coupled with these physical plant and health related issues, many school buildings do not have the modern technological infrastructure to maximize student learning. Even in 2019, thousands of our nation's school buildings lack the wiring and internet connectivity to adequately support online learning. Not only is the health of our students being placed at risk, but their learning opportunities are being diminished, jeopardizing their educational and economic futures. As a nation we can do better.

¹ Center for Green Schools, 21st Century School Fund & National Council on School Facilities (2016). State of Our Schools: America's K-12 Facilities report. Retrieved from <https://kapost-filesprod.s3.amazonaws.com/published/56f02c3d626415b792000008/2016-state-of-our-schoolsreport.pdf?kui=wo7vkgV0wWOLGSixek0N5A>

Fortunately, H.R. 2 responds to these shortcomings. The measure's \$100 billion in grant aid and \$30 billion in tax-based assistance is targeted to the schools that need the most aid in addressing crumbling and outdated school buildings. The bill's requirement to catalog the existing condition of school facilities is also critical to begin to get a school by school understanding of what is needed to ensure up to date, safe school facilities exist for all of our students. The totality of the legislation would also ensure that the idea of online learning becomes a reality.

Thank you again for the passage of this legislation that is essential to ensuring that our students are learning in the schools that they deserve.

Sincerely,



Leslie Carrell Boggs
President
National PTA



Nathan R. Monell, CAE
Executive Director
National PTA