

November 23, 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 133 undersigned organizations write in strong support of the Senate's proposal to provide \$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 appreciate that both the House and Senate Subcommittees have included an increase for FY 2021, and we continue to urge the enactment of \$15 million 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.

This year, parents, as well as educators and school leaders, have endured pandemic-related challenges of online, hybrid, and altered in-person instruction, and new challenges in engaging families at a time when families are primary to student success. High-impact family engagement, as supported by the SFEC program, is critical to ensuring that students are attending classes and

receiving support from home, mitigating the expected learning loss due to COVID-19. As the country breaks records for daily infections and hospitalizations, we anticipate another difficult winter coping with COVID-19. Parents will continue to play the role of facilitator while instruction is online, making family engagement even more critical than before.

As you negotiate final spending levels for FY 2021, we urge you to include \$15 million for the SFECs program. Thank you for your consideration of our request and your steadfast commitment to the SFEC program and the high-impact family engagement it yields.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

African American Ministers In Action

African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Inc.

Afterschool Alliance

American Counseling Association

American Federation of School Administrators

American Psychological Association

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 (HIPPPY)

Institute for Educational Leadership

Justice For Families

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
National Superintendents Roundtable
National Urban League
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
TNTP
THRIVE Center

State Organizations

Advocates for Children of New York (New York PTI)
Advocates for Justice and Education
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
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
Utah PTA

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