July 8, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair  Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education  Human Services and Education
260 Russell Senate Office Building  260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair  Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies  & Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives  United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20515

**Appropriations Request:**

$20 Million or More for Statewide Family Engagement Centers

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

The 82 undersigned national and state organizations write in support of robust funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) grant program and respectfully request no less than $20 million in funding for the program in the FY 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (L-HHS-ED) appropriations bill.

This year parents, guardians, educators and school leaders have continued to endure pandemic-related challenges of online, hybrid, and altered in-person instruction. New challenges have arisen 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 not suffering from learning loss, particularly those whose families and communities – many of whom already faced significant disadvantages before the COVID-19 pandemic – have been most impacted by the pandemic.

The SFEC program provides much-needed technical assistance and partnership development to states and school districts to foster meaningful engagement with families to further their children's academic and developmental progress. While SFECs work with all parents and schools throughout their state, many focus on students of
color, English learners, and recent immigrant children working to integrate into their new communities. Additionally, SFECs provide direct services to families to give them the tools to effectively work with their child’s school to improve their child’s academic outcomes and overall well-being.

Research shows that family engagement advances the academic and developmental progress of our nation’s children and drives increases in student achievement. The success of SFECs has been well documented, and they have served as vital resources for families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our organizations believe that an investment in SFECs is critical to ensuring that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in their child’s education so they can support our nation’s students in becoming fully prepared for higher education and careers.

The funding Congress allocated to the SFEC Program in FY21 was only enough to support family engagement in 13 states: Arizona, Connecticut, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. Although the American Rescue Plan Act provided emergency funds for K-12 education to cover pandemic-related expenses, it did not include funding dedicated to Statewide Family Engagement Centers. Robust funding is still needed to not only sustain the great work already underway, but also to expand the program to ensure that all families across the country – including families in your state – have access to this program in the coming years.

Historically family engagement has always been, and will continue to be, a strong bipartisan issue. Leaders of recent Dear Colleague letters supporting robust funding for the SFEC program include Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Representative Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (R-PA), Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC). Several colleagues from both sides of the aisle have continuously affirmed their support for an increase of funding for SFECs on the behalf of their constituents. More than ever, continued bipartisan support for the program is needed to help reverse the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen family engagement in schools.

For the reasons above, we respectfully request $20 million or more in funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers grant program in the FY 2022 L-HHS-ED appropriations bill, a moderate but desperately needed increase from the $12.5 million allocated to the program in FY21. Thank you again for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you to support this important program.

Sincerely,
National Organizations
Afterschool Alliance
Center for Family Involvement @ VCU
Communities In Schools National Office
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
First Focus Campaign for Children
GLSEN
Institute for Educational Leadership
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Learning Heroes
National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
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 Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Education Association
National HIPPY Network
National Military Family Association
National Organization for Women
National PTA
Network for Public Education
PACER Center
Parents Helping Parents, Inc.
SchoolHouse Connection
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)
TASH
The Advocacy Institute
The American Counseling Association

State Organizations
Ak PTA
Alabama PTA
Arizona State PTA
California State PTA
Colorado PTA
Connecticut PTA
Delaware PTA
European PTA
Florida PTA
Georgia PTA
Hawaii State PTSA
Illinois PTA
IN*SOURCE
Kansas PTA
Louisiana Parent Training & Information Center
Maine Parent Teacher Association
Massachusetts Advocates for Children
Massachusetts PTA
Michigan PTA
Minnesota PTA
MISSISSIPPI PTA
Missouri PTA
MT State PTA
Nevada PTA
New Jersey PTA
New Mexico PTA
North Carolina PTA
NYS Parent Teacher Association
Ohio PTA
Oklahoma PTA
Oregon PTA
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center
Parent Revolution
Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
PUERTO RICO PTA
Pyramid CPRC
Read On Arizona
Rhode Island Parent Information Network
Rhode Island PTA
Sd PTA
South Carolina PTA
Tennessee PTA
Texas PTA
THRVIE Center
Vermont PTA
Washington State PTA
West Virginia PTA
Wisconsin PTA


4 National PTA outlined the need for such dedicated funding in April 2020. See “National PTA calls on Congress to provide funding for family engagement, remote learning, special education and child nutrition programs in the next COVID-19 relief bill.” http://bit.ly/2020COVIDLetterPTA.