



March 29, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Capitol, H-232, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Capitol, H-204, Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders Pelosi and McCarthy,

On behalf of the [Re]Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition ([BASIC](#)), a broad and diverse coalition of over 130 education, health, environmental, labor, and industry organizations, we urge you to include the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act (RRASA) as passed last Congress in HR2 in the infrastructure stimulus package. The inclusion of RRASA and the directive to appropriate \$100 billion in direct grants and \$30 billion in bond interest subsidies would help address obsolete and deteriorated conditions in high-need rural, town, suburban and urban public school facilities.

We appreciate the immediate relief school districts are now getting to address the increased costs of operating schools in a public health crisis. But we want to make clear that while the American Rescue Plan and COVID-19 Relief funds will enable districts to operate their *20th century schools* more safely, they will NOT enable our high-need districts and schools to modernize this critical infrastructure for the 21st century, as is desperately needed. The need to improve our nation's school facilities was never more acutely apparent than in the monumental effort that many school districts have put forward to make patchwork repairs and upgrades to outdated facilities in an effort to reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Long-term under-investment<sup>1</sup> in school facilities has increased the urgency of ensuring that these critical centers of community are ready to provide the services and care that our economy relies on.

A comprehensive local, state, and federal partnership to modernize our nation's public school facilities infrastructure is essential and long overdue. Ensuring that RRASA is included in the infrastructure stimulus package would:

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<sup>1</sup> A national study of 46,000 school improvement projects (1995-2004) found that schools in high-wealth zip codes spent three times more than schools in the lowest wealth school districts. Over the last 25 years, local school districts have paid over 80% of school construction costs, carrying \$454 billion in long term debt; on average, that amounts to \$9,000 per student at the end of FY2018. In some cases, where state funds are available, low-income school districts have been unable to put up even a 10% match to draw state dollars.

- address structural inequities in education that have led to a concentration of crumbling school buildings and grounds within our nations' poorest and most rural and inner-city school districts;
- support a healthy school environment, both indoors and outside, to ensure the health and wellbeing of children, teachers, and staff;
- reduce the carbon footprint and urban heat island effects of thousands of school buildings and grounds;
- Ensure green school buildings and grounds that are adaptable and resilient to address climate change impacts such as increasing extreme weather events; and
- provide locations for wrap-around services and joint uses such as for school-based health clinics, adult education, and civic and recreational centers.

Schools built now will still be in use in 2075 and beyond. This federal, state, and local partnership to bring 20th century facilities into the 21st century will also support thousands of businesses and create millions of jobs in communities hard hit by the economic impact of COVID-19. After highways, our public schools are the second largest public infrastructure sector, in terms of state and local capital outlay, but unlike highways and bridges have no federal funding. Like our public roads and bridges, our nation's public schools are a shared public good distributed throughout our nation, provide vital support for a functioning economy, and should be fully integrated into our national infrastructure policy going forward.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to mobilize our members and our colleagues in the civic, labor and business community to support your continuing efforts to respond to COVID-19, rebuild our economy, and increase equity in American education.

CC: The Honorable Bobby Scott

CC: The Honorable Virginia Foxx

Sincerely,

21st Century School Fund  
 AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
 Abruna & Musgrave, Architects  
 Afterschool Alliance  
 Air Equipment Company  
 Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute  
 American Institute of Architects Committee on Architecture for Education  
 American Occupational Therapy Association  
 American Planning Association  
 American Society of Civil Engineers

Artcobell  
 Associated General Contractors of America  
 Association for Learning Environments  
 Association of School Business Organizations International (ASBO)  
 Baltimore City Public Schools  
 BAMA Kids, Inc.  
 Blackridge Health & Educational Solutions  
 BRICK Education Network  
 Bristol Virginia Public Schools  
 Build Up California | Early Learning Facilities

BuildingAction: The Coalition for Sustainable Buildings  
Californians for School Facilities  
Campaign for Environmental Literacy  
CARRIER GLOBAL CORPORATION  
CBRE Heery, Inc.  
Center for Cities + Schools  
Center for Green Schools @ USGBC  
Children & Nature Network  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department  
CITYGREEN DC  
CMTA Engineers  
Coalition of Small and Rural Schools of Virginia  
Collaborative for High Performance Schools Inc.  
College Achieve Public Schools  
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education  
Communities In Schools Pittsburgh - Allegheny County  
Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team  
Cooperative Strategies  
daVinci Planning, PC  
DLR Group  
Durham Public Schools  
EARTHDAY.ORG  
Ed-Space Consulting and Project Management  
Edmonds School District  
enVerid Systems  
Facility Adviser  
Fairfield Enterprise, LLC  
Go Green Initiative  
Gonzales Union School District  
Great Northwest Education Cooperative  
Green Building Initiative  
Green Schools National Network  
Green Schoolyards America  
Greenbank Associates  
Grimm + Parker Architects  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
Healthy Schools Network, Inc.  
Heart of America  
High Performance Learning Environments  
Impact Fitness Foundation  
In the Public Interest  
Inclusive Prosperity Capital  
International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers

International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
International WELL Building Institute  
iXero  
Johnson Controls  
Jones Whitsett Architects  
KaBOOM!  
Kansas City Public Schools  
Kansas Green Schools Program/Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education  
KCI Technologies Inc.  
KIPP  
LaBella Associates  
Living Classroom  
Maine Parent Teacher Association  
Mark Design Studios Architecture, PC  
Maryland ACLU  
Michigan Education Justice Coalition  
NAESP  
National Alliance for Public Charter School's Facility Center  
National Association for Music Education (NAfME)  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools  
National Council on School Facilities  
National Indian Education Association  
National Parent Teacher Association  
National Rural Education Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Nature+play designs  
New America  
New Jersey Education Law Center  
North American Association for Environmental Education  
Out Teach  
Parents For Students Safety  
PBS Engineering and Environmental, Inc.  
pcbinschools.org  
Perkins Eastman  
Philadelphia Healthy Schools Initiative  
Public Economics, Inc.  
Public Private Action  
Public Schools Interest Group - American Planning Association  
Quattrocchi Kwok Architects  
Reflo  
Rhode Island Environmental Education Association  
Richmond Forward  
School Board Of St. Lucie County  
School Board Partners

School Energy Coalition  
School PRIDE Foundation  
School Site Solutions, Inc.  
SGA/Narmour Wright  
Shawnee Heights Unified School District (KS)  
SMART California Sheet Metal Workers' Local 104  
Southern Echo Inc.  
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative  
SRBWI/BAMA Kids, Inc.  
Strategic Energy Innovations

StudioGC architecture + interiors  
Susan Epstein and Associates  
Ten Strands  
The American Society of Interior Designers  
The Low Income Investment Fund  
The Portal Coalition  
The Wild Center  
UndauntedK12  
Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School  
Women for a Healthy Environment