

The Honorable Patty Murray
Subcommittee on LHHS-Ed Appropriations
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Subcommittee on LHHS-Ed Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives , Washington, DC
20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Subcommittee on LHHS-Ed Appropriations
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives , Washington, DC
20515

June 14, 2021

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

As you consider Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, we encourage you to help close opportunity and resource gaps in our nation's public schools by funding the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grant program authorized by Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at \$2 billion, which represents a \$780 million increase over FY2021.

Title IV-A is a flexible grant that supports state and district efforts to: 1) support safe and healthy students by providing comprehensive mental and behavioral health services, implementing violence prevention programs, trauma informed care, school safety trainings; and other evidenced based initiatives; 2) increase student access to a well-rounded education, such as: STEM; computer science and accelerated learning courses; career and technical education; physical education; music; the arts; foreign languages; college and career counseling; effective school library programs; and social and emotional learning; and 3) provide students with access to technology and digital learning materials and educators with professional development and coaching opportunities necessary to effectively use those resources.

Over the last four fiscal years, on a bipartisan basis, Congress has provided a \$4 billion investment for Title IV-A, which has allowed districts to meaningfully invest in programs that provide direct educational services and equitable supports to students. Its flexibility has allowed districts to provide funding for critical programs that support educators, school leaders, and students. As district leaders continue to leverage the flexibility of the SSAE grants, they are eager to plan for the continuance and/or expansion of existing programs and services, and to create new programs.

To address unprecedented interruptions to learning caused by COVID-19, we call on Congress now to go beyond what was authorized in ESSA by providing \$2 billion for the SSAE block grant. This will allow additional school districts, especially in rural areas, to make investments in not just one, but all three areas that this grant supports. Right now—more than ever—districts need the continued investments in the Title IV-A program.

The continued funding in these critical areas, especially during these uncertain times, will give districts the opportunity to build on the successes from the past 5 fiscal years as well as the ability to use Title IV-A funds to address issues that the COVID-19 crisis has made apparent and exacerbated. This pandemic has made clear that districts face a wide range of unique challenges, whether it's ensuring all children have access to technology for remote or blended learning or the ability to provide mental health supports from afar. As school systems prepare for the return to the classroom, they will need the flexibility of Title IV-A funds to provide social and emotional learning programs, engaging well-rounded classes like music and physical education, and active learning opportunities enabled through technology.

In order to support a safe and healthy school environment and make sure our students receive a well-rounded education that puts them on a path to success, we must continue to invest in our nation's schools, educators, and most importantly, our students. For these reasons, we urge Congress to fund the SSAE flexible grant program at \$2 billion in FY 2022.

Thank you for the consideration of this request, we are grateful for the continued investments in the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program under Title IV-A of the Every Student Success Act (ESSA).

Sincerely,

National Organizations
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Afterschool Alliance
American Counseling Association
American Federation of School Administrators
American Heart Association (AHA)
American Library Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American School Counselor Association
ASCD
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
Chiefs for Change
City Year Inc.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Committee for Children
Common Sense
Communities In Schools
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
Educational Theatre Association
EduColor
Futures Without Violence
Girl Scouts of the USA
Girls Inc.
Girlstart
International Society for Technology in Education
Joint National Committee for Languages
League of American Orchestras

MENTOR National
National Afterschool Association
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council for Languages and International Studies
National Council for the Social Studies
National PTA
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Science Teaching Association
National Summer Learning Association
National Superintendents Roundtable
School Social Work Association of America
School-Based Health Alliance
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators
State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education
State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)
Teach Plus
State Organizations
Alabama Association of School Psychologists
Alaska Science Teachers Association
Arizona Science Teachers Association
Arkansas School Psychology Association

Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania
Connecticut School Counselor Association
Connecticut Science Teachers Association
Delaware Association of School Psychologists (DASP)
Florida Association of Science Teachers
Guam Association of School Counselors (GASC)
HASTI (Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc.)
Idaho Science Teachers Association (ISTA)
Illinois School Psychologists Association
Indiana Association of School Psychologists
Kentucky Association for Psychology in the Schools (KAPS)
Maine School Counselor Association
Maine Science Teachers Association
Maine Science Teachers Association
Maryland Association of Science Teachers (MAST)
Maryland School Psychologists' Association
Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers
Michigan Science Teachers Association (MSTA)
Michigan Association of School Psychologists
Minnesota Science Teachers Association
Missouri Association of School Psychologists
Montana Science Teachers Association
Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science
Nebraska School Psychologists Association
Nevada School Counselor Association
Nevada State Science Teachers Association
New Hampshire Association of School

Psychologists
New Jersey Association of School Psychologists
New York Association of School Psychologists (NYASP)
New York State School Counselor Association
North Dakota Association of School Psychologists
North Carolina School Counselor Association
Ohio School Counselor Association
Oklahoma School Psychological Association
Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association
Rhode Island School Psychologists Association
Science Teachers Association of New York State
Science Teachers Association of Texas
Science Teachers of Missouri
South Carolina Science Council
South Dakota Association of School Psychologists
South Dakota Science Teaching Association
Tennessee Association of School Psychologists (TASP)
Tennessee Science Teachers Association
Texas Association of School Psychologists
Utah Association of School Psychologists
Utah School Counselor Association
Utah Science Teachers Association
Vermont Association of School Psychologists
Washington Science Teachers Association
Washington State Association of School Psychologists
West Virginia School Psychologists Association
West Virginia Science Teachers Association

Wisconsin School Counselor Association
Wisconsin School Psychologists Association