

HOUSE DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER

Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA-11) and Representative Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA-15) are leading the bipartisan Dear Colleague letter to fund Statewide Family Engagement Centers in FY21. Please contact Anthony Hanna in Congressman DeSaulnier’s office at Anthony.Hanna@mail.house.gov or Nick Rockwell in Congressman Thompson’s office at Nick.Rockwell@mail.house.gov to sign on by March 9, 2020.

March XX, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human,
Services and Education
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole,

Under your leadership, we are grateful that the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Act of 2020 included \$15 million for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) and respectfully request as you develop the Fiscal Year 2021 LHHS Appropriations Act, that you fund the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) grant program at an amount of at least \$15 million.

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. SFECs also provide vital direct services to improve collaboration of engagement between children, parents, teachers, school leaders, counselors, administrators and other school personnel with each other.

Research has shown that family engagement in a child’s education increases student achievement, improves attendance, reduces the dropout rate, and advances the emotional and physical well-being of children. Students whose families are involved in their children’s academic success attend school more regularly, earn better grades, enroll in more challenging academic programs, and have higher graduation rates. The Statewide Family Engagement Centers program will harness effective practices to help schools and districts implement systematic family engagement programs that build ties between the community, families, students, and schools.

The SFEC program is in year two of an initial five-year grant cycle after receiving \$10 million in the FY18 appropriations process, resulting in thirteen states establishing SFECs. While the program has received \$10 million in subsequent fiscal years, no new centers can be established without additional funding. This means 41.7 million K-12 students and their families in the other states are unable to benefit from enhanced engagement supports and services provided by SFECs unless Congress provides more funding. We believe that an investment in SFECs and family engagement is important to ensuring not only that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in the education of their children, but that our nation’s students are fully prepared for

higher education, the workforce, and career opportunities in the 21st century. Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to support this important program.

Sincerely,

Mark DeSaulnier

Glenn "GT" Thompson