June 19, 2017

Dear Senators Cochran, Leahy, Blunt, and Murray:

The undersigned organizations on behalf of the Title IV, A Coalition write to request that the Committee provide full funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grant program, found under Title IV, Part A of the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The SSAE grant program, authorized at $1.6 billion for fiscal year 2018 (FY 2018), is the result of Congress’ decision to consolidate more than 20 existing programs, most of which were competitive, into a single formula-funded flexible block grant program that has the potential to benefit millions of students by allowing districts to choose how to spend their dollars to support safe and healthy schools, well-rounded education, and the effective use of technology. The critical education programs meant to be supported by SSAE funds include: 1) safe and healthy students activities, such as providing mental health services to students; 2) increasing student access to STEM, computer science and accelerated learning courses, physical education, the arts, music, foreign languages, and college and career counseling; funds for an effective school library program; and, 3) providing students with access to technology and digital materials and educators with technology professional development opportunities.

We strongly urge Congress to fully fund the SSAE program in FY 2018, as the FY 2017 allocation of only $400 million is wholly inadequate to provide the flexibility at the local level or to run the program as Congress intended. Funding this program at less than 25% of its authorized level in its first year has already presented serious implementation issues, including the need to allow states to allocate funds to districts competitively, contrary to what is authorized in ESSA. States electing to run a competition will incur significant burdens as they grapple with creating, initiating, and judging a competition. Altering the structure of the program in this manner also negates the Congressional intent of increasing access to SSAE programs for all students and instead is likely to continue to benefit those districts already adept at winning competitive grants.
As a result of the low funding and the confusion around a competition, we are deeply concerned that many states might ignore the competitive option altogether and choose to allocate the money by formula for the sake of ease and fairness to all districts. While our groups ultimately want these dollars to go to every district, electing to distribute the money by formula at this low funding level has its own potentially negative consequences. For instance, many states or districts might choose to simply transfer the dollars for another purpose, as the amounts received by formula may simply not be enough to make meaningful investments in these areas, thereby leaving districts with no federal funds to support Title IVA’s abovementioned activities.

In addition to the financial challenges of such a low funding level, the amount allocated for SSAE does not allow states and districts to make meaningful investments in a range of programs that, when combined, improve conditions for learning and help students receive a well-rounded education. It will force school districts to choose between high-quality programs that positively impact students in different ways – trading off school counseling services for Advanced Placement programs, for instance, thereby jeopardizing the greater flexibility for districts and schools that Congress intended.

On behalf of the millions of students, parents and educators that we collectively represent, we urge you to please appropriate full funding in FY 2018 for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program under Title IV, A of ESSA and allow states and districts to make meaningful investments in programs that are critical to student success.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations and Companies**

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)  
Advance CTE  
AESA  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
American Association of School Librarians  
American Council for School Social Work  
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages  
American Counseling Association  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Federation of School Administrators  
American Heart Association  
American Library Association  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American School Counselor Association  
Apple
ASCD
Association of School Business Officials
Blackboard Inc.
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools
Cengage Learning
Chorus America
Coalition for Community Schools
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
College in High School Alliance
Committee for Children
Communities In Schools
CoSN
Council of Administrators of Special Education
D2L
Edgenuity
Facebook
Futures Without Violence
Girl Scouts of the USA
Google
In Reach, Inc.
Intel
International ACAC
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
Jobs for the Future
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Little Kids Rock
Matific USA
McGraw-Hill Education
Music for All, Inc.
Music Teachers National Association
MusicFirst
NAMM
National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Technological Literacy at the Museum of Science, Boston
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Assoc. (NIAAA)
National PTA
National Rural Education Association
National Science Teachers Association
National Summer Learning Association
Noodle Markets
Organization of American Kodály Educators
Organization of American Kodály Educators
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America
Quadrant Research
Recording Academy
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
School Social Work Association of America
SETDA
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators
Society for Public Health Education
Software & Information Industry Association
STEM Education Coalition
STEM LA3–Girls Collaborative Project
Students4STEM
The Fitting Room Educational Media Corporation
Trust for America's Health
VH1 Save The Music Foundation

Regional Organizations
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, & Washington
Pacific Northwest Association of College Admission Counseling (PNACAC)

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming
RMACAC

**California, Nevada**
CUE
Western Association of College Admission Counseling

**New England**
New England Association of College Admissions Counselors

**Southern**
Southern Association for College Admission Counseling (SACAC)

**State Organizations**

**Alabama**
Alabama Educational Technology Association (AETA - ISTE Affiliate)

**Arizona**
Arizona Association of School Psychologists
CocoNuts FIRST Robotics Team

**California**
CA Association of School Psychologists (CASP)
California Association of School Psychologists
California Association of School Psychologists
California Educational Technology Professionals Association
San Diego Association of School Psychologists
The Joyful Child Foundation
The Joyful Child Foundation
Winters Joint Unified School District

**Colorado**
Canon City School District Fremont RE-1
Colorado Society of School Psychologists
Garfield County School District 16
Innovative Education Colorado (InnEdCO) (ISTE)
Pikes Peak BOCES

**Connecticut**
Connecticut Music Educators Association

**Delaware**
Delaware Association of School Psychologists (DASP)
Florida
Florida Association of School Psychologists

Georgia
Georgia Library Media Association
Georgia K-12 CTO Chapter of CoSN

Hawaii
Hawaii Music Educators Association

Illinois
Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling
Illinois Music Education Association
Illinois School Psychologist Association

Indiana
Indiana Connected Educators
Westfield Washington Schools

Kentucky
Kentucky Association for Psychology in the Schools
Kentucky Music Educators Association

Louisiana
LACUE (ISTE Affiliate)
Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators

Maine
Maine Music Educators Association

Maryland
Kent County Public Schools
Maryland Society for Educational Technology (MSEA)
Team 449 The Blair Robot Project

Massachusetts
Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA)

Michigan
Bionic Blackhawks - Team 2834
MACUL
Michigan Association for College Admission Counseling
Michigan Music Education Association

**Mississippi**
Mississippi Foreign Language Association

**Missouri**
Missouri Association of School Psychologists

**Montana**
Montana Educational Technologists Association
JML Strategy–Montana Afterschool Alliance
Montana Education Partnership

**Nebraska**
Nebraska School Psychologists Association

**Nevada**
Nevada Association of School Psychologists (NVASP)

**New Hampshire**
New Hampshire Music Educators Association
New Hampshire Society for Technology in Education (NHSTE)
NHCTO Council
School Administrative Unit #6

**New Jersey**
FIRST Robotics Team 1676 - The Pascack Pi-oneers
New Jersey Association of School Psychologists
New Jersey Music Educators Association (NJMEA)

**New Mexico**
Albuquerque Public Schools
Explora

**New York**
FIRST Team 1511 - Rolling Thunder
New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education
New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education (NYSCATE)
New York State School Music Association
New York State Association for College Admission Counseling

**North Carolina**
FIRST Team 2655, Inc., The Flying Platypi
North Carolina CoSN

**North Dakota**
North Dakota Music Educator's Association

**Ohio**
FRC 3324 Metrobots
Ohio Music Education Association

**Oregon**
Oregon Music Education Association
Salem Keizer Education Foundation

**Pennsylvania**
Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania
Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) PA
Parkland School District
Progressive Music
PAECT

**Rhode Island**
Rhode Island Society for Technology in Education (RISTE)

**South Dakota**
South Dakota Music Education Association

**Tennessee**
TETA - Tennessee Educational Technology Association

**Texas**
Texas K-12 CTO Council

**Virginia**
Tunstall High School Robotics Boosters Club
Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE)
Washington
Washington Music Educators Association

West Virginia
West Virginia Foreign Language Teachers Association (WVFLTA)
West Virginia Music Educators Association

Wisconsin
FIRST Wisconsin
Washington Music Educators Association (WMEA)
WEMTA Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association
Wisconsin Educational Technology Leaders (CoSN)
Wisconsin Music Educators Association

Wyoming
Wyoming School Psychology Association