

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2020

Dear Senators Shelby and Leahy and Representatives Lowey and Granger:

The undersigned members of the Title IV-A Coalition as well as a broader group of national, state, and local organizations encourage urge you to guarantee an adequate investment in federal education by ensuring the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill receive its proportional share—about one third—of discretionary dollars in the FY 2021 budget. Without allocating the appropriate amount to the largest non-defense discretionary appropriations bill, many education programs will continue to be underfunded, weakening their impact on our nation’s schools. Additionally, we encourage you to fully fund the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) flexible block grant program under Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at its authorized level of \$1.6 billion.

The SSAE block grant supports three important education areas: 1) safe and healthy students activities, such as providing comprehensive mental and behavioral health services to students, implementing violence prevention programs, trauma informed care, and school safety trainings; 2) increasing student access to a well-rounded education, such as: STEM; computer science and accelerated learning courses; career and technical education; physical education; the arts; music; foreign languages; college and career counseling; effective school library programs; social and emotional learning; and, 3) providing students with access to technology and digital materials and educators with technology professional development opportunities.

More specifically, the flexible block grant enables states and local school districts to support a variety of services, such as school-based mental health programs, drug and gun violence prevention programs, school safety trainings, physical education programs, and programs to help deal with the nation’s opioid crisis. The grant also supports well-rounded learning opportunities, including expanded access to arts, music, civics, computer science, CTE, and foreign language courses; Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, and other rigorous and accelerated courses; and STEM and STEAM courses, which may integrate arts and music to foster innovation and creative thinking. Additionally, the funding allows

districts to provide instructional and technological support for educators and school leaders implementing personalized and digital learning.

Our organizations are grateful that on a bipartisan basis, Congress has provided a \$3 billion investment for Title IV-A, which has allowed districts to build on the investments over the years across all 3 buckets the program supports. As district leaders better understand 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 and are very concerned about funding cuts as they are just now seeing successes in their districts. In fact, the [Coalition's survey of 1,000 districts](#) across the country indicated that 90% of district leaders considered Title IV-A funding "very important" and the anecdotal evidence has proven that this funding is being used in innovative and flexible ways to support the unique needs of districts across the country.

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 fully fund the SSAE flexible grant program at \$1.6 billion in FY 2021.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to make sure students in every community are supported to reach their maximum potential.

Sincerely,

American Counseling Association	National
AASA, The School Superintendents Association	National
Advance CTE	National
AESA	National
Afterschool Alliance	National
Alliance for Excellent Education	National
American Dance Therapy Association	National
American Heart Association	National
American Library Association	National
American Psychological Association	National
American School Counselor Association	National
ASCD	National
C. Blohm & Associates, Inc.	National

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)	National
Committee for Children	National
Committee for Children	National
Committee for Children	National
Communities In Schools National Office	National
Council for Exceptional Children	National
Council of Administrators of Special Education	National
EDGE Consulting Partners	National
Educational Theatre Association	National
Educators for Excellence	National
edWeb.net	National
Futures Without Violence	National
Girl Scouts of the USA	National
InnovateEDU	National
Innovations4Education	National
LDA	National
Learning Disabilities Association of America	National
McGraw-Hill	National
Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL)	National
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)	National
National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)	National
National Association for Music Education	National
National Association of School Nurses	National
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)	National
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)	National
National Center for Learning Disabilities	National
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)	National

National Eating Disorders Association	National
National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform	National
National PTA	National
National Science Teaching Association	National
PDK International	National
Redstone Center for Prevention and Wellness	National
Sandy Hook Promise	National
School Social Work Association of America	National
School Social Work Association of America	National
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators	National
Software & Information Industry Association	National
State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE)	National
State Educational Technology Directors Association	National
TESOL International Association	National
The American Counseling Association	National
The College Board	National
The Education Trust	National
Young Audiences, Inc.	National
Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin	Multistate
Pacific Northwest Association for College Admission Counseling	Multistate
Southern Association of College Admission Counseling	Multistate
Western Association for College Admission Counseling	Multistate
Arkansas Society for Technology in Education	AR
Learning Disabilities Association of Arkansas	AR
Arizona Citizens for the Arts	AZ
Arizona Dance Education Organization (AzDEO)	AZ
RTAC for AZ Arts Education	AZ
Los Angeles Unified School District	CA

CECA, Inc.	CT
LDA OF GEORGIA	GA
Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE)	IL
Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling	IL
Illinois Digital Educators Alliance	IL
Missouri Association for College Admissions Counseling (MOACAC)	MO
New Hampshire Society for Technology in Education (NHSTE)	NH
NHSTE NH ISTE Affiliate	NH
Learning Disabilities Assoc. of NJ	NJ
Learning Disabilities Association of Ohio	OH
LDA of PA	PA
Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling	PA
Learning Disabilities Association of South Carolina	SC
Tennessee Education Technology Association (TETA)	TN
Learning Disabilities Association of Texas	TX
Texas Association for College Admission Counseling	TX
Virginia Society for Technology in Education	VA
Learning Disabilities Association of Washington	WA
Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services (WCASS)	WI
Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association	WI