



Senator Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2020

United States Congress
Washington, D.C. 20515
Submitted Electronically

Dear Representatives and Senators:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Unified School District (Los Angeles Unified) and the San Diego Unified School District (San Diego Unified), we write to strongly urge Congress to include a significant amount of flexible funding for public schools in the next emergency supplemental bill. While the inclusion of \$13.5 billion for elementary and secondary education in the CARES Act was a welcomed first step, more must be done to mitigate the far-reaching harms arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and to meet the ongoing academic, health, and wellness needs of our Country's most vulnerable students and families.

Launching a comprehensive distance learning program across a large school system is a monumental task but we have made great strides in ensuring our students continue to have opportunities to learn during this crisis. In addition to education, many of the families we serve rely on us to help provide basic needs to their children. In addition to providing over 15 million meals since March 18th at 63 Grab & Go Food Centers, Los Angeles Unified surprised children and their families with toys, books, baby supplies and sports gear; donated 100,000 N-95 masks to local hospitals; and provided mental health counseling and support to students and families. In San Diego Unified, the number of school meal pick-up locations now totals 22 with over 430,000 total meals served to students. All of these relief efforts come with a cost, and our two school districts have estimated over \$600 million in COVID-19 response unanticipated costs that were not budgeted in our current budgets.

We urge Congress to include the following investments in any future legislative effort to move our country toward economic recovery while ensuring the needs of our most vulnerable students and families are met.

Education Stabilization Fund

The next emergency COVID-19 response must include substantial financial support directly to school districts to bolster districts' budgets and stimulate the economy in the short term. In the long-term, additional funds will be needed beyond any immediate, short-term investments from Congress to stabilize public school funding and to address the full impact of an economic recession. ***We request Congress provide an additional allocation of \$175 billion distributed to school districts through the Title I formula***

as K-12 discretionary funding to cover the additional costs incurred to address the digital divide, to distribute meals to both children and adults, and summer school, among other unforeseen issues.

Federal Categorical Programs

1. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*

In order to continue to provide a high-quality education at home with accessible instructional materials and critical related services to meet individual student needs, additional funding for IDEA is essential. ***We urge Congress to provide \$13 billion to augment existing IDEA funding.***

2. *Title I*

Many of our most vulnerable students – those living in poverty, in the foster care system or those whose families are experiencing homelessness – struggle to attend school in ordinary circumstances and their lives have been made more difficult by this crisis. While we are working hard to reach and serve them, additional funding is needed to support the COVID-19 response, including providing summer instruction to bridge students’ academic needs. ***We urge Congress to provide \$12 billion in additional funding for Title I.***

3. *Title IV-A Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Program*

Funds from the SSAE grant program can be leveraged to support districts’ efforts, including activities to address the social, emotional and academic needs of students. ***We urge Congress to increase funding for SSAE to help provide the necessary supports and to strengthen the quality of distance learning.***

4. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*

Education for workers’ literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to help upskill and reskill for in-demand jobs will be critical to address continued disruptions and permanent shifts to the labor market due to the pandemic. ***We urge Congress to provide \$1 billion in WIOA Title II to allow adult schools to provide the necessary resources for workers and employers.***

National School Nutrition Program

Since a school district’s School Nutrition Program generates revenues based on meals served and we are serving fewer meals than normal during the school closures, our revenues will not be sufficient to cover our payroll and benefit costs for the current year. ***We urge Congress to provide \$2.6 billion to mitigate a portion of the estimated financial loss that school nutrition programs have and will continue to experience and we further request Congress allow districts be reimbursed for meals served to adults to ensure the neediest families have access to a healthy, nutritious meal during this pandemic.***

E-Rate

Without access to the internet or a device at home, students are unable to learn online with their peers thus, creating more inequity among our low-income population. ***We urge Congress to provide \$2 billion in financial support specifically dedicated to expanding home internet access and waive relevant E-rate program rules in order to allow all students to have adequate home internet connectivity while their schools are closed, ensuring that no child falls behind in their education.***

Infrastructure

School buildings must be safe, up-to date, and have spaces that facilitate teaching and learning for students with various needs. School construction also supports job creation and major industries that produce the equipment, fixtures, furniture, and materials for constructing and modernizing school facilities. For every

\$1 billion dollars invested in school construction nearly 18,000 direct and indirect jobs are created. *We strongly urge that any federal infrastructure package include funding for school construction assistance.*

Los Angeles Unified and San Diego Unified are determined to serve the needs of all students, however, there must be equitable and sufficient resources for us to achieve this goal. In fact, a recent letter from Governor Newsom to Speaker Pelosi identified the need for hundreds of billions of dollars to stabilize public school funding in a time of crisis. Increasing federal funding for public education would indicate that Congress is serious in supporting and investing in our most vulnerable students and families.

Thank you for your continued leadership. We appreciate your attention to these critical education priorities.



Austin Beutner
Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District



Cindy Marten
Superintendent
San Diego Unified School District

cc: Los Angeles Congressional Delegation
San Diego Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Kamala Harris
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chairman, Education & Labor Committee
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, Education & Labor Committee
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chairwoman, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee