



March 19, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Pelosi:

As district and state education leaders from across the United States, we are on the front lines of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic, working to protect our school communities, meet students' basic needs, disseminate critical health information, and provide academic instruction all while responding to breaking developments in real time. **Through our bipartisan network, [Chiefs for Change](#), we implore you: Make K-12 schools a centerpiece of the federal trillion-dollar economic stimulus package.**

As of today, 41 states have shut down schools. At least 95,000 schools are closed, affecting nearly 44 million students.

Schools are the heart of our communities. They are the trusted lifeline for millions of families, providing essential updates on public health and emergency measures as well as connections to crucial social services and local resources. It is unclear how long schools will remain closed, but they must continue to be a stabilizing force until this crisis is over.

Education is the foundation of our society. It is the most important investment we can make in the long-term economic health of our nation and in the collective security and wellbeing of our people. Learning cannot stop. We cannot allow this unprecedented challenge to create a lost generation of students—and we must ensure our most vulnerable children continue to receive the vital supports they need.

Given the importance of schools in families' daily lives and how education shapes our shared future, any stimulus package must contain funding for K-12 systems that is truly flexible and proportionate to the extraordinary demands of this challenge. Specific needs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Technology so learning can continue and critical health information can be shared.** This involves a massive expansion of WiFi and broadband access as well as hardware and software for students and schools, including devices, personal hotspots, and online learning programs.
- **Additional staff, counseling, and other services, including wellness checks, to meet students' extensive and varied health needs resulting from and exacerbated by the crisis.**

- **Resources to begin planning and implementing robust summer school programs or other extended learning time opportunities for students who need them in the coming months.** Support should include, where appropriate, funding and flexibility that allow systems to prolong the school year or start the next school year early.
- **Bridge programs to get graduating students back on track for college and careers.** These initiatives, at community colleges and public universities, would help incoming freshmen get up to speed so they are prepared for their college coursework.

**States and districts must have the resources that are necessary to serve all students impacted by COVID-19, especially the most vulnerable students,** including children with disabilities, English learners, students from low-income families, immigrant students, and those experiencing homelessness. Systems must provide assurances that they are, to the best of their ability and capacity, serving *all* children.

We applaud Congress for approving the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* this week, which will provide flexibility for school meal programs, expanded coverage of testing for COVID-19, and tax credits and protections for families who must care for children during school closure. This is an important start—but much, much more is needed.

In this national emergency, at this pivotal moment, we urge Congress to pass—with overwhelming bipartisan support—an economic stimulus with significant resources dedicated to K-12 systems so we can protect students and families today and preserve America for tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Chiefs for Change