

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, representing more than 10,000 public school superintendents, we are reaching out to encourage you to swiftly complete Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) and prioritize investment in our nation's public schools. School districts are beginning the necessary budget planning process for the next school year and the uncertainty regarding FY25 funding is creating a sense of paralysis for district leaders who have to submit their own budgets to the State on time.

Across the country, school district leaders and staff are working to understand and navigate federal policy changes as they continue to face the challenges of chronic absenteeism and staff shortages and working to support academic recovery and provide critical mental health resources to students. School districts remain focused on their mission to ensure every student in their schools receives a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in whatever path they choose but to do this critical work it is paramount that school districts can rely on continued robust federal investments.

It has long been AASA's preference for annual appropriations to be completed through the standard process, but we recognize the many competing demands before Congress at this time and understand the potential necessity to move forward with a full-year continuing resolution. Whichever pathway is chosen we urge you to protect key investments in education. Specifically, we call on Congress to prioritize these formula programs:

- IDEA Part B: Congress has never honored its commitment to fund 40 percent of the additional cost associated with educating students with disabilities. School districts use IDEA funds for various pivotal investments to support students including personnel, specialized equipment and technology, etc. Any reduction of the federal investment in this program would be a shameful step backward in providing critical supports for students with disabilities and harm district efforts to ensure they receive a high-quality education, especially in the year where the landmark legislation turns 50.

- Title I, Part A of ESEA: Title I, Part A is the backbone of the premier federal K-12 education law. The breadth and depth of Title I make it uniquely positioned for supporting districts in their work to support children—particularly those in poverty—in meeting challenging state academic content and achievement standards. Districts rely on Title I funds for critical supports like teachers, reading programs, and additional direct instructional services for students.
- Title II, Part A of ESEA: Decades of research has found that low-income and minority students are most likely to have inexperienced teachers. Title II, Part A closes these gaps by ensuring students have greater access to high-quality, effective educators. Title II, Part A provides necessary resources to grow the skills and expertise of current teachers and provide important induction and mentoring programs for new educators that keep them in the classroom.
- Title IV, Part A: Title IV, Part A is a flexible program that supports investments in safe and healthy students, well-rounded education programs, and the effective use of technology in education. The flexibility of the program allows district leaders to target funding based on the specific needs of their school community. Title IV-A funding has long been the funding stream for many of the activities districts have been using ESSER dollars to support, like behavioral and mental health supports. Increased funding for Title IV-A is especially critical for FY25 as ESSER funds run out and districts look to continue these critical programs.
- Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP): REAP is a cornerstone program for addressing the unique needs of our nation’s rural schools, which serve more than 9 million students. Every year, almost half of all school districts in the country utilize REAP funding to make key investments for their students, including (but not limited to) providing additional staff compensation, investing in education technology and expanding curricular offerings. Investments in REAP ensure that small and low-income rural districts are able to provide equitable educational opportunities to their students.

Federal education funding is forward funded to provide schools with foresight into the following school year’s budget, so they can plan appropriately. However, this mechanism is less helpful if appropriations remain incomplete halfway through the fiscal year. We urge you to work expeditiously to complete the FY25 appropriations work, providing districts with timely information so they can complete their budget and funding levels that support critical resources for education. We stand ready to assist you to ensure that K-12 education remains a priority for FY26 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Tara Thomas  
Government Affairs Manager  
AASA, The School Superintendents Association