



The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Resources,  
Education and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Resources,  
Education and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Resources, Education and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member, Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Resources, Education and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

Dear Members of Congress,

As you develop the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, we – the undersigned organizations below - write to urge you to protect investments in education and highlight the critical federal formula programs that are the backbone of our nation’s educational system.

As the professional organizations representing the nation’s public school superintendents, rural educators, education service agencies, and school business officials, who serve as stewards of local education dollars, we are deeply familiar with the pressures you face when allocating limited fiscal resources. This year, we acknowledge the competing demands you have of ensuring spending thresholds honor the bipartisan spending caps, while at the same time holding true to the important work of protecting education investment. As you move forward with final appropriations funding levels, we strongly support the prioritization of the following federal investments:

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 are able to 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.

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 services, 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<sup>i</sup>. 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<sup>ii</sup> 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.

Education funding must remain a top priority for federal government funding in 2025, and we encourage you to advance a final FY2025 appropriations package that reflects our requests above. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Association of Educational Service Agencies  
Association of School Business Officials, International  
National Rural Education Association

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<sup>i</sup> Adamson, Frank and Darling-Hammond, Linda. "Addressing the Inequitable Distribution of Teachers: What It will Take to Get Qualified, Effective Teachers in All Communities". (2011). Accessed April 2024: <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/addressing-inequitable-distribution-teachers-what-it-will-take-get-qualified-effective-teachers-all-1.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> 2022 Department of Education data shows that 6, 217 districts participated in REAP. NCES data for Fall 2022 shows 13,318 regular school districts: [https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press\\_releases/2\\_05\\_2024.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/2_05_2024.asp)