February 23, 2021

Representative Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As we mark one year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the extraordinary changes our
members and the schools and students they serve have had to navigate as a consequence, we writ we Tc 0 -
e86 (w)1.13v (h)2.4 e6nex -1.224 Td
of the
pandemic, our members addressed the daunting tasks of pivoting to remote and hybrid learning,
working to ensure staff and students were safe, and providing students access to school meals. The
confluence of these efforts came with significant fiscal impact and during a time when many state and
local governments were seeing reduced revenues due to the broader economic slowdown.

The federal supports provided to schools through the CARES Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act of
2021 (CAA) provide a strong step toward the important work of getting and keeping schools open for in-person instruction in a manner safe for students and staff. We have heard from our members across the
country, and they have already been able to put CARES funding to use in the following ways:
• Ensuring students can access meals, even when schools are closed.
• Helping schools obtain and distribute technology—d�x Obtaining mitigation-related items, including personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID tests,
cleaning/sanitation supplies, room dividers, and more.
• Paying salaries associated with increased custodial/janitorial staffing needs.

Funding from the CAA is just starting to reach school districts. Initial reporting indicates school districts
will use the funds to expand and sustain the investments they made with CARES Act funding through
this academic year and into the summer. Many are also planning to use this funding to partially address
learning loss and academic recovery efforts.

We are aware of the inaccurate notion that schools are not in need of additional funding because of the
reported ‘spend’ rate of federal funding to date. In conversations with our respective memberships,
they report that while the ‘spend rate’ may seem quite low to those unfamiliar with state and district
school financial procedures and requirements, they have budgeted for every dollar they are scheduled
to receive from the COVID relief bills and are still anticipating more significant costs they will be unable
to meet without additional federal funds. This anecdotal information is supported by research from
Education Resource Strategies, which estimates that to address the requisite social-emotional and
academic needs of children over the next five years, districts on average will need to increase their
educational spending by 21% each year when compared to their current expenditures. In light of

anticipated declines in state spending on education, local funding can by no means increase and sustain
spending more than
 20% for the next five years without a major infusion of federal funding.

As the pandemic wears on, schools continue to deliver education in virtual and in
-person settings. States
and school districts are expending significant resources to protect students and educators as state and
local revenues continue to decline precipitously.

 School districts remain committed to working diligently
to re
-open and stay open for in
-person instruction where public health guidelines allow. Educators
continue to strive to deliver a high
-quality education to students across all grades. They are putting their
health at ris