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Solutions: Ensuring Every Student Has Caring, Qualified & Committed Educators

All students need caring, qualified and committed educators in their public schools. Unfortunately, the nation is in the midst of an unprecedented school staffing crisis across every job category that needs to be addressed immediately, both in the short and the long term.

State legislatures, state education departments, and local school districts must face this challenge head on. They have a tremendous opportunity in front of them to work with education employees, their unions and parents to find long-term viable solutions that will help attract and retain a quality workforce in our nation's public schools to ensure student success. These solutions must include educator voices through collective bargaining where it exists and advocated through labor management collaboration where bargaining is prohibited.

Opportunity: Ensure Competitive Pay and Benefits

- Increase base pay for **all** employees to eliminate the wage gap between teachers and comparable professionals and ensure a living wage for all education support professionals.
- Raise substitute pay and provide substitutes with benefits and options for full-time work.
- Reduce the time it takes to reach career-level pay.

Recent Examples of Success

- In **California**, a strong state budget and a \$15 billion infusion of federal funds has increased wage settlements across the state. For example:
 - Los Angeles (UTLA) negotiated a 5% raise and bonuses for 2021-22
 - San Diego negotiated a 4% across-the-board increase for 2021-22
- In **Maryland**, legislation passed to boost starting salaries to \$60K by FY 26. This will significantly help in recruiting and retaining educators. The average teacher salary in Maryland rose by 4.2 percent between 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- **Colorado**- Recent increases in teacher salaries have been fueled by increased educator activism, including large school walkouts along with local bargaining strikes in places like Denver, Pueblo, and South Park. The statewide average salary increased 5% from 2018-19 to 2019-20.
- **Iowa City** hired full-time substitutes for each building, with large schools assigned two substitutes. Substitutes also received a higher rate of pay and now receive benefits.

Opportunity: Improve Working Conditions

- Immediately implement all necessary safety and health measures in schools to protect students and staff
- Provide emergency sick leave for COVID related absences.
- Provide paid health benefits and paid family leave for all staff
- Address staff mental health and burnout
- Increase staffing levels so educators can connect with students one-on-one
- Modernize school buildings and fix broken infrastructure

Recent Examples of Success

- **Columbus Ohio**-The Columbus Education Association collectively bargained to require the district to allocate ESSER funds to hire 33 additional counselors and 88 literacy specialists
- **Iowa City** is hiring full-time substitute teachers for each building. Now they receive higher pay AND benefits
- **Tennessee**- Shelby Co. School district in Tennessee used ESSER Funds to hire 250 K-12 specialized education assistants
- **Delaware** passed HB 100 which provides funding to hire 250 full-time mental health professionals in their elementary schools
- **Montgomery County Maryland** negotiated 80 hours of emergency leave COVID leave for vaccinated unit members and 80 hours of leave to care for a family member.
- **Illinois**— The Eldorado Education Association and local District 4 School Board agreed to provide teachers additional paid time off to recover if they contract CoViD-19. The agreement is similar to the School Employees Benefit and Wage Protection Bill (HB 2778) which passed with strong bipartisan support in November. Unfortunately, Governor Pritzker has said he will veto the bill which would require school districts to pay employees for as many days as they need to recover from COVID-19 or quarantine away from work according to the public health guidelines. The bill also provides full paycheck protection for hourly employees, who would still receive their paychecks if a school or higher education institution has to close because of a COVID emergency.
- **Fix Broken Infrastructure**-Lack of technology and Wi-Fi, combined with the inability of parents to supervise because they are required to work outside the home, includes the need for alternate and additional support for students outside of regular class time and creates challenges for educators in locating students who have not participated in class.

Opportunity: Remove Barriers NOT Standards

- Implement the Education Assistance Fund in all districts (Tax free employer student loan payments up to \$5200 per year)
- Fully fund Teacher Residency Programs
- Create and Fund Grow Your Own Programs
- Create paid Apprenticeship Programs for teacher and education support professionals
- Provide quality professional development opportunities
- Change district hiring practices

Recent Examples of Success

- **Minneapolis** Special Education Teaching Residency Program (MSTR), which combines an affordable, accelerated Master's degree program at the St. Paul University with a year-long co-teaching experience in a MPS classroom. This program aims to recruit, prepare and retain highly qualified teachers who share similar life experiences as the students who attend MPS.
- **Alaska**, Napakiak (na pak "e" ak), Alaska -- T.E.A.C.H. program (Training Educators for Achieving Certificated Hire). This Grow Your Own program assists candidates from the district who are fluent or literate in Yugtun (Yuptin), the language spoken by Central Alaskan Natives, in becoming certified teachers in partnership with the University of Alaska Fairbanks Kuskowkwim (Kus ka kwim) campus.
- **Tennessee** is the first state to be approved by the U.S. Department of Labor to establish the first every Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship program with Clarksville-Montgomery County School System and Austin Peay State University. This program is supported by TEA and NEA.
- **Iowa** announced the launch of the first-in-the-nation's Teacher and Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship Grant program. The Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Workforce Development Agency will use \$9M of the ARP ESSER funds to create the program which will train high school students and paraeducators for the next step in their teaching careers.

Opportunity: Increased Financial Support and Sustainable Education Funding

Federal Emergency Funds can and should be used to ease the educator shortage. These funds should increase base pay for all employees and when those funds are gone, states should continue to fund those increases with state funds, including rainy day funds. Fully funding education is an effective economic development strategy.

Fact about Education Investment and Economic Outcomes

- When Education funding is increased, personal income goes up, while crime and poverty rates decline.
- Cutting Education funding results in higher crime rates, higher poverty rates, and a decrease in personal income.
- Increased funding for Education is shown to result in higher graduation rates and higher wages.

Recent Examples of Success

- **Minnesota and the Surplus**
A recent study for Minnesota showed a direct link between the tax revenue surplus created by the CARE's and ARPA's stimulus (over \$7.7 billion) and the economic result of investing half of it half (roughly \$1.6 billion per year) were applied to education salaries.
 - Total employment would rise to over 30,000 jobs within the first year across the state.
 - There would be a population increase of over 15,000.
 - Gross Domestic Product would rise by \$2 billion within the first year.
 - Personal income would rise over \$2.36 billion within the first year