



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

November 18, 2022

United States Congress  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, who teach, support, and nurture students in communities across our nation, we urge you to support the following investments and legislative priorities before the conclusion of the current session of Congress. Votes on these issues may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

We ask that you support these priorities in the Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations process to secure the largest possible investments to support student learning, address the educator shortage, strengthen public schools, and tackle other crucial issues.

#### **COVID**

- We support President Biden's request for \$9 billion in funding for expanding access to COVID vaccines, developing next-generation vaccines, and researching long COVID.

#### **EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE**

- \$6.17 billion for the **Child Care and Development Block Grant**. This would expand the base CCDBG budget to support states in making targeted investments in their child care systems aligned with longer-term needs, grant subsidies to more families, support the child care workforce, and increase access and supply.
- An additional \$4.4 billion for Head Start, raising total funding to \$15.4 billion. This would expand Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, increase compensation for workers, provide flexibility to meet local needs, help develop effective and appropriate staff for American Indian/Alaska Native programs, and address other issues.

#### **EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

- An additional \$1 billion for the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) to ensure that the 15 million students who benefit from the program are not disconnected from their schools, teachers, and classmates. The Federal Communications Commission received more than \$2.8 billion in requests for ECF funds in its most recent application window; the additional funding would allow FCC to fund all valid applications.

#### **FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

- \$468 million for the Full Service Community Schools program to help communities, including those in rural areas, families, and schools recover from the pandemic. The funding would expand services to meet students' academic, social, and developmental needs, accelerate student learning, and help close opportunity gaps that the pandemic exacerbated.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

- \$4 billion for higher education programs, including \$1.1 billion for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority Serving Institutions, as well as \$132 million for Teacher Quality Partnerships, nearly double the current amount.
- \$2.14 billion for Title II effective state instruction grants, funding that is essential to address the educator shortage.

## IDEA

- A \$3-billion increase (\$16.3 billion total) for IDEA state grants, increasing the federal share of the program from 13 percent to 15 percent, which would return the federal share to its 2013 level. While still below the 40 percent share promised by the federal government, the increase would provide services for 7.4 million students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12.

## MENTAL HEALTH

- \$1 billion to address mental health issues among students and educators, worsened by the pandemic.
- \$514 million for the Education Innovation and Research program.

## PERKINS CTE

- \$1.58 billion for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act's formula state grants—a \$200 million increase—to ensure that secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners have equitable access to high-quality CTE opportunities and that states and districts can cover costs specific to CTE, including acquisition of industry-standard equipment.

## TITLE I

- An additional \$3 billion (\$20.5 billion total) for Title I discretionary programs, a 23-percent increase that would take a major step toward fulfilling President Biden's pledge to triple Title I funding.

In addition, we urge you to take action during the final weeks of 2022 to raise the debt ceiling so that history does not repeat itself in 2023, with some lawmakers threatening to crash the economy and damage America's full faith and credit unless funding for Medicare, Social Security, and education is cut.

We also ask you to address the following priorities in any must-pass legislation that moves in the lame duck:

## CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION

- Finalize child nutrition reauthorization in order to help students stay well-nourished and ready to learn. NEA supports the **Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act (H.R. 8450)**, the child nutrition reauthorization passed earlier this year by the House Education and Labor Committee. In particular, prioritize:
  - The **Community Eligibility Provision** to enable schools with significant need to serve free school meals to all students. This is crucial given the expiration of the temporary waivers that provided flexibility for school meal distribution and made school meals free for all students.

- **Professional development and training** for school food service professionals at no cost to them, during regular, paid working hours.

## **IMMIGRATION**

- Pass permanent protections for immigrants, especially those currently protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

## **JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS**

- Continue the swift confirmation process for all of President Biden’s nominees to the federal judiciary—the most experientially and demographically diverse in our history—who are or will be pending action by the full Senate before the end of this Congress.

## **STUDENT LOAN DEBT**

- Pass the **Teacher Debt Relief Act (H.R.6898)**, which allows teachers to enroll in both Teacher Loan Forgiveness and Public Service Loan Forgiveness programs concurrently.
- Pass the **PSLF Payment Completion Act (H.R.7465)** to remove the needless and burdensome provision in the law that requires a PSLF applicant to be employed in a public service job at the time of loan forgiveness.

## **TAX POLICY**

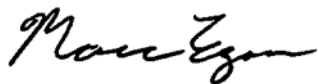
- Expand the **Child Tax Credit (CTC)**, which [lifted nearly 4 million children out of poverty in 2021](#). The expanded CTC payments were included in the American Rescue Plan but reverted to previous payment levels in 2022. Permanent expansion will make approximately 19 million children in the lowest-income families eligible for the full CTC.

## **WORKERS’ RIGHTS AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

- Pass the **Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R.5727)** to allow all public service workers to form a union and bargain collectively.
- Pass the **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (S.1486)** to create a uniform national standard for reasonable accommodations in the workplace for pregnant workers.

NEA educators appreciate your willingness to consider these priorities; addressing them will help our nation provide students with the tools and resources they deserve, better equip schools to meet students’ needs and challenges, and uplift struggling families. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association