

May 20, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

**Appropriations Request:
\$20 Million for Statewide Family Engagement Centers**

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

The 68 undersigned national and state organizations respectfully request no less than \$20 million in funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) grant program in the FY 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (L-HHS-ED) appropriations bill.

The SFEC program provides much-needed technical assistance and partnership development to states and school districts to foster meaningful engagement with families to further their children's academic and developmental progress. While SFECs work with all parents and schools throughout their state, many focus on students of color, English learners, and recent immigrant children working to integrate into their new communities. Additionally, SFECs provide direct services to families to give them the tools to effectively work with their child's school to improve their child's academic outcomes and overall well-being. For States that presently have SFECs the program has enabled many parents and school systems alike to navigate remote learning during the pandemic and the return to in-person instruction.

Research shows that family engagement advances the academic and developmental progress of our nation's children and drives increases in student achievement.¹ The success of SFECs has

¹ See "Parent, Family, and Community Involvement in Education." National Education Association. 2008. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.204.7661&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. See also Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on

been well documented,² and they have served as vital resources for families during the COVID-19 pandemic.³ Our organizations believe that an investment in SFECs is critical to ensuring that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in their child's education so they can support our nation's students in becoming fully prepared for higher education and careers.

The funding Congress allocated to the SFEC Program in FY21 was only enough to support family engagement in 13 states: Arizona, Connecticut, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. Funding is still needed to not only sustain the great work already underway, but also to expand the program to ensure that *all* families across the country – including families in your state – have access to this program in the coming years.

Historically family engagement has always been, and will continue to be, a strong bipartisan issue. Leaders of recent Dear Colleague letters supporting robust funding for the SFEC program include Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Representative Glenn 'GT' Thompson (R-PA), Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC). Several colleagues from both sides of the aisle have continuously affirmed their support for an increase of funding for SFECs on the behalf of their constituents. More than ever, continued bipartisan support for the program is needed to help reverse the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen family engagement in schools.

For the reasons above, we respectfully request at least \$20 million in funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers grant program in the FY 2023 L-HHS-ED appropriations bill, a desperately needed increase from the \$15 million allocated to the program in FY22. Thank you again for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you to support this important program.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Afterschool Alliance

BellXcel

Council for Exceptional Children

Council of Administrators of Special Education

EDGE Consulting Partners

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

Student Achievement." National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. 2002.

<https://sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>.

² See "Catalyzing Family, School, and Community Partnerships: A Review of the Work of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers." National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE). 2021.

<https://nafsce.org/page/sfcreport>.

³ See "Statewide Family Engagement Centers making strategic, widespread impact amid pandemic." National Center for Families Learning. 2020. <https://www.familieslearning.org/blog/sfec-impact-pandemic>.

Learning Heroes

National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Families Learning
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Military Family Association
National PTA
PACER Center
Parents as Teachers
SchoolHouse Connection
The Advocacy Institute

State Organizations

Alabama PTA
Alaska Parent Teacher Association
Arizona PTA
California State PTA
Colorado PTA
Connecticut PTA
Delaware PTA
European PTA
F I R S T
Florida PTA
Georgia PTA
Hawaii Congress of Parents, Teachers, and Students Association
Illinois PTA
Louisiana PTA
Maine Parent Teacher Association
Massachusetts PTA
Michigan Alliance for Families
Michigan PTA
Minnesota PTA
Mississippi PTA
Missouri PTA
MT State PTA

New Jersey PTA
New Mexico PTA
New York State PTA
NH PTA
North Dakota PTA
Ohio PTA
Oklahoma PTA
Oregon PTA
Parent Network of WNY
PEAK Parent Center
Pennsylvania PTA
Pyramid CPRC
Rhode Island PTA
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)
South Carolina PTA
South Dakota State PTA
Tennessee PTA
Texas PTA
Vermont PTA
Virginia PTA
Washington State PTA
Wisconsin PTA
WV PTA