



April 5, 2019

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Lowey and DeLauro and Ranking Members Frelinghuysen and Cole:

On behalf of chief state school officers across the country, I am writing to convey states' priorities for K-12 education in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations cycle. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues.

State education leaders remain committed to creating a more equitable education system for every child. CCSSO released *Leading for Equity*, a set of ten actions states are committed to taking to improve educational equity in their states. Across these commitments, states demonstrate how they can better align federal, state, and local resources to advance equity for all students. Funding is a critical component, though not the only component, and state chiefs see the funding they receive from through the federal budget as a significant resource to improve educational outcomes.

For these reasons, we were pleased when Congress passed a bipartisan FY2019 funding bill. This legislation provided modest but critical funding increases for major K-12 education programs, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As states implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015, federal funding is as critical as ever to ensure states can implement state plans aligned with ESSA with fidelity in and in keeping with the law. This is also true as states embark on implementing the recently reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE).

As stewards of limited resources, state chiefs recognize that every taxpayer dollar is precious and must be administered efficiently and effectively to better meet the needs of all students. As states move to implement ESSA, CTE and other federal programs, they are also working to improve state and local stewardship over limited federal funds to ensure maximum impact to improve student achievement, particularly for disadvantaged or traditionally underserved students, as well as children with disabilities and others with special needs. Chiefs also know and are eager to demonstrate the positive returns the federal government – and our country as a whole – can reap when investing in the next generation.

CCSSO and our members look forward to working with Congress to ensure that FY 2020 appropriations provides the resources needed to improve outcomes for all children in every state. State chiefs emphasize the following K-12 funding priorities:

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

1. Increase funding for ESEA Title I, Part A

Title I, Part A of ESEA is at the core of the federal-state partnership in K-12 education. As reauthorized by ESSA, Title I-A provides increased flexibility for states, while also calling on states to develop and implement new accountability and school improvement systems to support academic excellence and reduce achievement gaps. State chiefs have committed to creating a more equitable education system for all students, and this is the continued goal and purpose of Title I federal funding. During school year 2020-2021, when states and school districts will be receiving FY 2020 funding, they will be working to increase achievement and improve student outcomes in schools that have been identified for support and improvement through new state accountability systems. It is essential that states and their districts have the resources needed to bring those efforts to fruition. To support state leaders in meeting the educational needs of all students, we urge Congress to fund this critical program at the authorized level of \$16,182,345,000 in FY 2020.

2. Provide Authorized Funding for ESEA State Assessment Grants

ESEA, as reauthorized by ESSA, continues to require that States administer annual assessments in specified grades in reading or language arts, in mathematics, and in science. These assessments provide much of the framework for states' systems of school accountability; that is, they provide the information that states use to determine which schools are succeeding in educating all their students to high standards. Yet high-quality assessment can be resource-intensive, and states continue to rely on federal assistance in meeting this important requirement of the reauthorized statute.

Authorized under Title I of ESEA, State Assessment Grants support state efforts to develop and implement high-quality assessments to measure the academic achievement of all students. Under ESSA, states and school districts may also use these funds to audit assessment systems in order to



reduce unnecessary or duplicative assessments. State chiefs understand that states have an important role to play in monitoring equitable implementation of standards and assessments. According to the Brookings Institution, states spend an estimated \$1.7 billion on assessments each year, yet the federal program pays for \$378 million of that cost. State chiefs ask Congress to maintain State Assessment Grants at the full authorized level of \$378,000,000 to ensure that students are appropriately assessed and effective targeted instructional supports to improve academic achievement are identified.

3. Provide Authorized Funding for ESEA Title II, Part A, to Support Effective Instruction

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, every student is required to have a highly effective teacher. No longer can poor or minority students be disproportionately served by ineffective or out-of-field teachers. States have been working to address this critical issue both before and through ESSA plans. Title II, Part A funding is critical to support States and local districts in these efforts. We urge Congress to fund Title II, Part A funding at the full amount authorized under ESEA to reach these goals for every child.

Communities across the country use flexible Title II-A funds to develop the workforce they need to best serve the students who are the intended beneficiaries of ESEA. In New Mexico, for example, the state uses this funding to provide professional development and mentorship programs for teachers and principals in the state's lowest-performing schools. As a result, these schools have improved proficiency rates for their students in English Language Arts by 4.5 times the rate of statewide growth and 2.7 times the statewide growth rate in mathematics. Under ESSA, Nevada plans to use Title II-A funds to modernize its licensure requirements to incorporate meaningful professional growth and educator effectiveness and make improvements in the statewide evaluation system to ensure reliability, validity, fairness, consistency, and objectivity. Massachusetts will use this funding to review its school districts' use of Title II funds and make sure that professional development supports more effective educators, particularly those who serve students with disabilities, low-income students, and students of color.

These select examples of effective uses of and plans for Title II-A funding are just a sample of the efforts states are undertaking to support high-quality teaching and learning. Chiefs urge Congress to continue to support these federal-state partnerships by funding the program at the authorized level of \$2,295,830,000 to increase teacher effectiveness and support the use of proven strategies to improve learning outcomes.

4. Preserve Funding for ESEA Title III

English learners (ELs) are a growing population group across our states, and in recent years their enrollment has increased particularly in states where schools have little previous experience in serving them. Enabling ELs to achieve English language proficiency and achieve to high standards in the regular, English-speaking classroom, is one of the key responsibilities given to states by ESSA.



Under the reauthorized statute, states must set goals for ELs' attainment of English proficiency and they must incorporate a measure of progress toward that goal in their systems of school accountability. For this reason, school year 2019-2020 will be a critical time during which states test all ELs for proficiency, implement systems for improving educational programs for the EL population, and provide services and supports to schools that are not making sufficient progress in that area.

Title III of ESEA funds state and local programs in English language acquisition for EL and immigrant students. In order to ensure the success of states' efforts to improve outcomes for this high-need and growing population, we recommend that the Congress fund Title III at the authorized level of \$884,960,000 for Fiscal Year 2020.

5. Adequately Fund ESEA Title IV, Part A, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant

Title IV, Part A, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program, provides federal support for programs that support a well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and education technology. Newly authorized by ESSA, this program received its first appropriation of \$400 million in FY 2017, followed by an increase to \$1.1 billion and \$1.2 billion in FY 2018 and FY 2019 respectively.

In addition to using these funds to provide students with a well-rounded education, states have committed to ensuring student safety by focusing on school culture, climate, and social-emotional development. In order to keep students safe, state leaders recognize this work takes multiple approaches such as securing school facilities and a strong focus on how to deepen and strengthen communities. Title IV is particularly critical as states and local communities seek to improve school safety; it remains critically important that we support state and local leaders in providing safe, supportive school environments for all students, and we urge Congress to fund Title IV, Part A at the authorized level of \$1.6 billion.

6. Adequately Fund ESEA Title IV, Part B, 21st Century Community Learning Centers

One way in which state chiefs have worked to strengthen students' relationships with their communities is through afterschool programs. Chiefs urge Congress to adequately fund 21st Century Community Learning Centers so students have the supports they need outside of the classroom to ensure success in school and in life. This program provides students with activities to enhance their academic, social, and overall development during their out-of-school time. Approximately 1.9 million students benefit from these programs in schools, libraries, and communities across the country. Data show that students who participate in these programs miss fewer days of school, have fewer out-of-school suspensions, increase their chances of graduating, and are more likely to continue their education after high school. Congress should fund this



program at no less than \$1,211,673,000, the amount provided in FY 2019, to ensure that low-income students may access the out-of-school time supports they need to succeed.

7. Support Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems

For many years, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) funding has helped state education agencies provide state leaders, district administrators, educators, and the education community with high-quality data on student achievement and other student outcomes and on school performance. States use these funds to create more efficient and effective data systems, including new ESSA requirements such as reporting on homeless, foster, and military-connected youth, and per-pupil expenditure at the school level. For example, one state used SLDS grants to streamline the data collection process that school districts must navigate annually, thereby reducing administrative burden. Through automation this state has saved over \$500,000 annually on a single data collection requirement. These savings are driven into more important services locally, such as teaching and learning activities. Meanwhile, another state used an SLDS grant to develop and implement a custom technology tool to provide educators with near real-time data to help inform instruction. Chiefs urge Congress to build on these and similar successes by funding this program at least at the FY 2019 level of \$32,281,000.

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

8. Adequately Fund the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

States are leading efforts to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enroll in postsecondary education or enter the workforce with industry-recognized certifications or credentials that can lead them to a well-paying career. In partnership with JPMorgan Chase, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group, CCSO is leading the New Skills for Youth Initiative and working with states to increase the number of students who graduate prepared to compete in an evolving job market. To support state leaders as they implement the recently passed Perkins Act and produce graduates who are both college- and career-ready and ensure all students have access to pathways that prepare them for the workplace of tomorrow, chiefs urge Congress to appropriate at least \$1,262,598,000 for the Perkins Career and Technical Education State Grants program, consistent with FY 2019 funding levels and the President's proposed budget.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

9. Invest in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA, Part B supports state and local programs for students with special needs, including support for special education teachers, related service providers, and professional development. IDEA funding can also be used to provide more comprehensive supports that benefit all students, such as implementing a universal design for learning curriculum, planning and implementing new learning



environments to support all learners in an inclusive setting, or purchasing curriculum-based screening and progress monitoring instruments. While ideally the federal government would meet the statutory objective of funding 40 percent of the additional costs of educating students with disabilities, we understand that even with higher spending caps this is a challenging goal under current circumstances. In the FY 2019 funding bill, Congress appropriated \$12.3 billion for IDEA, a significant increase over previous years, but still far short of the federal commitment. Therefore, chiefs ask Congress to increase the federal government's share of the excess costs of special education services to about 15%, or \$12,850,000,000 for IDEA in order to strengthen services for our students with disabilities. This would represent a down payment on the federal commitment to fund 40% of costs incurred under IDEA.

Thank you for considering the appropriations priorities of chief state school officers and the students they serve. As states move to advance equity in the public education system and implement the Every Student Succeeds Act and other key federal and state programs aligned with this vision, it is imperative that the federal government remain a key partner in supporting the work underway in states to provide the necessary resources to meet the needs of all students, particularly students with disabilities, students from low-income families, English learners, and other students who have been traditionally underserved by our education system.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that Congress supports educators and students with adequate resources in Fiscal Year 2020.

Sincerely,



Carissa Moffat Miller
Executive Director

cc: Chairman Bobby Scott, House Committee on Education and Labor
Ranking Member Virginia Foxx, House Committee on Education and Labor