

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Capitol, S-230, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-232, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Capitol, S-221, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-204, Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators McConnell and Schumer & Representatives Pelosi and McCarthy:

On behalf of the *Reimagine, Represent* Teacher Diversity Coalition and additional undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for including at least \$250 billion in additional stimulus funds for education, with a minimum of \$175 billion dedicated to state stabilization funds for elementary and secondary schools; \$25 billion in dedicated funds to Title I of ESEA; and \$50 billion for Institutions of Higher Education with \$15 million dedicated to teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions in any future COVID-19 stimulus package.

While it is difficult to think beyond the most immediate needs for students, teachers, and families during this tumultuous time, it is critical that as Congress explores the next several rounds of stimulus legislation, it plans for the long-term impact that learning disruptions will have on students and teachers nationwide. Funding from the CARES Act will go a long way toward meeting emergency needs, but further funds must be available for states to begin long-term recovery efforts now. Within any future education stabilization fund, we believe there are key areas that will require dedicated funding in order to limit the impact on our nation's most vulnerable students and ensure progress to improve the quality and diversity of our nation's teaching workforce continues. These include support for new teachers entering in the next school year, funds to support student mental health and well-being, incentives to expand learning time for students, and support for teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions.

We have already seen the clear and devastating disparities that COVID-19 has had in our communities of color. Black communities are more likely to experience high rates of coronavirus infection, and Black Americans are more likely to die after being exposed.¹ Black and Latinx Americans have also been disproportionately likely to lose their jobs during this time.² These numbers are not an accident nor a coincidence, but a reflection of our nation's history of racism and oppression, which have led to inequities across sectors of society, including education, leaving millions of students of color and low-income students without access to the resources and experiences needed to pursue their aspirations and live healthy, prosperous lives.

As a coalition of organizations working to strengthen diversity in the teacher workforce, we are gravely concerned that these same racial disparities are already playing out in our education response. Across the nation, early evidence suggests that school closures are disproportionately hurting students of color and students living in poverty, who are already less likely to attend well-resourced schools, and less likely to have additional resources like technology, internet access, and books to support independent learning at home.³

¹ Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2020, April 20). Coronavirus in African Americans and Other People of Color. Retrieved April 28, 2020, from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities>

² The Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020, April 3). *News Release: The Employment Situation--March 2020* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empisit.pdf>

³ EdBuild. (2019). *23 Billion*. Retrieved from <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion/full-report.pdf>

Perrin, A., & Turner, E. (2019, August 20). Smartphones help blacks, Hispanics bridge some—but not all—digital gaps with whites. Retrieved April 24, 2020, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/20/smartphones-help-blacks-hispanics-bridge-some-but-not-all-digital-gaps-with-whites/>;

We share similar concerns about the long-term vitality of our teacher workforce, particularly teachers of color, who are more likely to serve in our highest-need schools.⁴ Schools serving children living in poverty are often already at a financial disadvantage,⁵ and are disproportionately likely to face budget shortfalls and staff layoffs as a result of the current economic crisis.⁶ As students face historic learning loss and trauma, schools may have fewer resources than ever to help meet their needs. We are concerned that operating under such serious constraint will set teachers up for failure, potentially driving valued professionals out of our classrooms.

As districts around the country face the prospect of widespread layoffs, we are also troubled by evidence from the Great Recession suggesting that Black and Latinx teachers are at particular risk of losing their jobs during widespread layoffs.⁷ We are also concerned about the rising generation of future teachers of color, many of whom are facing interruptions to their teacher education, including the risk of dropping out of school due to financial hardship.⁸

Educators of color represent a vital sector of our educator workforce, and the benefits of students seeing their identities reflected in their classrooms range from the academic to the behavioral and even aspirational. Students of color who are taught by teachers of color increase their reading and math proficiency, graduate at higher rates, and are more likely to aspire to attend college.⁹ When students return to the classroom, it will be more important than ever to have an excellent and diverse group of educators to support them.

Dedicating \$250 billion in aid to K-12 and higher education will be a strong start to ensure our schools have the support that they need to recover and emerge stronger from this crisis. In order to ensure these funds support students who need them most, and bolster the diversity of the teacher workforce, Congress has an opportunity to dedicate funding toward the following areas:

1. **Funding Our Schools:** *Congress should allocate at least \$175 billion in state stabilization funds for elementary and secondary schools distributed using the Title I formula of ESSA, \$25 billion in dedicated funds to Title I of ESEA, and \$15 million to teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions. This should include a strong maintenance of effort requirement that ensures any reductions to state and local education funding do not disproportionately affect high-poverty local education agencies.*
2. **Maintaining a Strong Workforce:** As state budgets increasingly suffer the economic impact of this virus, budget cuts will likely force states and districts to lay off school staff. Based on evidence from the previous recession, there is reason to believe that without intervention, these layoffs will be

Neuman, S., & Moland, N. (2016). Book Deserts: The Consequences of Income Segregation on Children's Access to Print. *Urban Education*, 54(1), 126–147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916654525>

⁴ Ingersoll, R. and Merrill, E. (2017). A quarter century of changes in the elementary and secondary teaching force: from 1987 to 2012. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017092.pdf>

⁵ EdBuild. (2019). *23 Billion*. Retrieved from <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion/full-report.pdf>;

⁶ Knight, David S. "Are High-Poverty School Districts Disproportionately Impacted by State Funding Cuts?: School Finance Equity Following the Great Recession." *Journal of Education Finance* 43, no. 2 (2017): 169-194. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/688011>.

⁷ Knight, D. S., & Strunk, K. O. (2016). Who Bears the Costs of District Funding Cuts? Reducing Inequality in the Distribution of Teacher Layoffs. *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 395–406. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x16670899>;

Karp, S. (2015, September 2). Black Teachers Hit Harder By CPS Layoffs. Retrieved April 29, 2020, from <https://www.bettergov.org/news/black-teachers-hit-harder-by-cps-layoffs>

⁸ Will, M. (2020, March 25). Student-Teachers Caught in Middle by Shutdowns. Retrieved April 29, 2020, from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/03/25/student-teachers-caught-in-middle-by-shutdowns.html>;
Council of 1890 Universities. (2020, April 20). Letter to Congressional Leadership . Retrieved April 29, 2020, from <https://hbcudigest.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/4-20-20-1890s-Coronavirus-letter-to-Congressional-Leadership.pdf>

⁹ Carver-Thomas, D. (2019). *Teachers of Color: In High Demand and Short Supply*. Retrieved from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/diversifying-teaching-profession-report>

significant, and are likely to impact schools serving low-income students, Black and Latinx students most.¹⁰ *Congress should allow states to dedicate stabilization and Title I funds to prevent layoffs, and dedicate both stabilization funds and Title I funds to incentivize states and districts to maintain staffing in Title I schools. In order to support retention of a diverse and excellent teacher workforce, Congress should require that states use these funds to prevent layoffs and prioritize funding to maintain staffing in Title I schools. Further, it should allow districts to use a portion of these funds for specific practices that increase retention, including increasing support staff in Title I schools, providing incentives for teachers to teach in Title I schools, and developing teacher leadership roles in Title I schools.*

3. **Induction & Recruitment Support:** Districts planning for the school year ahead will likely face additional challenges as typical hiring channels like in-person career fairs and hiring fairs must go virtual and new processes will need to be developed. Similarly, new teachers (many of whom will have had their preparation interrupted by this crisis) will come into school environments marked by trauma and uncertainty, where they will be tasked with helping students recover from monumental learning loss. These teachers will need strong supports in order to succeed and remain over the long term. *Congress should provide dedicated funding through state stabilization funds to support LEAs to: 1) conduct hiring early and with an emphasis on implementation of emergent strategies to recruit an excellent and diverse cohort of new teachers¹¹ and 2) provide strong induction supports, such as mentoring and comprehensive early professional development, to incoming teachers.*
4. **Extended Learning Time:** When students return to school, they will need both additional resources and time to catch up, alongside appropriate time to account for and mitigate trauma they have experienced. Too often, when student learning is behind grade level, particularly in schools serving low-income students and students of color, educators are expected to remediate without additional time or meaningful supports. Experiencing high expectations with low support is a key reason that educators of color say they are likely to leave classrooms.¹² Forward-thinking districts are already working to extend learning time for summer 2020, but cost will prohibit others from following suit in the short and long term. *Establishing universal summer school, year-round school schedules, and/or extended day are three strategies to ensure educators have sufficient time to help students catch up. Congress must establish dedicated funding within both the state stabilization fund and Title I funds to support states and districts to adopt these measures.*
5. **Mental Health Supports:** There will undoubtedly be a long-term impact on student and teacher mental health in the wake of this crisis; indeed, recent survey results suggest that students already perceive gaps in support for their mental and emotional health during this crisis, and wish that adults could provide more.¹³ Now and when students return to school, both students and educators will need additional mental health support, and current staffing for counseling and school psychologist roles is already insufficient to meet student needs.¹⁴ *Congress must dedicate state stabilization funds to*

¹⁰ Knight, D. S., & Strunk, K. O. (2016). Who Bears the Costs of District Funding Cuts? Reducing Inequality in the Distribution of Teacher Layoffs. *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 395–406. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x16670899>

¹¹ Greenberg Motamedi, J., & Stevens, D. (2018). *Human Resources Practices for Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Teachers of Color*. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/human-resources-practices.pdf>

¹² The Education Trust, & Teach Plus. (2019). *If You Listen, We Will Stay: Why Teachers of Color Leave and How to Disrupt Teacher Turnover*. Retrieved from <https://edtrust.org/resource/if-you-listen-we-will-stay>

¹³ PDK International. (n.d.). COVID19-Resources. Retrieved April 17, 2020, from <https://pdkintl.org/COVID19-Resources/>

¹⁴ The American School Counselor Association. (2020, April 14). Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio 2018–2019. Retrieved April 29, 2020, from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a56b9aa017db276cd76b240/t/5e9663c6d3ddce144cdad0c2/1586914246609/Ratios18-19.pdf>; The National Association of School Psychologists. (2018, October 17). What is the Cost of Providing Students with Adequate Psychological Support. Retrieved April 29, 2020, from <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-matters-blog/what-is-the-cost-of-providing-students-with-adequate-psychological-support>.

support mental health response in schools, particularly to fund staffing and professional development. It should require that states that use these funds to prevent layoffs prioritize funding to maintain staffing for mental health roles (including counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and other mental health and social-emotional support staff) in Title I schools, and allow districts to use these funds for specific practices, such as professional development for trauma-informed instruction, that bolster student and adult mental health.

- 6. Supporting Minority-Serving Institutions:** The economic impact of COVID-19 is likely to influence enrollment in and persistence through our institutions of higher education, and there is likely to be a disproportionate impact of those attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other Minority-Serving Institutions. To ensure these teacher preparation programs, which educate nearly 40 percent of Black teachers and Latinx teachers in the U.S. respectively,¹⁵ are strengthened and supported, it is critical to target funding for these programs across the country. *Within any dedicated funding for Institutions of Higher Education, Congress must set aside at least \$15 million for teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions*

We envision a society that not only values and uplifts the teaching profession, but is committed to ensuring that each and every student is able to see him or herself reflected in his or her teachers. We see a country where students of color attend and complete college just as often as their White peers and have opportunities to be trained at high-quality teacher preparation programs that are committed to preparing them to be excellent educators who inspire their students to want to become teachers. Our response to this crisis will determine whether or not this vision comes true for a generation of students and educators.

The *Reimagine, Represent* Coalition and the undersigned organizations look forward to working with you on passing this legislation into law so that we can ensure a brighter and safer future for students in America. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your commitment to our nation's children, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Educators for Excellence
Alliance for Excellent Education
The American School Counselors Association
The Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
The Black Church Center for Justice & Equality
BellXcel
The Center for Black Educator Development
Committee for Children
Deans for Impact
EDGE Consulting Partners
Education Reform Now
The Education Trust
The National Association of School Psychologists
The National Association of Secondary School Principals

¹⁵Gasman, M., Castro Samayoa, A., & Ginsberg, A. (2016). *A Rich Source for Teachers of Color and Learning: Minority Serving Institutions*. Retrieved from https://cmsi.gse.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/MSI_KelloggReportR5.pdf
Garza, R. (2019). Paving the Way for Latinx Teachers. Retrieved from <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/paving-way-latinx-teachers/>

The National Black Justice Coalition
The National Center for Teacher Residencies
The National Council on Teacher Quality
National Education Association
New America, Education Policy Program
New Leaders
Our Turn
Philly's 7th Ward
Sperling Center for Research and Innovation
Teach for America
Teach Plus
TNTP
Urban Teachers
UnidosUS
The United Negro College Fund