



March 24, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Pelosi:

As a Coalition for Community Schools we are an alliance of education, health and social services, youth development and community organizations who are witnessing firsthand the inequities the COVID-19 crisis is further exacerbating in access to health, food, education and economic services already faced by the [51%-and growing-proportion of low-income students](#) in our public schools. **There are currently 45 states, and multiple districts in other states, that have decided to close schools affecting at least 53 million students.**

We urge you to prioritize our nation's lowest-income students, families and communities in the next stimulus package, as well as the communities most affected by the pandemic, by significantly increasing funding for the Full-Service Community Schools program to reach and support this vulnerable population. Specifically, **we urge Congress to direct \$100,000 for each Title I eligible school (\$2.5 billion) and \$200,000 for each Title I schoolwide school (\$5 billion)**. This funding will pay for a full-time coordinator and programming determined as critical through a needs assessment to supplement the district and non-district staff and programming already in place at the school.

Community schools are an [evidence-based strategy for school improvement](#) that coordinates resources and relationships through public schools, yield a [high social return on investment](#), and can accelerate positive effects community wide as recently seen in [New York City](#). The long-term effect of this pandemic on our most vulnerable communities will be significant, and community schools are uniquely positioned to meet the many needs that we can't even foresee yet. Through their practices of collaborative leadership, integrated focus on learning and comprehensive supports, and their culture of relational trust, they are the hubs of their communities where people come together to help students succeed and the community to thrive.

Through the practice of school-community partnerships facilitated by the community school coordinator, community schools can meet the immediate and longer-term needs from this pandemic borne by students and their families and communities in several ways, including:

- the identification and immediate access to emergency health and social service needs such as food distribution, home supplies, temperature and mental health checks and childcare for health and emergency personnel;



- the re-opening and effective use of nearly 2,500 school-based health centers in place nationally and safe access to school district and community medical personnel to relieve hospitals of providing ongoing wellness checks and basic health and behavioral health care;
- continuation of access to school-based health and mental health services for the parents/guardians who are losing/will have lost their jobs along with their employer-provided-health care and out of school time programs necessary for parents to have safe places for their children as they continue, or re-enter the workforce;
- adult services at community schools, including connections to social services, career/job search support, adult education, financial literacy, tenant rights classes, etc.

Finally, we urge Congress to support the several federal programs and nonprofits across the country that serve low-income children, youth and families and that sustain the work of community schools, from health to food access to mentoring and others to ensure the ongoing and long-term services students and families need are in place for community school coordinators to coordinate, integrate, and personalize.

Across the nation we are seeing incidents where school-based personnel in low-income communities are rising to meet the food, health and educational inequities posed by the pandemic. The Coalition for Community Schools believes that had more Full-Service Community Schools been in place, low-income communities would be better positioned to meet the demands of COVID-19 directly. Help us be prepared for the recovery and the future.

Sincerely,

The Institute for Educational Leadership, coordinating partner of the Coalition for Community Schools and the following partners:

National Partners

Afterschool Alliance

American Federation of Teachers

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)

Beacon National Network

Communities In Schools

Healthy Schools Campaign

National Center for Community Schools



National Education Association

National League of Cities

Netter Center for Community Partnerships

Public Advocacy for Kids

Rural School and Community Trust

The School Based Health Alliance

The Southern Education Foundation

United Way Worldwide

State Partners

Indiana Community Schools Network

Maryland Coalition for Community Schools

Maryland Out of School Time Network

New Jersey Community Schools Coalition

Local Partners

Children's Aid (New York)

Say Yes Buffalo (New York)

Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) (California)