

The Hon. Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United State Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Hon. Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
United States Senate Committee on  
Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 7, 2021

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chair Cantwell, and Chairman Pallone:

The undersigned K-12 education and library associations write today to urge you to include within the forthcoming Build Back Better Act at least \$4 billion to ensure that more than 5 million students, teachers and library patrons can maintain their home broadband connections beyond June 30, 2022. We hope that Congress will follow the lead of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has already approved that sum in its section of the Build Back Better Act.

Our organizations remain very appreciative of Congress authorizing and appropriating \$7.17 billion for the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) in the American Rescue Plan Act. Right now, schools and libraries are using these funds to purchase connected devices and home Internet access services to help bridge the pernicious home connectivity gap that afflicted as many as 16 million students and 400,000 educators before COVID began. This so-called homework gap disproportionately affects Black, Brown, low-income, and rural students, making it difficult for them to carry on their studies.

We were pleased to see that demand for ECF has been extraordinarily high. Despite the Federal Communications Commission opening an initial 45-day application window over the summer, when schools were in recess and many were on vacation, schools and libraries applied for \$5.1 billion in ECF support, more than 70% of available funds. This funding paid for 9.1 million connected devices and 5.4 million broadband connections, with applications coming from every US state and territory. We anticipate that the remaining funds will be fully exhausted following next week's closure of the second application window.

While ECF funding is making incredible inroads in closing the homework gap, that funding only provides support for home broadband connections until June 30, 2022. When that funding ends, the home broadband connections established will have to terminate unless additional funding is provided. Should these home broadband connections be cut-off, students could find their online courses interrupted, their research projects and homework assignments impossible to complete, and their relationships with educators and peers shut down. Library patrons would

lose critical connections to work and healthcare, as well as remote learning. For all of these reasons, we urge Congress to include \$4 billion in additional ECF funding within the forthcoming Build Back Better Act.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter and look forward to continuing to work with you on this significant problem.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents' Association  
Advance CTE  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
American Federation of School Administrators  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Library Association  
American Psychological Association  
American School Counselor Association  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
Association of Educational Service Agencies  
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents  
Association of School Business Officials International  
Children's Health Fund  
Code.org  
Common Sense Media  
Consortium for School Networking  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
Family Centered Treatment Foundation  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Girls Inc.  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
International Society for Technology in Education  
Joint National Committee for Languages  
Khan Academy  
KIPP Public Schools  
Learning Forward  
Magnet Schools of America  
MENTOR  
National Association for Pupil Transportation  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools

National Association of Independent Schools  
National Association of Pupil Transportation  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of State Boards of Education  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Catholic Educational Association  
National Center for Families Learning  
National Committee for Languages and International Studies  
National Council for Teachers of Mathematics  
National Council of Teachers of English  
National Council for the Social Studies  
National Education Association  
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium  
National Rural Education Association  
National School Boards Association  
Parents as Teachers  
Project Tomorrow  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)  
The Education Trust