



New York State
School Boards
Association

Better School Boards Lead to Better Student Performance

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March 25, 2020

The Honorable Charles Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Recommendations for Emergency Supplemental Assistance to School Districts for Coronavirus Emergency Preparedness and Response Efforts

Dear Senator Schumer,

The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) recognizes your leadership in developing our country's response, mitigation and prevention efforts to end the proliferation of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and urges your consideration for immediate and specific funding assistance and flexibility to our school districts.

On March 16, Governor Cuomo signed an Executive Order mandating the closure of all schools in the state for at least two weeks. As April quickly approaches and New York continues to experience exponential increases in the numbers of positive COVID-19 cases, we sense that closures will last much longer with a real possibility that school buildings will stay closed for the remainder of the school year.

Our district leaders have rapidly developed complex plans to address meal distribution, childcare for essential workers and remote learning opportunities for students; however, they need more funding in order to effectively implement these plans.

NYSSBA requests resources to provide unconnected or under-connected students and teachers with home access to the broadband connections required for distance learning and digital equity, and designated funding for mobile WiFi hotspots, computers, servers and related hardware, software, and commensurate instructional tools.

We also request granting the U.S. Department of Education additional authority to grant temporary, emergency waivers and flexibility to state education agencies and school districts to address IDEA and other requirements, while still ensuring that every student's civil rights are protected. This includes ensuring that states and school districts are not penalized for events caused by the pandemic that are beyond their control and that have impacted progress in advancing academic achievement.

Finally, the number of students eligible for Title I services is likely to increase substantially, depending on the length of this pandemic. Therefore, additional Title I and other equity focused federal resources are needed to ensure that those students have the supplementary educational support critical to student achievement.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at 518-783-0200 or bob.schneider@nyssba.org.

Sincerely,

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