



**UEN Request for Federal Supplemental
Appropriations for Local School Systems
COVID-19 Support**

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dave Loebsack
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Axne
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Abby Finkenauer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve King
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Grassley and Ernst and Representatives Finkenauer, Loebsack, Axne and King:

We write to urge you in the strongest possible terms to approve new funding for local school systems in the next coronavirus supplemental appropriations bill. The 18 school districts in the Urban Education Network of Iowa join others across the nation in supporting an additional federal allocation of \$175 billion in Educational Stabilization Funds distributed to the local level through the Title I formula. We also urge Congress to provide an additional \$13 billion for IDEA, \$12 billion in additional Title I program funding, \$2.0 billion for E-Rate, and emergency infrastructure funds that include public schools.

The down payment you made by allocating \$13.5 billion in the CARES Act for schools was a critical lifeline for public education. But now we implore you to provide a second, larger installment for public schools as you craft the fourth supplemental appropriations package.

The initial allocation will help offset the unexpected costs we are incurring in providing meal services to our students and reestablishing instruction. In short order, schools stepped up to the challenge to revamp operations and instructional systems in response to the public health crisis that confronts the nation. With no promise of additional aid, schools organized to provide meals to thousands of students and families. Throughout the closure, Urban Schools have not only been preparing and distributing tens of thousands of meals to hungry students each day throughout the week, we are also providing more every Friday to keep them nourished over the weekends.

On the instructional side, schools made a rapid transformation from school-based to home-based learning. In addition to adapting Pre-K/12 curricula in real time for an online platform, Urban Schools have distributed tens of thousands of computers to ensure students had access at home to the distance learning plan and for many provided the Internet infrastructure for students and staff to stay connected.

But dark clouds on the horizon will spell disaster if Congress does not intervene. Significant revenue shortfalls loom for local school districts that will exacerbate the disruptions to date. School district revenues derive primarily from state and local sources that are expected to drop precipitously in the months ahead.

We are alarmed by this forecast because we've been here before. Similar shortfalls occurred during the 2008-09 recession. At that time, Congress stepped up with nearly \$100 billion in education funding

through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and an additional \$10 billion in 2010 for an Education Jobs Fund.

The current situation is far more severe. As aggressive as schools have already been, districts need substantial supplementary resources to sustain our alternative programming. Furthermore, research on the efficacy of virtual learning makes clear that there is simply no substitute for students being physically with their teachers.

The result of lost time this spring will be substantial unfinished learning for many students. On top of the predictable summer learning loss, vast numbers of students will enter the next school year substantially behind academically – simultaneous with the impact of budget cuts due to local and state revenue shortfalls.

These budget cuts will mean reduced teaching staffs and ballooning class sizes at a time when schools will need to address unfinished learning from the previous year and may have to continue to practice social distancing. The ramifications are not only profound for the students involved, but for the staff and our nation. This educational catastrophe could weaken the country’s economic foundation for years to come without significant financial support from Congress.

With additional federal funds, we’ll be able to devise and afford innovative ways to recoup some of the learning time lost this spring and stabilize our teaching force. Moreover, your investment in education will insure the country long term. We hope you recognize the importance of an emergency investment in the nation’s public schools at this time and will do all that you can to secure it.

Thank you.

David Coziahr, President Council Bluffs School Board Dr. Vickie Murillo, Superintendent	Janet Godwin, President Iowa City School Board Steve Murley, Superintendent	Stuart J. Cochrane, President Fort Dodge Community Schools Dr. Je Ulrich, Superintendent
Nancy Humbles, President Cedar Rapids School Board Noreen Bush, Superintendent	Jeremy Saint, President Sioux City School Board Dr. Paul Gausman, Superintendent	Mrs. Sondra Nelson, President Linn-Mar School Board Shannon Bisgard, Superintendent
Bruce Potts, President Davenport School Board Dr. Bob Kobylski, Superintendent	Shanley McNally, President Waterloo School Board Dr. Jane Lindaman, Superintendent	Bea Niblock, President Marshalltown School Board Theron Schutte, Superintendent
Kyrstin Delagardelle, Chair Des Moines School Board Dr. Thomas Ahart, Superintendent	Dr. Jenny Risner, Superintendent Ames Community School District	David Weillbrenner, President Ottumwa School Board Nicole Kooiker, Superintendent
Tami Ryan, President Dubuque School Board Stan Rheingans, Superintendent	Randy Bauer, President College Community School Board	Gary Fischer, President Southeast Polk School Board Dr. Dirk Halupnik, Superintendent