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MEDIA RELEASE

Urban Schools Coalition Calls for Congress to Provide More Funding for Public School Systems in Next Coronavirus Relief Bill

WASHINGTON – The Council of the Great City Schools, the nation’s primary coalition of large urban public-school districts, urges Congress to approve new funding for local school systems in the next coronavirus supplemental appropriations bill.

In a letter to Capitol Hill, with signatures that include Superintendent Bob Nelson’s, the organization calls on an additional federal allocation of $175 billion in Educational Stabilization Funds to be distributed to the local level through the Title I formula. The group also urges Congress to provide an additional $13 billion for the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), $12 billion in additional Title I program funding, $2.0 billion for E-Rate, and emergency infrastructure funds that include public schools.

The letter, signed individually by 62 big-city superintendents, asks federal lawmakers for financial support to help offset the unexpected costs districts are incurring in providing meal services to students and transforming from school-based to home-based learning in the wake of school closures. And as aggressive as schools have been in providing instruction at a distance, districts continue to need resources to provide electronic learning devices and internet connections to every child.

Because of declines in state and local revenues, significant revenue shortfalls are looming for local school systems, as well, with several big-city school districts projecting 15 to 25 percent cuts in overall revenues going into next school year. According to the council, an estimated 20 percent loss in combined state and local revenues would likely result in some 275,000 teachers being laid off in big-city public school systems alone.
“With additional federal funds, America’s public schools will have help in off-setting the cost of meals provided during the pandemic, narrowing the digital divide and addressing numerous other needs as districts face a possible crippling shortfall at this unprecedented time,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.

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