

June 6, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

The 83 undersigned national and state organizations write in support of robust funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers grant program and respectfully request no less than its authorized level of \$10 million—in the FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (L-HHS-ED) appropriations bill.

The Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) grant program is one of the few non-categorical programs from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that was maintained in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Both the House of Representatives and the Senate recognized the importance of parent and family engagement in education by including the SFECs program as a standalone program in their respective reauthorization bills. Known as the Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) under NCLB, the improved SFECs program will build capacity for states and school districts to systematically embed family engagement policies and practices in their education plans. The SFEC program will provide much needed professional development for educators and school leaders to strengthen school-family partnerships and parent-teacher relationships. Additionally, SFECs will provide direct services to families to give them the tools to effectively work with their child's school to improve their child's academic outcomes and overall well-being.

Family engagement has always been, and continuous to be, a bipartisan issue in Congress. In March 2016, [22 Senators](#) and [38 Representatives](#) from both sides of the aisle signed a Dear Colleague letter in support of funding for Statewide Family Engagement Centers in FY 2017. With ESSA implementation underway, states, school districts, school leaders and parents need programs such as SFECs to engage parents as stakeholders and effectively implement the law as Congress intended.

Research shows that family engagement advances the academic and developmental progress of our nation's children and drives increases in student achievement. Our organizations believe that an investment in SFECs is critical to ensuring that families are meaningfully supported and engaged in their child's education so they can support our nation's students in becoming fully prepared for higher education and careers.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and we look forward to working with you to support this important program.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American School Health Association
Campaign for Youth Justice
Coalition for Community Schools at the Institute for Education Leadership
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Chief State School Officers
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Heising-Simons Action Fund
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Magnet Schools of America
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of La Raza
National Education Association
National PTA
PACER Center
Parents as Teachers
TESOL International Association
United Way Worldwide

State Organizations

Alabama PTA
Alaska PTA
Arizona PTA
Arkansas PTA
California PTA
Colorado PTA
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
Connecticut PTA
Delaware PTA
District of Columbia PTA
Education Northwest (OR)
European PTA

Fact Oregon
Family Matters Parent Training & Information Center (IL)
Family Resource Center on Disabilities (IL)
Federation for Children with Special Needs (MA)
Florida PTA
Georgia PTA
Hawaii PTA
Idaho PTA
Illinois PTA
INCLUDEnyc (NY)
Indiana PTA
Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs
Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC)
Kansas Parent Training and Information Center
Kansas PTA
Kentucky PTA
Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network (KY-SPIN)
Louisiana Parent Training & Information Center
Louisiana PTA
Maine PTA
Maryland PTA
Massachusetts PTA
Michigan PTA
Minnesota PTA
Missouri PTA
Montana PTA
Nevada PTA
New Hampshire PTA
New Jersey PTA
New York State PTA
North Carolina PTA
North Dakota PTA
Ohio PTA
Oklahoma PTA
Oregon PTA
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (VA)
Parent to Parent of Miami
Pennsylvania PTA
Philadelphia HUNE Inc.
Raising Special Kids (AZ)
South Carolina PTA
South Dakota Parent Connection
Tennessee PTA
Texas PTA

Virginia PTA
Washington State PTA
West Virginia PTA
Wisconsin PTA