



September 23, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers and Ranking Members Mikulski and Lowey:

The Coalition for Community Schools (Coalition) and 46 of its national partners are writing to urge you to provide an increase to the Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) program for FY 2017 above the \$10 million it received in FY 2016. FSCS is an initiative that connects schools with community partners to increase academic, health, and social services and opportunities for students, families, and community members that results in improved educational outcomes for young people.

Full-service community schools are growing at a rapid rate across the country (from 33 places in 2007 to over 100 now), and the high demand currently outpaces capacity at the local level. When the program was first funded in 2008, the U.S. Department of Education received almost 1,000 letters of intent for just 10 awards, showing the significant demand among communities. Last year, Congress demonstrated its strong support for the program by authorizing it in the Every Student Succeeds Act for at least ten grants per year. This support is also reflected at the state level, where 12 bills were introduced in 9 states in 2015 from Georgia to California to bipartisan bills in Ohio and Texas.

It is crucial that Congress fund this program for FY 2017-otherwise, 21 current grantees will lose their funding who are in years two or three out of their five-year grants. This cessation of funding would not only significantly slow or stop the great work the grantees are doing, but would be fiscally irresponsible to cut off funding in the middle of a successful grant.

This program has successfully catalyzed community school initiatives in various communities to become effective, self-sustaining, and responsive to local needs through public-private partnerships. With this funding, awardees have been able to scale up the community school strategy across public schools including charters; hire full-time coordinators to manage school-community partnerships; offer several services and opportunities for students and families; and blend and align federal and state funding streams around the community school strategy.

It's important to note that the community school strategy is not a program that is layered on to schools, but rather is a vehicle that aligns existing school based services with available community resources to help schools build capacity and leverage funding school-wide to meet the comprehensive needs of students before, during, and after school. Emerging evidence shows that integrated student services, a core feature of



community schools, lead to decreases in grade retention and dropout and increases in attendance and math and reading achievement.¹ These strong school-community partnerships also yield a return on investment, with one study finding that district dollars leverage community resources at a minimum rate of 1:3 and another finding that every dollar invested in such schools produced at least a \$10.30 return in social investment.²

We ask that as you prepare a final FY 2017 bill, you ensure that the Full Service Community Schools program receives an increase above \$10 million so the 21 current grantees may continue their great work and more communities may have the opportunity to apply to a program that has proven effective and sustainable. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

Coalition for Community Schools and our partners:

National Organizations

21st Century School Fund

American Federation of Teachers

Afterschool Alliance

After-School All-Stars

Alliance for Excellent Education

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

Alliance of Community Teachers and Schools (ACTS)

America's Promise Alliance

Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Center for Health and Health Care in Schools

¹ Kristin Anderson Moore and Carol Emig, *Integrated Student Supports: A Summary of the Evidence Base for Policymakers*, <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-05ISSWhitePaper3.pdf>, (February 2014)

² Blank, M, Jacobson, R, Melaville, A, and Pearson, S., Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership, *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources To Support Student Success*, <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/finance-paper.pdf> (2010); Laura Martinez and Cheryl D. Hayes, The Finance Project, *Measuring Social Return on Investment for Community Schools: A Case Study*, <http://www.childrengsociety.org/files/CASE%20STUDY%20final.pdf>, (June 2013)



Center for Popular Democracy

Child and Family Policy Center

Citizen Schools

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Communities in Schools

Elev8

ExpandedED Schools

First Focus Campaign for Children

Forum for Youth Investment

Foundations, Inc.

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

Healthy Schools Campaign

Mental Health America

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Mutt-i-greed Curriculum

National Association for Bilingual Education

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

NASSP

National Education Association

National School Climate Center

National Summer Learning Association

Organizations Concerned About Rural Education

Public Advocacy for Kids

Rural School and Community Trust

School-Based Health Alliance



School Social Work Association of America

SparkAction

The Children's Aid Society

The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink

Trust for America's Health

United Way Worldwide

Yale School of the 21st Century

YMCA of the USA