



Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As Superintendents, we write to urge you to expand and strengthen AmeriCorps and Senior Corps in the next COVID-19 relief package. In addition to the public health and economic crises created by COVID-19, we are facing an educational crisis, with 55 million students out of school for months. AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members are already partnering with schools and communities across the country, with established relationships, infrastructure and a track record of results. They have been essential partners as our districts transitioned to distance learning, helping us effectively meet the needs of our students in the wake of school closures. When we return to school this fall, we will need this help and more, if we are to close achievement gaps that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and school closures.

We anticipate a “COVID slide” that will affect students of all ages. Elementary students will have the largest academic losses and could be a year behind when they return. Middle and high school students who face barriers to online learning due to family responsibilities or lack of technology will be at an increased risk of falling off track to high school graduation. They will also face the challenge of re-entering school with unmet social-emotional needs and are more likely to be held back, which further increases their likelihood of dropping out. And COVID-related school closures have reduced or eliminated supports to high school students applying to college or seeking post-secondary training. As a result, the number of students who graduate without secure college placement or a viable career opportunity will grow and could lead to increased numbers of out of school and unemployed youth.

Expanding AmeriCorps is an efficient way of addressing these challenges. In the face of COVID-19, diverse teams of AmeriCorps members are serving on the front lines of the pandemic's fallout, supporting students with distance learning, narrowing the opportunity gap, and will help students and teachers recover from learning loss and increased exposure to trauma when schools re-open.

Expanding the number of national service members who can partner with teachers and schools to catch students up would provide critical relationships and the necessary capacity for schools to address increased levels of need. Investing in AmeriCorps will provide additional support for our students

struggling with the impact of COVID-19 and will help ensure that we can all benefit from their talents and contributions in the future.

We were pleased to see the introduction of S. 3964, the Cultivating Opportunity and Response to the Pandemic through Service (CORPS) Act and H.R. 6702, the Pandemic Response and Opportunity Act, two bipartisan proposals to expand and strengthen the existing national service infrastructure to help our communities respond and recover.

On behalf of our students, educators, and schools, we urge you to include funding and legislative provisions from these service bills in the next pandemic relief package so we can tap the talent and energy of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members to help ensure our students receive the attention and the support they need.

Sincerely,

Jorge Aguilar, Superintendent, Sacramento City Unified School District, Sacramento, California
Sehba Ali, CEO, KIPP Texas Public Schools, Houston, Texas
Ron Ballard, Superintendent of Schools, USD 470-Arkansas City Schools, Arkansas City, Kansas
Fatimah Barker, Chief External Officer, Achievement First, Brooklyn, New York
Richard Berlin, Executive Director, DREAM, New York, New York
Yasmin Bhatia, CEO, Uplift Education, Dallas, Texas
Jennifer Blaine, Superintendent of Schools, Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, TX
Xavier Botana, Superintendent, Portland Public Schools, Portland, Maine
Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent, Boston Public Schools, Roxbury, Massachusetts
Donalda Chumney, Superintendent, Community School District 2, NYC DOE, New York, New York
Mark DiBella, CEO, YES Prep Public Schools, Houston, Texas
Chris Funk, Superintendent, East Union High School District, San Jose, California
Jennifer Gill, Superintendent, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield, Illinois
Deborah Gist, Superintendent, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Diana Greene, Superintendent of Schools, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida
Mike Hammer, Superintendent, RSU 19 Newport, Maine
Janice Jackson, CEO, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, Illinois
Constance Jones, CEO, Noble Network of Charter Schools, Chicago, Illinois
Henderson Lewis, Jr., Superintendent, NOLA Public Schools, New Orleans, Louisiana
Jennifer Lopez, CEO, Carmen Schools of Science and Technology Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Ben Marcovitz, CEO, Collegiate Academies, New Orleans, Louisiana
Lisa Margosian, CEO, Ascend Charter Schools, Brooklyn, New York
Pedro Martinez, Superintendent, San Antonio ISD, San Antonio, Texas
Tammy Pate, Superintendent, Community School District 28, NYCDOE, Jamaica, New York
Brett Peiser, CEO, Uncommon Schools, New York, New York
Harrison Peters, Superintendent, Providence Public School District, Providence, Rhode Island
Mike Poore, Superintendent, Little Rock School District, Little Rock, Arkansas
Marie Robinson, Superintendent, RSU 89, Stacyville, Maine
Kent Scribner, Superintendent, Fort Worth Independent School District, Fort Worth, Texas
Preston Smith, Co-Founder/CEO, Rocketship Public Schools, San Jose, California

Brandon Sorlie, Chief Schools Officer, Ascend Charter Schools, Brooklyn, New York
Bobby White, Founder/CEO, Frayser Community Schools, Memphis, Tennessee
John Zitzner, Founder, Breakthrough, Cleveland, Ohio

cc: Chairman Lamar Alexander, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
Ranking Member Patty Murray, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
Chairman Bobby Scott, House Education and Labor Committee
Ranking Member Virginia Foxx, House Education and Labor Committee

Signatures as of 7/29/20