

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
U.S. House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
U.S. House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

October 14, 2022

Dear Chairs DeLauro and Leahy and Ranking Members Granger and Shelby:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, dedicated to advancing the learning, safety, and well-being of children and young people in our country, we thank you for your support and proposed investments in primary prevention, social and emotional skills for success, trauma-informed practices, and in school and out-of-school supports in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. These investments will engage students in their learning, promote their wellness, and mitigate challenges upstream before they develop into crises.

As the FY 2023 appropriations process continues, we urge you to add to the funding increases you have proposed for programs that expand access to primary prevention and build social and emotional skills to address the profound effects of the last three years on student safety, wellbeing, and academic success.

Strengthening pathways to the essential life skills that mitigate risk factors and promote protective factors, such as effective communication, self-discipline, problem solving, and working together, supports both students and educators. These life skills increase students' [academic outcomes](#), improve [college and career readiness](#), and reduces challenge, such as experiencing [anxiety and depression](#). Providing these supports early on can help head off a crisis before it can develop.

We also know that [a vast majority of parents](#)¹ support teaching these skills in schools – even more so since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students are asking for this support too. A 2021 national survey out of the CDC that showed that [high school students](#) who said they felt close and connected to people at school less frequently reported negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental wellness. Another [recent national survey](#) showed that students felt more valued when their school integrated social, emotional, and cognitive supports.

¹ Another recent survey also shows that [parents overwhelming support](#) social and emotional skills instruction in schools.

As such, we are particularly pleased that you have proposed increased investments in the core elementary and secondary education programs – Title I, Title II-A, and Title IV – that support these efforts. We urge that the final bill contain the highest possible level of funding for these programs.

We also ask that the final FY23 appropriations bill provides at least:

- \$132M (an increase over \$50M from FY22) for social-emotional learning within the **Education Innovation and Research program (EIR)** and continue to prioritize social-emotional learning for both early and mid-phase evidence tiers as the EIR social and emotional learning competition can support evidence-based interventions for educational staff especially in relation to burnout.
- \$90M (an increase over \$5M from FY22) for the **Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED)** grant program and continue to support a competitive priority for social and emotional learning and Whole Child Education within SEED.
- \$500M for **School-Based Mental Health Services Grants** and \$500M for **Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grants** under School Safety National Activities.
- Prioritization of trauma-informed practices and building social and emotional skills in grants under **School Safety National Activities**.
- \$468M (an increase over \$393M from FY22) for **Full-Service Community Schools**.
- \$229M (an increase over \$109M from FY22) for **Project AWARE**.
- **\$10M for new competitive grant program** to help school districts design and implement integrated student supports on addressing a range of student and family needs.
- A new **10% set-aside within the Mental Health Block Grant** to support evidence-based programs that address early intervention and prevention of mental health disorders among at-risk children and direct SAMHSA to use the set-aside fund for programs to “promote positive social-emotional development for children from birth to age five.”
- \$3M (an increase of \$1M from FY22) for **child sexual abuse prevention research**.

We are grateful for Congress’ bipartisan efforts to enhance learning and the safety and wellbeing of America’s young people, and we strongly urge you to do even more to prioritize access to primary prevention and building essential social and emotional skills.

We look forward to continuing to work together on this essential endeavor of supporting our young people. For any questions or to discuss further, please reach out to Jordan Posamentier, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at Committee for Children (jposamentier@cfchildren.org).

Sincerely,

American Psychological Association

American School Counselor Association

Committee for Children

Communities In Schools

California AfterSchool Network

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Confident Parents, Confident Kids

Council of Administrators of Special Education

EDGE Consulting Partners

EQuip Our Kids!

The Family Focused Treatment Association

International Observatory for School Climate and Violence Prevention

Jewish Family and Children's Services (SF Bay Area)

Long Branch Public Schools

Mind the Class

National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives

Sandy Hook Promise

Sand Creek High School

Sand Creek High School

Respectful Ways Trauma-Informed SEL

SEL Launchpad

SEL Providers Association

Social and Emotional Alliance for New Mexico

The Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Texas

SEL4CA

SEL4CO

SEL4NH

SEL4US

Thrively