

Dear Rural School Leaders,

First, let me commend you again on the heroes' work you've been doing. Feeding, educating, caring for your kids and your community in new ways, on a moment's notice...truly an amazing and inspirational feat; one that your community will long remember after the crisis has passed. Well done, my friends!

There are many sources of information and your RSA can help. School finances are our focus at this time of year and we'll stick to it here. For regular logistical updates you've already found your best sources, but we've found NYSCOSS and NYSSBA to be particularly helpful.

First, I'm sure you're wondering what the crisis means for state funding for your schools. We all are. We are less than a week away from the state's constitutional budget deadline and we've heard virtually nothing about negotiations, except for the governor's remark that those who still seek school aid increases do not have "a colorable claim." With state revenues plummeting from the economy being placed "on pause" and state revenues in flux (given that they intertwine with federal forms that now need not be filed until July) questions loom large.

Some things are almost certain, however. First, the state will have less money than it anticipated (which already expected a multibillion dollar deficit.) We know that our state's revenue fluctuates with Wall Street bonus taxes and the stock market is in turmoil. We know that in the midst of a public health crisis and the extraordinary measures being taken to treat the healthcare needs of our residents, the deficit will not be addressed through cuts in state payments to that industry. Since the state only spends extraordinary sums in healthcare and public education, you can guess what's in the wind for schools.

When the dust settles, we will have some legitimate claims for more funding. For instance,



Transportation Aid will need to be adjusted to qualify the delivery of meals as an aidable expense. Schools have been asked to become daycare providers, educate remotely and continue to provide special educational services despite physical barriers and health concerns. The governor has said he's already spending money the state doesn't have. None of that bodes well for districts already fiscally challenged and forced to deplete substantial portions of their reserves.

In the midst of this worrisome situation, two factors may help: First, the state may at long last be too broke to ignore the impact of its traditionally inequitable distribution of state funds. Our current circumstances may force it to evaluate the nation's worst aid distribution scheme in order to preserve education in those districts most at risk of fiscal disaster. The virus may do what even our state's highest court could not in making the state provide aid according to a community's comparative inability to pay for the education of its children.



Second, the federal government may rise to the occasion. Phase 3 of the federal approach to crisis relief has targeted public schools. There are differing versions in each house of Congress,

but both focus on preserving the continuity of education in the states. They have divergent formulas for distributing aid and the amount of the aid varies considerably, but negotiations continue and the federal education stimulus is significant in both instances. Federal aid would be distributed according to its own criteria, not the state's, so it is likely to be both targeted and flexible. We are hopeful the aid actually comes after the state's budget deadline, so that it doesn't simply supplant federal aid for its own.

We have attached a side by side comparison of each house's version of the bill, for your review. Please let your Members of Congress and U.S. Senators know how desperately needed this relief is and how it would help your district.

Your RSA continues to advocate for your interests to both the state and federal governments. Like everyone else we're doing it remotely, but we're doing it. Thank you for your work within your communities and as always, for your efforts on behalf of your children. They say the next two weeks will be our darkest time. Let it also be our finest effort.

Stay well my friends,
Dave

SIDE BY SIDE COMPARISON OF HOUSE AND SENATE RELIEF BILLS

	House: Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act (HR 6379)	Senate: HR 748 (substitute); division b
State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (House) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (Senate)	\$50 billion	\$20 billion
	Formula grant to governor: - 61% based on population of children aged 5-24 - 39% based on population of low-income children	Formula grant to SEAs using Title II-A

	<p>Allocation of state grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30% to LEAs based on relative share of low-income children - 30% to public IHEs based on number of Pell recipients 	<p>Allocation of state grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80% to LEAs (including charters) based on Title I
	<p>Uses: <i>see page 113</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any use under ESEA, IDEA, Perkins, McKinney Vento, Adult Ed, - Coordinating with public health departments - Purchasing education technology, including professional development - Summer online learning - Technology to support quality online learning for historically underserved students - Maintaining employment of existing personnel 	<p>Uses: <i>see page 98</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any use under ESEA, IDEA, Perkins, McKinney Vento, Adult Ed - Coordinating with public health departments - Developing procedures - Training and PD on sanitization - Long term planning, including for how to distribute meals, provide technology, and implement IDEA - Purchasing educational technology - Mental health services
	<p>Priority: Under-resources IHEs</p>	

	<p>Guardrails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IHE's can't use funds to increase endowments or for religion - State application must include assurance that funding for K-12 and higher education for FY 2020, 2021, 2022 will at least be at the level of the average of the prior 3 years for each K-12 and higher ed - Collective bargaining maintained - No funds for private schools, unless the funds are for children with disabilities as authorized under IDEA 	
Waivers	Provides no new, broad waiver authority for the Secretary under ESEA, IDEA, HEA, or Perkins	Expedited process: waivers approved or disapproved within 30 days
		Duration: not to exceed to 2019-2020 academic year, except in the case of MOE waivers

		<p>Waivers are permitted for policy pertaining to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments, accountability, and reporting related to assessments and accountability, except that states receiving such a waiver must maintain accountability determinations (ESEA sections 1111(b)(2)-(3), 1111(c), 1111(d) and related provisions of 1111(h)) - Schoolwide program eligibility (ESEA Section 1114(a)(1)) - MOE (ESEA, Section 1118(a) and section 8521). - Limitations on carryover funds (ESEA, Section 1127 and GEPA, sec 421(b)) - Requirement for a needs assessment for Title IV-A (ESEA, Sec 4106 (d)) - 20/20/60 division of Title IV funds (Subparagraphs (C), (D), and (E) of section 4106(e)(2)) - 15% limit on technology purchases under Title IV-A ((F) Section 4109(b)) - PD requirements
		<p>Future Waivers: ED will submit a report to Congress with recommendations regarding the need to waive additional policies, including policies under IDEA</p>

<p>Higher Ed funding (House)*</p> <p>Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (Senate)</p> <p>*Note: higher ed also receives 30% of the House-proposed State Fiscal Stabilization Fund</p>	<p>\$9.5 billion</p>	<p>90% to IHEs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% based on number of Pell recipients - 25% based on number of non-Pell recipients <p>10% for meeting needs related to coronavirus split among different components of HEA</p> <p>Use of funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “cover any costs associated with closure or significant changes...” - No less than 50% for emergency grants to students
Runaway and Homeless Youth	\$100 million	\$25 million
Head Start	\$1 billion (allocated to states proportionally to the number of children in Head Start)	\$250 million
Child Care	\$6 billion	\$3 billion
Job Corps	\$100 million	---
Connectivity Fund	\$2 billion	---