



### Media Release from BASIC: August 24, 2020

Washington, D.C.: On Friday, August 21, the [CDC released updated guidance for reopening schools](#). We applaud the additions and clarification on important issues. We note that CDC's guidance on ventilation is cursory, at best. However, a blunt reality remains: **the central challenge faced by school districts seeking to reopen their buildings to students and staff is their lack of funding to get the job done and timely access to unbiased information.**

School districts and states have been wrestling with how to reopen and operate schools safely in a pandemic since schools closed in March. Parents and educators know better than anyone that public schools are important and that educating children at school in their school buildings is a far better alternative to remote schooling.

Founder of the [BASIC](#) coalition Mary Filardo stated, "Following any and all of the CDC guidance for school reopening is added work and carries added costs. Local school districts and [states are financially in the red](#). The federal government needs to act. BASIC is calling on Congress for \$10 billion in immediate funding for emergency facilities repairs and system upgrades. This is not a lot of money when you consider we are trying to get 50 million children back to school safely."

BASIC urges our national leadership to (1) support local public health departments for adequate testing and tracing; (2) provide \$10 billion to low wealth and high need districts for emergency facilities repairs and system upgrades needed to implement CDC guidance; and (3) provide relief to help states and local governments manage the current fiscal crises caused with the pandemic.

Executive Director, Claire Barnett of the [Healthy Schools Network](#), and member of BASIC said, "The White House proposed a \$50 million increase to the U.S. EPA for its Healthy Schools Voluntary Grants Initiative, which would provide information and training to schools and communities on ventilation and related facility topics. Congress should act now to get good information on best practices to states, tribes and communities so they can better address COVID operations issues."

"California is dealing with a 10% cut to schools due to budget shortfalls, massive wildfires all across the state, plus COVID-19, which continues to spread in communities." said Jeff Vincent, the Director of Public Infrastructure Initiatives at the [Center for Cities + Schools at the University of Berkeley](#). "As our schools struggle to provide safe environments for students amidst these multiple crises, federal support for reopening is essential. Without which, many schools simply cannot reopen safely."

The combined health and weather crises make it even more clear that the federal government needs to pass the [Rebuild America's School Act \(RASA\)](#) which would allow us to build a new generation of healthy, safe, and resilient school buildings in communities, with the federal role to target schools and districts with the greatest needs. The authorization for a \$130 billion investment for this has already passed the House as part of H.R. 2-a national infrastructure policy and stimulus package. Rebuilding our nation's public schools to modern health, safety, resilience, and educational standards will provide jobs where they are needed most, ensure our nation recovers stronger, and delivers more than talk to low income communities.

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[The Re\[Build\] America's School Infrastructure Coalition \(BASIC\)](#) is a non-partisan coalition of civic, public sector, labor, and industry associations who support federal funding to help under-served public school districts modernize and build K-12 public school facilities. We believe that ALL children should attend healthy, safe, and educationally appropriate school facilities. It's BASIC.

To learn more: Visit BASIC's [website](#), which includes [resources](#) and [recent school facilities news](#).

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