

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Capitol, S-230, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-232, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Capitol, S-221, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-204, Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2020

Dear Senators McConnell and Schumer & Representatives Pelosi and McCarthy:

On behalf of the BASIC Coalition and the additional undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our strong support for including the Rebuild America's Schools Act (RASA) as a critical part of the any future COVID-19 stimulus package. School infrastructure is a major problem that can wait no longer for a solution. There are close to 100,000 public schools in the nation that when they reopen, will house 50 million children and 5 million teachers and administrators.

On average, K-12 school facilities are nearly 50 years old and are currently underfunded by approximately \$38 billion each year. Each day, millions of students and educators attend buildings with leaking roofs, deteriorated floors and ceilings, inadequate heating and air conditioning, and are surrounded by mold and other toxic hazards—all making for unhealthy learning and teaching conditions. School buildings and grounds that serve high-poverty communities and serve a majority of minority students are the most deteriorated—but obsolete school facilities are in all of our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for immediate investments in school infrastructure, especially in overcoming the digital divide. This disparity is especially acute in rural America and in poor urban areas, where communities lack access to broadband in their homes. This digital divide parallels the broader facilities infrastructure disparities. As schools reopen post-pandemic, some children will make up learning-loss next summer because classrooms are modern and safe, while millions of other children will lose out for the lack of air conditioning and other facility deficiencies.

Including RASA in the next stimulus package is an opportunity to build a new generation of resilient and modern public schools and create jobs now that can stabilize communities during the immediate crisis. RASA is strategic as an economic stimulus because:

- **Public education infrastructure is the 2nd largest construction spending sector** behind highways with districts spending \$1 trillion (2014\$) from 1994-2013 for school construction.
- **School construction creates thousands of jobs** for laborers, skilled trades people, and building industry professionals. In addition, it supports major industries that produce the equipment, fixtures, furniture, and materials for constructing and modernizing school facilities. For every \$1 billion dollars invested in school construction nearly 18,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs are created.

- **School construction is an equal opportunity stimulus**—it brings robust economic activity across the states into urban, suburban and rural communities, and will enable small businesses to sustain themselves via the school construction pipeline, thus boosting the local economies in every district.

Including RASA in a future stimulus bill is wise policymaking. Expanding the state and district partnerships to include the federal government means our nation will be better equipped to respond to national crises, such as pandemics and natural disasters. Public school facilities are the first line of defense when our communities have to respond to emergencies. During this health crisis, school facilities are serving as staging points to feed healthcare workers and millions of children. School buildings are housing day-care centers for healthcare and essential workers. School facilities are acting as community medical centers by serving as overflow hospitals and clinics. These investments would:

- Help close the digital divide in America by extending broadband to school facilities, ensuring that the schools can serve as reliable command centers during national emergencies.
- Allow school districts to redesign schools to meet community needs such as school-based health clinics, after school and summer learning opportunities, and career technical education facilities for children and adults.
- Provide much needed job opportunities to workers in the registered apprenticeship system, allowing them to continue to train for careers in the building and construction trades—not just to rebuild schools, but also roads, bridges, water works, ports, and waterways.

This large-scale federal investment in public PK-12 infrastructure is worthwhile in the short-term and over the long-run. Local school districts already carry nearly one half a trillion in local long term debt, signifying their strong local commitment to doing their share. However, the supplemental federal funds would allow these investments to go further and meet the actual needs of our country's public education facilities.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to include the Rebuild America's Schools Act and appropriate \$200 billion in the next stimulus package for school and school-based community facilities construction. At a minimum, we urge that at least 10% of the package is allocated for these purposes. The PK-12 education sector is uniquely able to effectively and efficiently utilize these funds for school modernization, resiliency, health and safety improvements to boost the economy and prepare our nation for the future.

The BASIC Coalition and the undersigned organizations look forward to working with you on passing this legislation into law so that we can ensure a brighter and safer future for every person and district in America. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your commitment to our nation's children, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

21st Century School Fund
A4LE
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Acentch
Achieving America Family Foundation
Administrators Association San Diego City Schools (AASD)
Advance CTE
Afterschool Alliance
American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)
American Federation of Teachers, AFLCIO
American Society of Civil Engineers
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Artcobell Corporation
ASCD
Association for Career and Technical Education
Association of Education Service Agencies (AESA)
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
Association of Science and Technology Centers
BCSA Local 10 (Buffalo Council of School Administrators)
Brewster Thornton Group Architects
California's Coalition for Adequate School Housing
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Career & Technical Association of Texas
Center for Cities + Schools, UC Berkeley
Coalition for Healthier Schools
Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS)
Connecticut federation of school administrators
Cooperative Strategies
Council of Administrators of Special Education

Cultural-Shift, Inc
DBVW Architects, Inc.
Dude Solutions, Inc.
Durham Public Schools
Ed-Space Consulting and Project management
EdMarket
Education Reform Now Advocacy
Educators for Excellence
EPA/AFSA Local 105
Fast Growth School Coalition (Texas)
Federal Lands Impacted Schools Association
Green Schoolyards America
Healthy Schools Network
Heart of America Foundation
INSPIRE Learning Environment Planning
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Crafts (IUBAC)
International Union of Painters & Allied Trades
Johnson Controls, Inc
KABOOM!
Los Angeles Unified School District
Military Impacted Schools Association
Moseley Architects
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Council on School Facilities
National Education Association
National Indian Impacted Schools Association
National PTA

National Rural Education Association
National School Boards Association
National Science Teaching Association
National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)
National Urban League
National Youth Leadership Council
New Britain Connecticut Administrators Union Local 51
New Jersey Department of Education
North American Association for Environmental Education
Parkhill Smith & Cooper
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers Health & Welfare Fund & Union
Public Economics, Inc.
Rebuild America's Schools Coalition

Seimens Industry, Inc
SGA/NarmourWright Design
SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers)
Snohomish School District No 201
StudioGC Architecture + Interiors
Tarkett
TESOL International Association
Texas Education Agency
Turning Green
U.S. Green Building Council
Vanir Construction Management, Inc.
Wyoming State Construction Department
Yonkers Public schools