

Dear (your Congresspersons name)

I am a resident of _____(city)_____ and a constituent of yours. I am a member of the Capistrano Unified Council of PTSA (CUCPTSA) which represents more than 21,000 members from 54 schools' Parent Teacher (Student) Association (PTA/PTSA) units in Capistrano Unified School District which is represented by the 45th, 48th, and 49th congressional districts. PTA's primary goal is to advocate on behalf of our students with one united voice for student educational opportunities, welfare, and mental health protections.

Our school district is facing very bleak predictions about the financial impact of COVID-19 on our state's budget directly affecting our schools and our children. COVID-19 impacted state budgets are affecting not only our district, but every school district in the nation. We appreciate your efforts in passing the CARES Act which provided grants to states totaling \$30.75 billion through the Education Stabilization Fund. The reality is it's simply not enough.

I am writing you today to urge you to support K-12 education with an additional \$175 billion dollars in federal funding. We need...

- A per student "stimulus payment" to be distributed to districts based on enrollment, outside of California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and not based on categorical or supplemental entitlements. During this time of crisis, every district needs the flexibility to decide where their priorities reside. This will support every student as every student has been impacted by COVID-19. We propose approximately \$3,000 per student nationwide.

-OR-

Fully fund these very basic services that all school districts in our nation provide students:

- Technology
- Textbooks
- Transportation
- Food Services

As all schools move to distance-learning platforms, states are being forced to address the digital divides within communities both rural and urban. Given the uncertainty of when schools will re-open for in-person learning, school districts are working to provide access to all students to ensure equity. As a result, districts are handing out computers, providing internet access and hotspots, and require funds to replace computers returned in non-functioning states or not-returned once in-person classes resume. These are all costs that were unforeseen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every school district incurs costs related to textbook adoptions. The cost to our district is \$7-9 million annually in textbook adoption costs, as different grade levels and different core-subject adoptions take place from one year to the next. Digital textbooks require licensing fees to be paid annually, which is an additional cost not incurred when physical textbooks are used. During COVID-19, some publishers have waived the licensing fees but there is no guarantee of how long that will last. Additionally, to provide a comprehensive online distance learning program, there are additional costs for programs for intervention services such as iReady, Ticket-to-Read, MobiMAX, Mystery Science, and many others. While many of these vendors have temporarily lifted licensing fees, they cannot do that forever and our districts will be faced with added costs.

Every school district incurs costs related to transporting children, both general education and special education, to and from school. The cost of transportation in Capistrano Unified exceeds \$2 million a year excluding the costs for employee salary and benefits, including those costs transportation is about \$13 million a year. Having federal funds for the direct costs of transportation, excluding employee salary and benefits, to support this necessity would free up those monies for other uses, such as reducing class sizes, paying for additional cleaning, paying for PPE for school sites.

Prior to COVID-19, school districts received federal funds to feed children but federal reimbursement rates do not account for the real cost of operating school meal programs in California. Likewise, when children attend school in-person, the cost of providing free and reduced meals are offset by the students purchasing full priced meals. With schools closed, those monies are not collected. The CARES Act included insufficient funds for meals and food services. To date, our district has served over 250,000 meals to children and families experiencing food insecurities. Capistrano Unified estimates that the cost of distributed meals will be \$1 million by June.

With your support of additional federal funding, our district can provide our children:

- Intervention programs to address the learning gaps due to school closures.
- Reopen the schools safely, which could mean needing additional staff, disinfectant supplies, masks, and hand sanitizer.
- Reduce class size
- Hire additional teachers

In closing, please make funding schools your priority. On behalf of our 47,000 students, I appreciate your time and look forward to continued conversations with you.

Sincerely,

(Your full name) (Home address)