



## Understanding FOF National Demands

Fund Our Future is a comprehensive campaign that incorporates local, state and national demands centered on the belief that all students deserve a powerful, purposeful public education—from pre-K through college—that gives them the tools and skills they need to reach their full potential. We are fighting to give all students—particularly students of color, those with special needs, and those who are vulnerable and poor—what they need to succeed in our economy and society.

### Our national demands

#### ➤ **Fully fund IDEA** (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, passed by Congress in 1975, requires school districts to identify students with disabilities and provide them with the supports they need to achieve academically. Through IDEA, more than 6 million students with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education. The program funds the costs of special education teachers and administrators; related service providers (like paraprofessionals, speech therapists, psychologists, etc.); materials, supplies and special equipment; professional development for special education personnel; and early intervention services.

#### **The Crisis of Underfunding IDEA**

The chronic underfunding of IDEA by the federal government places a burden on states and local school districts, and shortchanges **all** students—particularly those with special needs.

IDEA came with a congressional promise to fund 40 percent of additional costs of providing services for students with disabilities. But federal funding has never come close to the promised 40 percent. In fact, 18 percent—in 2005—is the closest the federal government has ever come to the promised 40 percent, and the current federal funding level is only 15 percent. Since 2005, the federal government has shortchanged students with disabilities by \$233 billion.

If the federal government fulfilled its commitment, it would amount to an average of \$2,637 in additional funding each year for every student with a disability.

It's time for the federal government to keep its promises to students with disabilities.

#### ➤ **Fully Fund Title I**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed in 1965 as part of the Lyndon Johnson administration's War on Poverty, provides an additional federal investment for schools in communities serving students in poverty. Title I funds can be used for a variety of programs and services to support low-income students' learning—such as teachers and paraprofessionals for extra instruction in reading and mathematics, guidance counselors, community school coordinators, librarians and library books, nurses, preschool, after-school and extended day or year programs.

There are two types of Title I programs. **Schoolwide programs** are allowed if the percentage of low-income students served by a school is at least 40 percent. In schoolwide programs, Title I funds may be used to improve the performance of all students in a school. For example, funds might be used to provide professional development to all of a school's teachers, upgrade instructional technology or implement new curricula.

The other type of Title I service model is the **targeted assistance school program**, under which Title I-funded services are targeted to eligible children. Title I services must also be provided to eligible private school children who live in the public school attendance area.

## The Crisis in Underfunding Title I

Title I authorized Congress to provide an additional 40 percent above each state's per-pupil spending base for each Title I-eligible child to help pay for supplemental supports—like reading assistants and parent engagement specialists. Congress failed to meet that 40-percent mark in 1965 and every year thereafter. The impact of this chronic underfunding is extensive.

Fully funding Title I would enable the nation's highest-poverty schools to provide:

- Health and mental health services for every student, including dental and vision services; and
- A full-time nurse in every Title I school; and
- A full-time librarian for every Title I school; and
- A full-time counselor for every 250 students; or
- A full-time teaching assistant in every classroom.

### ➤ Increase Investment in School Infrastructure

More than half of public school buildings in this country are in dire need of repair. As we've seen from the strikes by educators across the country, and the wave of pro-public education officials elected in the November 2018 midterm elections, teachers, parents and communities want safe and welcoming public schools. These damaged buildings can't provide the foundation for a good education, because teachers can't teach and children can't learn in crumbling schools.

## The Crisis in Lack of Investment in Infrastructure

The federal government provides no funding for school construction, a vital part of our country's infrastructure. Students and educators deal with the results of crumbling infrastructure every day. They are exposed to desks covered with lead paint chips and dust, visible mold in classrooms, and unguarded radiators and scalding hot steam pipes. Decaying school infrastructure can result in illness and hurt children's academic performance.

A new bill introduced in Congress could bring desperately needed changes. On Jan. 30, 2019, House Democrats unveiled the Rebuild America's Schools Act, a plan to invest \$100 billion in our nation's public school system, improving both the physical and digital infrastructure of schools nationwide.

### ➤ Secure real operating funds at the national and state level to counteract the disinvestment in our public colleges and universities

Many families around the country depend on public colleges and universities, yet we continue to drastically underfund these institutions. The Great Recession and years of disinvestment decimated public higher education funding. Today, 41 states still spend less on higher education than in 2008 at the height of the recession.

## The Crisis in Public Higher Education

In 2016, the states that continued to lag in higher education funded state colleges at nearly \$15 billion below pre-recession levels. The chronic underfunding of higher education has led to skyrocketing costs—often at double or triple the rate of inflation—that have resulted in a dramatic increase in education debt for students and their families. Another consequence of chronic disinvestment in higher education is a dramatic loss of full-time tenure-track faculty who have been replaced by an underpaid contingent instructional workforce of part-time, adjunct faculty and graduate assistants.

We are calling for incentives for states, through the Higher Education Act, to invest in high-quality and affordable public higher education, including apprenticeships and career technical education programs.

### ➤ Forgive Outstanding Student Loan Debt in Keeping with the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

More than 45 million student loan borrowers still owe student debt, a result of decades of disinvestment in public higher education that has shifted costs onto students and their families while leaving colleges and universities underfunded. Collectively, student debt is more than \$1.5 trillion; this debt surpasses all types of household debt other than mortgages.

More than a decade ago, Congress created the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

In exchange for 10 years of service to America—in public schools, the military, civil service or nonprofit service organizations—and making payments for those 10 years, qualified borrowers could have their debt forgiven.

### **The Crisis in Public Service Loan Forgiveness**

In 2018, Republicans in Congress introduced a bill to eliminate the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. Although there has been no action on that legislation, there are concerns about the practices of the servicing companies hired by the U.S. Department of Education to administer the program. Borrowers working in the public sector have reported actions by those companies that have sabotaged loan forgiveness—including providing false information, delayed processing of qualified payments and failure to certify eligible public service jobs.

We are calling on the federal government to ensure that the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program operates as it was intended.