



November 16, 2022

Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

RE: San Diego Unified School District Priorities for Fiscal Year 2024

Dear Director Young,

On behalf of the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), California's second largest school district, I write to express our gratitude to the Biden administration for its commitment to make transformational investments in education to ensure our students and educators have the resources needed to succeed.

We are grateful for the critical COVID-19 relief funds that have been provided to support the students and families we serve. These funds provide an opportunity to reimagine a new normal that helps our students recover from the devastating effects of the pandemic. However, the long-term success of student recovery will require ongoing funds to ensure that the one-time relief funds result in sustainable educational investments. Therefore, we respectfully ask that President Biden's Fiscal Year 2024 budget request to Congress includes the following priorities:

Increase Funding for Title Programs

While Congress provided approximately \$200 billion in COVID relief funds to school districts to address the challenges associated with the pandemic, all COVID relief funds must be obligated by September 30, 2024 or earlier. School districts face myriad long-term challenges, including educator shortages, school safety, and mental health, that can truly only be addressed through continued funding of the ESEA's major Title programs, including Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV-A. In our district, almost 60 percent of children attending receive free and reduced price lunch, including more than 16,000 students who are English Learners and over 6,000 children who are homeless or in foster care. ***To combat these challenges and ensure sustained funding, we ask the administration to support significant increases to the title programs.***

Increase Funding for Impact Aid

Congress designed Impact Aid to assist local school districts that have lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal property or that have experienced increased



expenditures due to the enrollment of federally connected children. Unfortunately, the Impact Aid program has not been fully funded since 1969, meaning school districts do not receive all the funding for which they qualify under the program's formulas. At San Diego Unified, we serve more than 5,500 military families. This program is critical to helping meet the needs of our children from military families. The Impact Aid Full Funding Act creates a five-year plan to fund Impact Aid with \$1.1 billion, and would provide San Diego Unified with \$49.1 million over the five years. ***We urge the administration to put us on a path to fully funding Impact Aid by calling for passage of this legislation in the 118th Congress.***

Fully Fund Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

When Congress passed the IDEA in 1975, they committed to pay 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure for special education. However, that pledge has never been met, and current funding is at just 15.7 percent. At San Diego Unified, we serve approximately 15,500 children with disabilities. Each year that Congress fails to fulfill its promise of fully funding IDEA, it gets more difficult for districts to fund programs that benefit all students, including students with disabilities, and harder to recruit and retain qualified teachers and improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Over the past few years, an increasing number of Members of Congress have supported the IDEA Full Funding Act, a bipartisan bill to create a 10-year glide path to full funding and to make the increases permanent with mandatory funding. ***We urge the administration to commit to fully funding IDEA by calling for passage of this legislation in the 118th Congress.***

Thank you for your continued leadership, and we appreciate your attention to these critical education priorities.

Sincerely,

Sierra Cook
Director of Government Relations
San Diego Unified School District

CC: San Diego Delegation
Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA)