



March 29, 2021

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

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

Dear Leaders Pelosi and McCarthy,

On behalf of the [Re]Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition ([BASIC](#)), a broad and diverse coalition of over 130 education, health, environmental, labor, and industry organizations, we urge you to include the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act (RRASA) as passed last Congress in HR2 in the infrastructure stimulus package. The inclusion of RRASA and the directive to appropriate \$100 billion in direct grants and \$30 billion in bond interest subsidies would help address obsolete and deteriorated conditions in high-need rural, town, suburban and urban public school facilities.

We appreciate the immediate relief school districts are now getting to address the increased costs of operating schools in a public health crisis. But we want to make clear that while the American Rescue Plan and COVID-19 Relief funds will enable districts to operate their *20th century schools* more safely, they will NOT enable our high-need districts and schools to modernize this critical infrastructure for the 21st century, as is desperately needed. The need to improve our nation's school facilities was never more acutely apparent than in the monumental effort that many school districts have put forward to make patchwork repairs and upgrades to outdated facilities in an effort to reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Long-term under-investment¹ in school facilities has increased the urgency of ensuring that these critical centers of community are ready to provide the services and care that our economy relies on.

A comprehensive local, state, and federal partnership to modernize our nation's public school facilities infrastructure is essential and long overdue. Ensuring that RRASA is included in the infrastructure stimulus package would:

¹ A national study of 46,000 school improvement projects (1995-2004) found that schools in high-wealth zip codes spent three times more than schools in the lowest wealth school districts. Over the last 25 years, local school districts have paid over 80% of school construction costs, carrying \$454 billion in long term debt; on average, that amounts to \$9,000 per student at the end of FY2018. In some cases, where state funds are available, low-income school districts have been unable to put up even a 10% match to draw state dollars.

- address structural inequities in education that have led to a concentration of crumbling school buildings and grounds within our nations' poorest and most rural and inner-city school districts;
- support a healthy school environment, both indoors and outside, to ensure the health and wellbeing of children, teachers, and staff;
- reduce the carbon footprint and urban heat island effects of thousands of school buildings and grounds;
- Ensure green school buildings and grounds that are adaptable and resilient to address climate change impacts such as increasing extreme weather events; and
- provide locations for wrap-around services and joint uses such as for school-based health clinics, adult education, and civic and recreational centers.

Schools built now will still be in use in 2075 and beyond. This federal, state, and local partnership to bring 20th century facilities into the 21st century will also support thousands of businesses and create millions of jobs in communities hard hit by the economic impact of COVID-19. After highways, our public schools are the second largest public infrastructure sector, in terms of state and local capital outlay, but unlike highways and bridges have no federal funding. Like our public roads and bridges, our nation's public schools are a shared public good distributed throughout our nation, provide vital support for a functioning economy, and should be fully integrated into our national infrastructure policy going forward.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to mobilize our members and our colleagues in the civic, labor and business community to support your continuing efforts to respond to COVID-19, rebuild our economy, and increase equity in American education.

CC: The Honorable Bobby Scott

CC: The Honorable Virginia Foxx

Sincerely,

21st Century School Fund
 AASA, The School Superintendents Association
 Abruna & Musgrave, Architects
 Afterschool Alliance
 Air Equipment Company
 Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration
 Institute
 American Institute of Architects Committee on
 Architecture for Education
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 American Planning Association
 American Society of Civil Engineers

Artcobell
 Associated General Contractors of America
 Association for Learning Environments
 Association of School Business Organizations
 International (ASBO)
 Baltimore City Public Schools
 BAMA Kids, Inc.
 Blackridge Health & Educational Solutions
 BRICK Education Network
 Bristol Virginia Public Schools
 Build Up California | Early Learning Facilities

BuildingAction: The Coalition for Sustainable Buildings
Californians for School Facilities
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
CARRIER GLOBAL CORPORATION
CBRE Heery, Inc.
Center for Cities + Schools
Center for Green Schools @ USGBC
Children & Nature Network
Children's Environmental Health Network
City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
CITYGREEN DC
CMTA Engineers
Coalition of Small and Rural Schools of Virginia
Collaborative for High Performance Schools Inc.
College Achieve Public Schools
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
Communities In Schools Pittsburgh - Allegheny County
Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team
Cooperative Strategies
daVinci Planning, PC
DLR Group
Durham Public Schools
EARTHDAY.ORG
Ed-Space Consulting and Project Management
Edmonds School District
enVerid Systems
Facility Adviser
Fairfield Enterprise, LLC
Go Green Initiative
Gonzales Union School District
Great Northwest Education Cooperative
Green Building Initiative
Green Schools National Network
Green Schoolyards America
Greenbank Associates
Grimm + Parker Architects
Healthy Schools Campaign
Healthy Schools Network, Inc.
Heart of America
High Performance Learning Environments
Impact Fitness Foundation
In the Public Interest
Inclusive Prosperity Capital
International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers

International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
International WELL Building Institute
iXero
Johnson Controls
Jones Whitsett Architects
KaBOOM!
Kansas City Public Schools
Kansas Green Schools Program/Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education
KCI Technologies Inc.
KIPP
LaBella Associates
Living Classroom
Maine Parent Teacher Association
Mark Design Studios Architecture, PC
Maryland ACLU
Michigan Education Justice Coalition
NAESP
National Alliance for Public Charter School's Facility Center
National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Council on School Facilities
National Indian Education Association
National Rural Education Association
National Wildlife Federation
Nature+play designs
New America
New Jersey Education Law Center
North American Association for Environmental Education
Out Teach
Parents For Students Safety
PBS Engineering and Environmental, Inc.
pcbinschools.org
Perkins Eastman
Philadelphia Healthy Schools Initiative
Public Economics, Inc.
Public Private Action
Public Schools Interest Group - American Planning Association
Quattrocchi Kwok Architects
Reflo
Rhode Island Environmental Education Association
Richmond Forward
School Board Of St. Lucie County
School Board Partners
School Energy Coalition

School PRIDE Foundation
School Site Solutions, Inc.
SGA/Narmour Wright
Shawnee Heights Unified School District (KS)
SMART California Sheet Metal Workers' Local 104
Southern Echo Inc.
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative
SRBWI/BAMA Kids, Inc.
Strategic Energy Innovations
StudioGC architecture + interiors

Susan Epstein and Associates
Ten Strands
The American Society of Interior Designers
The Low Income Investment Fund
The Portal Coalition
The Wild Center
UndauntedK12
Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School
Women for a Healthy Environment