

May 6, 2020

Hon. Kay Ivey
Governor

600 Dexter Avenue

Montgomery, AL 36130

Via email: Nick Moore, Education Policy Advisor, nick.moore@governor.alabama.gov

Eric G. Mackey Ed.D.

Superintendent of Education

50 North Ripley Street

P.O. Box 302101

Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Via email: emackey@alsde.edu

Dear Governor Ivey and Superintendent Mackey:

The undersigned organizations write to urge you to ensure that Alabama share of federal funds for education relief during the COVID-19 pandemic is focused on students who are most adversely affected by this crisis.

We know this crisis presents many challenges for educators and schools across our state, and we appreciate the work you are doing to ensure the health and safety of students during this difficult time. This moment has also made clear the importance of public schools in not just teaching and learning, but also in making sure students have access to food, physical and mental health supports, and robust enrichment opportunities. So many students and families are struggling to access education and essential services, we urge you to use the significant funds from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to ensure schools can address the needs of students who are most marginalized during and after this crisis. We offer our assistance and support as you work to use the CARES Act federal funds to help students and families during this crucial period.

As you know,

immigrant, migrant children, children experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ children, and children in the juvenile justice system. It is likely that these children in particular will face the most significant barriers to accessing the education services and other supports they need during these difficult times.

The existing opportunity gap is likely to be exacerbated due to inequities in access to quality education, space to learn, and caretakers to support their learning and provide specialized services, including for students with disabilities. Further, children

learning. The impact of this crisis may be long-term: research found that it took two full years to recover learning loss that occurred following school closures during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

4. Throughout all of the above federally funded activities, the State must ensure students most impacted during this crisis are prioritized for instructional and socio-emotional support and opportunities, which includes through:

- McKinney-Vento Program services for homeless children,
- compensatory education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for children with disabilities,
- addressing the technology gap for low-income children and children of color,
- providing educational materials and resources in the child's family's native language, and
- ensuring students receive needed health and mental health services.

We are ready to work with you to see that the needs of Alabama children are addressed during this extraordinary time. We welcome the opportunity for meeting to discuss this with you and to answer any questions you may have. Please contact Shay Farley at shay.farley@splcenter.org or Katherine Dunn at katherine.dunn@splcenter.org if we can answer any questions or provide any support.

Sincerely,

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Alabama Arise
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
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