



**National Association
for Music Education**



MUSIC EDUCATION
POLICY ROUNDTABLE

Education Funding Relief for Public Schools

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged every facet of our lives, and our education system has not been spared. Students, teachers and families have never faced the challenges that have come with the shutdown of schools while trying to endure an economic crisis that threatens significant education cuts across the country.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly harsh on states' ability to balance their budgets and adequately fund social services. According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), state budget shortfalls expected from COVID-19's economic fallout will total a cumulative \$615 billion over state fiscal years 2020-2022. These shortfalls will have extremely negative consequences for education, which is often a target for budget cuts. As cases of the virus continue to rise and states make plans for how to safely educate students during the pandemic, ensuring their ability to properly provide education services is critical.

Additionally, the 'homework gap', which refers to the unequal opportunity experienced by students who lack home internet access, has had an even greater impact during the pandemic. Research suggests that between 12 and 16 million K-12 students in the United States are unable to log online for distance learning and that students from rural areas and racial minority groups are disproportionately affected. The distance learning environment precipitated by COVID-19 is exacerbating education inequity as millions of students remain disconnected from their teachers and classmates.

Students will soon return to school increasingly in need of environments which support their social and emotional development. [Research demonstrates](#) that music education has a multitude of benefits to support students' emotional well-being and help students cope with social isolation and the rapidly changing reality. Maintaining the Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) commitment to a well-rounded education supports the development of characteristics essential for students' development and we must ensure that access to this critical component of the learning experience is available to all.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, states are unable to do this without federal aid or draconian budget cuts. Local education agencies have already begun to adjust curricular offerings for the coming school year and remove music courses that benefit students and their ability to cope with these troubling times. We urge Congress to address the needs of the states and the needs of our nation's students in the next relief package, and appropriate adequate funding for our nation's public schools.

The National Association for Music Education and the Music Education Policy Roundtable call on Congress to appropriate:

- At least \$130 billion in funds to provide flexible resources for K-12 schools to reopen or provide distance learning. If it is deemed by public health departments that it is safe to reopen schools, these funds can be used to reduce class sizes and modify spaces so students and teachers can socially distance, improve ventilation and provide personal protective equipment. If schools cannot open safely, schools can use the funding to continue providing distance learning as equitably as possible.
- At least \$350 billion in aid to state and local governments to backfill state education budget shortfalls.

- At least \$4 billion in dedicated funding to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) E-Rate program. The E-Rate is an effective, bipartisan program that supports schools and libraries in acquiring discounted computers and internet connection devices, using fees collected through the Universal Service Fund (USF).