



BACK TO SCHOOL PACKET: 2018 EDITION

Dear NAFIS Member:

It's the middle of August, and Congress is on its longest Congressional district work period of the year, known as August Recess. For Impact Aid advocates, August is about getting the school year up and running, planning for the Impact Aid application, and setting the stage for our work once Congress returns in September.

This fall, there are major issues on the table, most importantly critical decisions regarding Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 funding for Impact Aid and other education programs. So far this year:

- The Administration's proposal to eliminate Federal Properties funding and reduce Basic Support funding by \$525 million was rejected by the House and Senate.
- Funding increases of \$2 million and \$1 million for Federal Properties were proposed in the House and Senate, respectively; increases of \$50 million and \$24 million for Basic Support were proposed in the House and Senate, respectively.

Part of your responsibility as an Impact Aid advocate is to develop relationships with your representatives in Congress and their staff. Building these relationships allows you to educate your legislators about the importance of Impact Aid and be a better advocate for the program.

August through November is also a critical time for Basic Support recipients to collect federally connected student data for the upcoming application – through both Pupil Surveys and Source Checks.

Enclosed in this Back to School Packet is information to advocate for increased Impact Aid funding and resources for preparing for the Impact Aid application.

We hope the first few weeks back to school go smoothly and that we see you at the NAFIS Fall Conference, September 23-25.

NAFIS Action Network

The NAFIS Action Network is our grassroots advocacy platform. It is located on the NAFIS [website](#) under the “Contact Congress” tab, or here [directly](#). This virtual tool facilitates communication between you and your representatives in Congress, including:

- Letter template to send personal messages to your Senators and Representative
- Bills and related legislation NAFIS is tracking
- Information about your Senators and Representative including their committee assignments, staff information, Twitter handles, and more

Social Media

Social media is a great way to amplify a message or get instant feedback. Nearly every Member of Congress has a social media presence, and online platforms can be an effective way to engage directly with policymakers, the media, and the public. Currently, NAFIS uses two social media platforms – Twitter and Facebook – to share information, amplify local stories, and build the NAFIS brand (please follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!). If your school district has innovative approaches to achieve a high return rate of parent-pupil survey cards, post it. If a local news article is written about Impact Aid in your school district, post it. Share how Impact Aid helps students in your area with your friends and followers.

Twitter

[Twitter](#) is the land of instant communication. “Tweets” are capped at 280 characters, and a hashtag (#) is used to tag common conversations and make it easier to search for a topic. For example, if you type #ImpactAid into the Twitter search function, tweets about Impact Aid from NAFIS and others will be listed. #ImpactAid is also the hashtag used for the two NAFIS National Conferences.

Twitter is a great way to connect with Congress because you can tweet directly to your Representative, and he/she can respond instantly with a comment or answer to a question you pose. Just be sure to include their Twitter handle, which identifies each Twitter account using (@). For example, if you want to tweet to NAFIS you’d include @NAFISschools in the Twitter message. You can usually find a member of Congress’ Twitter handle on their website.

Twitter is also a good way to connect with your community and help them understand Impact Aid and the importance of completing the parent-pupil survey. Many parents follow their child’s school district and district leaders’ Twitter accounts to stay informed on issues relevant to the child’s education.

Here are a few sample messages (@XXX is a placeholder for you to enter your Member of Congress’ Twitter handle):

For Policymakers:

- Congress must pass an omnibus, not a CR that delays #ImpactAid payments @XXX
- Thank you @XXX for supporting an increase for #ImpactAid!
- Congress: Support a \$52 million increase for #ImpactAid @XXX

For Community Members:

About Impact Aid:

- #ImpactAid = tax relief. Without it, federally-connected communities can face steeper taxes & lower revenue. FedGovt must pay its fair share! Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2nmhskk>

- #ImpactAid is efficient & flexible. Local leaders target funding where it's needed (curriculum, PD, transportation, construction). Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2nmhskk>

About Survey Cards:

- A Federal #ImpactAid survey form may have been sent home with your child. Completing & returning the form = funding for your school
- Fall is the season for #ImpactAid cards. Complete & return them to ensure your school receives the resources it deserves!
- 100% completion of #ImpactAid cards = more \$ for your school
- Garrison Commander XXX is speaking to students today about the importance of completing the #ImpactAid survey cards.
- Be on the lookout for your child's Federal #ImpactAid card—it will be sent home on XXX

Facebook

[Facebook](#) is the world's biggest social network, where subscribers can connect with friends, share articles, and amplify a message through "sharing" and "liking" features. For example, you can "like" posts from the [NAFIS Facebook page](#) or "share" them, which will re-post the message for your Facebook friends. You can also use Facebook to share important information with your followers, helping them better understand Impact Aid and the need to turn in the parent-pupil survey (if relevant).

Here are a few sample messages for your personal or school district Facebook accounts:

For Policymakers:

- Congress must support the \$52 million Basic Support increase provided in the House bill. This funding increase would maintain the current LOT payout for #ImpactAid, benefitting scores of affected students.
- #ImpactAid is efficient and flexible. All dollars appropriated annually by Congress go directly to school districts without state involvement and can be used for any general fund purpose including instructional materials, salaries, construction transportation, or capital needs. This flexibility allows school districts to use funds wherever needs are greatest and effectively support all students.
- Impact Aid helps educate 10M students in all 50 states. Support full funding of #ImpactAid.
- Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. Congress should fully fund #ImpactAid to ensure my school district can provide XXX.

For Community Members:

About Impact Aid:

- #ImpactAid supports equity for military children, who already sacrifice so much as their families support our nation, and ensures Federal Government meets its Trust and Treaty obligations to Indian nations and their children. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2nmhskk>
- Children in communities with a military installation, Native American reservation, national park or laboratory shouldn't have less because the Federal Government doesn't pay its tax bill in the form of federal #ImpactAid. Learn more about this important program: <https://bit.ly/2nmhskk>
- In our school district, we couldn't do XXX without #ImpactAid.
- #ImpactAid plays a key role in our district, helping us pay for XXX. Learn more about what this funding is and why we get it: <https://bit.ly/2nmhskk>

About Survey Cards (include a picture of the survey card so parents know what it looks like):

- Now that the new school year has started, be sure to be on the lookout for your child's Federal #ImpactAid card. Complete and return the cards to ensure our school district receives the resources we deserve!
- To ensure our school district receives all the resources we deserve, it is critical that parents complete and return their child's #ImpactAid survey cards. Please send it back by **XXX**! Learn more about Impact Aid: <https://bit.ly/2nmhskk>

Faces of Impact Aid

To help communicate the importance of Impact Aid to Federal officials and your community members, NAFIS has an ongoing initiative called "Faces of Impact Aid." Modeled after the popular social media project "Humans of New York," Faces of Impact Aid features short vignettes from school districts on the NAFIS [Facebook](#) page and in our other communications. These stories illustrate important areas Impact Aid funds – like academic achievement, STEM programs, school construction, and teacher recruitment and retention. In addition to sending them to NAFIS, you can email these vignettes to Congressional staff or print copies to bring as a “leave behind” during the Hill Day at the NAFIS Fall Conference. You can also share them on social media or use them as the basis for an op-ed or other communications in your community.

We want to hear from your district! If you would like to participate in this initiative, follow this [template](#) and email it to Anne O'Brien (anne@nafisd.org). Be sure to include a photograph (pre-approved for use on social media and in print) illustrating your point.

Submit an Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed)

Op-Eds and letters to the editor are opportunities for those with special knowledge on a topic to express their opinion and offer evidence for their point of view. Op-eds are well-read by the public, and Congressional offices monitor local media for issues that are important and timely to their constituents.

- If possible, tie your op-ed or letter-to-the-editor to a recent news story or editorial.
- Check with your local paper as to their preferred length—letters to the editor tend to be less than 250 words; op-eds have a wide range but are more typically between 550 and 800.
- Target media that reaches parents, students, and covers education topics.
- Include your name, address and a daytime phone number with your letter. Editors will need to verify that you are the author. When they call, use the opportunity to suggest story ideas about Impact Aid. Contact NAFIS to get a copy of “Talking Points,” or other resource material to provide the editor with background information and to promote Impact Aid.

School Board Resolution

Adopting a school board resolution in recognition of the importance of the Impact Aid program is another way to demonstrate to Federal policymakers that it should be a priority. Here's an example of a resolution from [Impact Schools of South Dakota](#), and another example from [San Diego Unified School District](#). Below is a template for your school district to consider:

Template School Board Resolution

A RESOLUTION, urging the US Congress to prevent spending reductions and increase funding for the Federal Impact Aid program.

WHEREAS, President Harry S Truman signed Public Law 81-874 in 1950, which first authorized the Impact Aid program;

WHEREAS, Impact Aid, the oldest Federal K-12 education program, is designed to reimburse school districts for the loss of traditional revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt Federal property or activities;

WHEREAS, Impact Aid payments are allocated directly to school districts in lieu of lost local tax dollars to assist with the basic educational needs of students and schools;

WHEREAS, existing property owners in our community already bear a significant financial burden due to Federal acquisition of private lands; and

WHEREAS, Impact Aid funding is of critical importance in providing quality educational opportunities for the (school district name) school district, without which our school district could not accomplish XX; and

WHEREAS, the Federal obligation upon which the Impact Aid program is based today is no different than it was when the program was established over 65 years ago:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

, the (school district name) strongly supports the Federal investment in federally impacted school districts, opposes sequestration as created by the Budget Control Act and its negative affect on the Impact Aid program; advocates for increased funding for this Federal obligation to alleviate the local taxpayer burden caused by Federal Property; and requests the US Congress recognize the importance of the Impact Aid program in ensuring that federally connected children receive a high-quality public education by fully funding the Impact Aid program.

Meeting with Congress at “Home”

For your longer term advocacy work, start planning a meeting with your representatives when they are back home. Often, it is more productive to meet representatives in your district than in DC. The hustle and bustle of DC is miles away. Here are a few tips to assist you in arranging local meetings and using the time during August recess wisely:

1. **Schedule the meeting in advance:** Call the local district office to schedule a visit or inquire about public office hours in advance. Be prepared to specify the meeting topic.
2. **Suggest a group meeting:** If a group of advocates are present, it demonstrates your concern about an issue is shared by other constituents. Numbers do count when trying to persuade policymakers of the importance of your views.
3. **Be on time, be prepared, and bring materials:** Your time will be limited. Prepare talking points in advance and bring printed materials to leave behind as a resource.
4. **Invite your representatives to visit your school:** Suggest a tour of a new facility or invite them to speak at a district meeting. Members of Congress will welcome the opportunity for an up-close look at how a school operates.
5. **Use the meeting as a photo opportunity:** Take a photo with your representative at the school or community meeting. Use it in a newsletter or post it to a social media site.

6. **Make contact with local Congressional staff:** Get to know key staff in local offices. They can be extremely helpful in your efforts to gain access to lawmakers when they're in DC.
7. **Be a local resource:** Members of Congress frequently establish advisory panels (consisting of parents, teachers, administrators etc.) to provide them with the local viewpoint on education policy initiatives. By serving on these panels you will be in a good position to offer input.
8. **Attend town hall meetings:** Lawmakers hold town halls to facilitate open dialogue with their constituents. Plan to attend and pose a question about Impact Aid to your elected official.