

Back-to-School 2019: 6 Ways to Support Impact Aid

For educators, this time of the year is about getting the school year up and running, including planning for the Impact Aid application. For Impact Aid advocates, it is also about connecting with members of Congress while they are home in their states and districts to explain the importance of Impact Aid and set the stage for policy work once Congress returns to Washington, DC, in September.

As you celebrate the back-to-school season, spend a few moments taking action to support Impact Aid. For example, you can:

1. Contact Your Congressional Representatives using the NAFIS Action Network

Ask your representatives to demonstrate their support for Impact Aid by:

- Co-sponsoring the Impact Aid Infrastructure Act, bipartisan legislation that invests in the facility and construction needs of federally impacted school districts
- Increasing funding for Impact Aid for FY 2020

On the [NAFIS Action Network](#) – our virtual tool to facilitate communication between you and your representatives in Congress – we have templates you can send directly to your legislators urging action on these issues. Personalize the messages to show how important Impact Aid is to your school district.

2. Raise Awareness on Social Media

Social media is a great way to inform your community on Impact Aid, show your support for the program, and get ideas on how to improve your practice. For example, you can use Twitter and Facebook to alert your community when parent-pupil surveys are sent home; search for examples of how other districts are publicizing the surveys; or tag your legislators in tweets about how important Impact Aid is to your district.

Sample messages (@XXX is a placeholder for your school district's Twitter handle; @YYY is a placeholder for your member of Congress' handle, which can be found on their website):

- Be on the lookout for your child's Federal #ImpactAid card. Complete and return the card to ensure our school district receives the resources we deserve! *(Tip: include a picture of the survey card so parents know what it looks like)*
- @XXX relies on #ImpactAid to pay for student transportation, technology and school counselors. Parents & guardians, please complete your survey cards so we get the resources our students deserve! *(Tip: include a picture of the survey card so parents know what it looks like)*
- As we head back to school, we are thankful for the #ImpactAid program, which provides funds that we use to offer important opportunities & resources to students. @YYY
- Congress: Support a \$52 million increase for #ImpactAid! We at @XXX use it for STEM curriculum, student social/emotional supports, facilities maintenance and more. @YYY

3. Meet with Congress at Home

Take advantage of Congress being home through September 8 to meet with your representatives at their district office to talk about the importance of Impact Aid, or invite them to visit a local school. Treat this meeting as you would a meeting in DC – schedule it in advance (or stop by during office hours if appropriate); be on time; be prepared with talking points; and have materials to leave behind as a resource. Remember to use the meeting as a photo opportunity, and publicize it in a newsletter or on social media.

If you aren't able to schedule a meeting or school visit, consider attending a town hall meeting to pose a question about Impact Aid to your elected official.

4. Submit an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor

Op-eds and letters to the editor are opportunities for those with special knowledge on a topic (like Impact Aid) to express their opinion and offer evidence for their point of view. They are well-read by the public and monitored by congressional offices to identify issues important to 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. Remember to include your name, address and daytime phone number with your letter (editors will need to verify that you are the author).

Here's an example of [a letter to the editor](#) thanking legislators for their support of Impact Aid, and [an op-ed](#) opposing the recent proposal to redirect Impact Aid funds to private school vouchers.

5. Adopt a School Board Resolution

Adopting a school board resolution in recognition of the importance of the Impact Aid program is another way to support Impact Aid, demonstrating to your community and 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](#).

If your school board does adopt such a resolution, be sure to alert your congressional representatives and send it to NAFIS.

6. Share Your Story with NAFIS

Join the NAFIS "Faces of Impact Aid" campaign. Modeled after the popular social media project "Humans of New York," "Faces of Impact Aid" features short vignettes from school districts that illustrate important projects and opportunities that Impact Aid funds, including STEM programs, school construction, teacher recruitment and retention activities, social/emotional learning and more. These stories both inform NAFIS efforts on the Hill and raise awareness about why Impact Aid is important. To participate, 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.

Please contact Anne O'Brien, NAFIS Director of Communications, if you have any questions or want to share other ideas on how to support Impact Aid!