



National Association of Federally Impacted Schools

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June 2, 2021

Dear Senator/Representative:

The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools requests that Impact Aid school construction funding be included in the infrastructure proposals currently being considered by Congress. Funding for Impact Aid construction is included in the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act, which provides \$100 billion in direct grants and \$30 billion in bonds for K-12 public school facilities (including \$500 million for the Impact Aid construction program), and the Impact Aid Infrastructure Act, which provides \$1 billion in funding through the Impact Aid construction program. NAFIS supports both of these bills.

The Federal government has accepted responsibility for funding construction at federally impacted school districts. Impact Aid was originally enacted as a construction program and continues to include annual construction funding for federally impacted schools. The inclusion of dedicated funding for federally impacted school districts in a larger infrastructure package would not create a new program, and there is precedent – the 2009 *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* invested \$100 million in the program.

Federally impacted school districts face the unique challenge of limited local tax revenue (and in turn, limited or non-existent bonding capacity) due to the presence of nontaxable Federal property, such as Indian Trust, Treaty, and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands, military installations and other Federal property. Many of these school districts are educating students in facilities with health and safety code violations, or that are more than 100 years old.

School districts that receive funding under the Impact Aid construction program educate some of our nation's most vulnerable children, including large numbers of Native American and military-connected students. These students need access to safe, modern school buildings. Increased Federal funding for the program will assist federally impacted school districts in both addressing health and safety concerns and making needed updates to support remote, hybrid and in-person teaching and learning, giving students the opportunity to reach their full potential in these uncertain times.

In a 2017 survey of 218 federally impacted districts, NAFIS identified \$13 billion in unmet construction need, including \$4.2 billion in pressing need. Specific projects would address overcrowding, leaky roofs, cracked foundations, expired boilers, technology upgrades and more. The public school funding provided in an infrastructure package would be a critical step for these school districts and would provide a pathway to safer and more supportive school buildings for our students.

By supporting public school infrastructure, especially in federally impacted school districts, Congress can help bring federally impacted school buildings into the 21st century and provide our students a safe and supportive learning environment.

Sincerely,

Hilary Goldmann
Executive Director

Leslie Finnan
Director of Policy & Advocacy

THE NAFIS FAMILY

MISA

Military Impacted
Schools Association

NIISA

National Indian Impacted
Schools Association

FLISA

Federal Lands Impacted
Schools Association

MTLLS

Mid-to-Low-LOT
Schools