Rep. Roger Marshall
312 Cannon
Washington, D.C. 20515

Rep. Steve Watkins
1205 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

Rep. Sharice Davids
1541 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

Rep. Ron Estes
2452 Rayburn
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 20, 2020

Representatives Marshall, Watkins, Davids and Estes,

I’m writing to ask you to sign on to the bipartisan “Dear Colleague” letter by Representatives Moulton of Massachusetts and Stauber of Minnesota to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, urging her to rescind her guidance on distribution of CARES Act funding to private schools. The National School Boards Association, AASA-The School Superintendents Association, the National PTA and other advocacy groups have endorsed this bipartisan effort.

In the April 30, 2020 guidance entitled, “Providing Equitable Services to Students and Teachers in Non-Public Schools under the CARES Act Programs,” the Secretary urges school districts to distribute CARES Act aid to private schools according to the total number of students enrolled in the private institutions. Favoring private schools over public ones at a time of fierce competition for state and local dollars in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is simply unacceptable.

If districts follow the Department’s guidance, public schools will receive fewer dollars than intended by Congress while serving proportionally more low-income students. Many education leaders have said they will not follow the guidance; as a result, we understand the Department is drafting a rule that would enshrine this funding inequity in a precedent that would impact future appropriations for public education.

Your office has likely received the request for signatures sent by Rep. Moulton’s office. Signatures are due by close of business on Monday, June 22.
Thank you for your support of public education. If you or your staff have any questions about this effort to revise the Education Department’s guidance, they may contact Deborah Rigsby at the National School Boards Association (drigsby@nsba.org; (703) 838-6208) or Leah Fliter at KASB (lfliter@kasb.org; (785) 320-1491).

Sincerely,

Shannon L. Kimball
President, Kansas Association of School Boards
Member, Board of Education, Lawrence USD 497