

Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee FY22 Member Day

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Testimony of Congressman Jamaal Bowman Ed.D.

INTRO

Thank you Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole for the opportunity to testify before the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-and Education today. As a former teacher, school counselor and principal, I think it's only right that the subcommittee responsible for education funding at the federal level enjoys the largest share of non-defense spending.

I deeply appreciate the incredible work this subcommittee carries out under your leadership, not only for our regular fiscal year spending, but for the COVID-19 relief packages as well.

I'm here to testify in support of programs that directly impact children in my district, which covers parts of the Bronx and Westchester.

HEAD START – EARLY CHILDHOOD

The first 1000 days of a child's life have a tremendous impact on their brain development, their physical and social-emotional health, and their long-term outcomes into adulthood. Without the right supports in place, our children are vulnerable to Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs – but ACEs are preventable. Every child deserves supportive caregiving with wraparound services in a healthy, trauma-informed space to learn and grow into their full potential.

I ask the subcommittee to dramatically increase our investment in Head Start. Head Start takes a community-based, comprehensive approach to early childhood education – and we should do more to expand their work – including Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships – which serve infants and toddlers in my district in Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, and Yonkers through the Westchester Community Opportunity Program. I ask that the subcommittee increase Head Start funding by *at least* \$1.3 billion for an overall level of \$12.1 billion in FY2022. I urge that we consider this the floor because we need to fund Head Start—along with the other core birth-through-five programs like CCDBG, Preschool Development Grants, and IDEA Part B Preschool Grants and Part C—at the highest feasible levels.

FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The community-based, comprehensive approach taken by quality early childhood education programs is an approach our K-12 system should take greater efforts to adopt. The Full-Service Community Schools program has shown what we can accomplish when we harness schools as community hubs that support students, families, and communities holistically. However, the current funding level for Full-Service Community Schools makes them too rare. I am speaking to you as the founder of a community public school, and as someone who authored a dissertation on the importance of community schools. I ask that the Subcommittee consider robust funding for the program. Communities in New York's 16th Congressional District would greatly stand to benefit from the expansion of Full-Service Community Schools.

IDEA

I especially wish to highlight our need to invest in IDEA. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has been enacted since 1975, but we have always fallen short of our mandate to pay 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure. On the Education and Labor Committee, we recently held a hearing on the impact of COVID-19 on our students with disabilities. We heard directly from a special education teacher who made clear we are in dire need of additional resources, including more special education teachers, to support our students meaningfully. In FY21, our IDEA Part B funding didn't even cover half of what we owe our students, and I ask that the Committee allocate funds such that we are on the most expedient path to fulfilling our federal mandate.

TEACHERS – TITLE II-A Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

Lastly, our investments in children would be nowhere without our teachers. The people responsible for educating our children should be a priority as we work to recover from the pandemic and build our education system back better than ever. I ask that the Subcommittee include \$3 billion for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program for Fiscal Year 2022. According to the Institute of Education Sciences, 88 percent of urban and suburban school districts use these funds for professional development – investing in this program will increase our students' access to quality, effective teachers and school leaders. It was Teacher Appreciation Week at the beginning of May and I ask that we show appreciation for our teachers in our federal budget.

Thank you.