



The National Association of Magnet and Theme-Based Schools

News Release

Statement from Todd Mann, Executive Director of Magnet Schools of America

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our public education system in ways that were unimaginable only two months ago. As most of the country shelters in place, approximately 8.5 to 12 million students lack access to the internet at home – also known as the “homework gap” – making it difficult for students to attend virtual learning sessions or complete homework assignments. This gap is especially prevalent for students of color, students living in rural communities and low-income families where access to reliable Wi-Fi or home computers is extremely limited.

Last week, MSA was asked by the National Education Association (NEA) to join a coalition to help bridge this divide and eliminate the homework gap. Steadfast in our mission to increase access to high-quality public education for students of all socio-economic and racial backgrounds, MSA was proud to work alongside Representative Grace Meng (D-NY) and the coalition to draft an emergency funding bill to appropriate \$2 billion to the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC’s) 22-year old, equity-based E-rate program. Funding for this program will ensure that all K-12 students and teachers will have the ability to purchase Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, and other devices to connect online, and teach and participate in virtual classes or complete schoolwork.

More than 40 leading national education and equity organizations have signed on in support of the bill as it currently stands, and we will continue to urge Congress to include this funding in the next COVID-19 stimulus package. MSA is honored to partner with these groups in this effort and help all our students achieve an equitable and accessible education during this uncertain time – and beyond.

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Magnet Schools of America ([MSA](#)) is a nonprofit education association that represents more than 4,340 magnet schools serving nearly 3.5 million students across 46 states and the District of Columbia. MSA was founded in 1986 and supports and serves the leaders and teachers of magnet and theme-based schools. It also provides technical assistance through the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership ([NIMSL](#)).