Hello RSAI members,

I'm at the National Rural Education Forum in Columbus, OH, and just heard from Leslie Finnan, Senior Legislative Analyst from AASA today, Oct. 12, 2017.

She shared the status of several federal education and funding policies which we will have for you at the RSAI annual meeting, but today, advocacy is needed on extending the Children's Health Insurance Program, knowns as CHIP.

Good news - the Senate in Washington has already passed a bi-partisan bill to extend it.

AASA is urging Congress to pass the bipartisan Senate bill.  Please reach out to your representatives in DC and ask for approval of the Senate bill which extends CHIP. Leslie thinks they'll get to it soon, planning initially for early fall (which it already is) but with some states running out of funds imminently, immediate action is required.  From AASA advocacy blog: <http://www.aasa.org/policy-blogs.aspx?id=41675&blogid=84002&archive=true>

**Write or Call Your Representatives and Senators with the Following Message:**

* The CHIP program ensures low-income children are healthy enough to learn by covering basic health screening, immunizations and many other critical health services.
* Schools rely on CHIP funding to supplement the healthcare services they provide to students. If Congress does not act quickly to extend funding for CHIP then school districts will lose funding for the critical health services low-income children receive that ensure they are healthy enough to learn.
* More than half of the nearly nine million children served by CHIP are eligible to receive services in school through their state Medicaid programs.
* School districts depend on CHIP to finance many of these services and have already committed to the staff and contractors they require to provide mandated services for this current school year. The failure of Congress to continue funding CHIP would merely shift the financial burden of providing services to the schools and the state and local taxpayers who fund them.
* Support the bipartisan bill to extend the CHIP program for five years in your chamber.
* Iowa was shown on a map to have funds available through Spring 2018, but many other states will be out of resources for serving children within the next two weeks.

Find your Congressional Representatives here: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/IA>

Additional background from AASA follows:

**Action Alert: Support Extension of Children's Health Insurance Program**

The CHIP Program expired on September 30th. If Congress does not act quickly to extend funding for CHIP then school districts will lose funding for the critical health services provided to low-income children that ensure they are healthy enough to learn.

CHIP provides essential funding to support states to cover uninsured children. Any delay or a failure to immediately extend funding for CHIP will jeopardize coverage for children who are eligible for school-based health-related services leading to immediate and lasting harmful effects for America’s most vulnerable citizens. A lapse in coverage for children places more barriers on their ability to come to school ready to learn. During a time of great uncertainty in the healthcare system, children need the consistent, reliable health coverage CHIP provides today.

More than half of the nearly nine million children served by CHIP are eligible to receive services in school through their state Medicaid programs. Fifteen states exclusively use CHIP funds to extend their Medicaid programs, meaning all children who qualify for CHIP receive identical services and benefits as their traditional Medicaid-counterparts. In most states, a substantial portion of children served by CHIP receive Medicaid services and benefits protections. Districts in these States bill Medicaid for health services they provide to CHIP eligible children. This funding stream is critical to ensuring that healthcare services can be delivered to eligible students in the school building.

A school’s primary responsibility is to provide students with a high-quality education. However, children cannot learn to their fullest potential with unmet health needs. The health services these children receive that ensure they are healthy enough to learn. School districts depend on CHIP to finance many of these services and have already committed to the staff and contractors they require to provide mandated services for this school year. The failure to continue funding CHIP would merely shift the financial burden of providing services to the schools and the state and local taxpayers who fund them.

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