



Urban school leaders predict teacher layoffs in 'educational catastrophe' without federal intervention

By Nicole Gaudiano

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Nearly 300,000 teachers could be laid off from schools in big cities without additional federal relief funding to ease the impact of the coronavirus on school budgets, according to the Council of the Great City Schools.

In a [Tuesday letter to congressional leaders](#), the organization wrote that several big-city school districts are projecting 15 to 25 percent cuts in overall revenues going into next school year.

The group said an estimated 20 percent loss in combined state and local revenues would likely result in some 275,000 teachers being laid off in big-city public school systems alone.

“The ramifications are not only profound for the students involved, but for the nation,” wrote the Council members, which include superintendents in Florida, California, New York City and Newark, N.J. “This educational catastrophe could weaken the country’s economic foundation for years to come without significant financial support from Congress.”

The letter, signed by 62 big-city superintendents, renews the organization’s call for more than \$200 billion in additional stimulus funds for education.

The group wants \$175 billion in education stabilization funds to be distributed through the Title I formula. It also wants an additional \$13 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, \$12 billion in additional Title I program funding, \$2 billion for the education technology program E-Rate and emergency infrastructure funds that include public schools.

K-12 funding in the CARES Act, [H.R. 748 \(116\)](#), will help offset unexpected costs the school systems are incurring in providing meal services to students and reestablishing instruction, they wrote.

“At the same time, dark clouds are forming on the educational horizon that will spell disaster if Congress does not intervene,” they wrote.

The organization predicted a “far more severe” situation than during the 2008-09 recession that promises “much more substantial damage.” Along with teachers being laid off, the organization wrote that class sizes will balloon and remaining teaching staff will be redeployed to classes and subjects they’re not used to teaching.

Additional funds will help public schools add summer school, expand the school day in the fall, retain teachers, address the needs of vulnerable students and narrow the digital divide, they wrote.