

Press release

Embargoed for release: 9am EST, January 29, 2018

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Coalition Launches to Support Federal Investment in Public School Facilities; Nonpartisan Group Seeks \$100 Billion as Part of Infrastructure Bill

WASHINGTON, DC — A group of nonpartisan organizations announced today the formation of a broad-based coalition to support fair federal funding of public school facilities as part of comprehensive infrastructure legislation.

The [Re]Build America’s School Infrastructure Coalition (BASIC) is pushing for \$100 billion of federal investment over the next 10 years to help modernize the nation’s aging public school facilities.

Over 150 House members support a [bill](#) introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (VA), and 25 Senators have expressed support for a similar [bill](#) from Sen. Jack Reed (RI). Both bills would provide \$100 billion in federal grants and school construction bonds and would create an estimated 1.8 million construction jobs nationwide. During his 2016 election campaign, President Trump repeatedly called for including schools in any infrastructure bill and is expected to address the issue during his State of the Union address on Jan. 30.

“We’re encouraged that there is bipartisan support for adequate and equitable federal funding for public school facilities,” said Mary Filardo, Executive Director of the 21st Century School Fund, which helped organize the BASIC coalition. “It’s time. We need to make these investments in our future strength and prosperity while our economy is strong. Surely, the places our children learn in are as important as the roads we drive on.”

Former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, a long-time champion of seeing schools as centers of community said, “Over 90 percent of this nation’s children go to America’s public schools. This is a big fact that members of Congress would do well to remember. These facilities are essential public infrastructure used every day by over 55 million Americans during the school year. If the White House and congressional Republicans want a legislative victory, they would be smart to put forward a bipartisan infrastructure bill that includes public schools.”

The current reality:

Massive scale. Public schools are the second largest public sector of America’s infrastructure, after roads and highways. Each weekday, 1 in 6 Americans – over 50 million children and adults -- sets foot in a public school.

Major investment gap. Local communities and states are currently spending \$49 billion a year to build and modernize public school facilities; but that's \$38 billion a year less than they need. This \$38 billion investment gap impacts education, health, safety, security, and the environment.

Uneven funding support. Some states provide a lot of support for school facilities. But 12 states provide none. And other than some modest FEMA spending to help rebuild after natural disasters, there are NO federal facilities funds for even the poorest school districts.

Built-in inequities. 80% of facilities funding comes from local property taxes, which leads to huge disparities. Cities and rural areas are particularly impacted. Over 6 million rural students impacted by lack of high-speed broadband.

Charter members of the coalition's leadership team are:

- [The 21st Century School Fund](#) engages in research, advocacy, innovation, and facilitation of civic and public sector networks to build constituencies for modern and equitable public school buildings and grounds.
- [The Center for Cities + Schools](#) provides research on school infrastructure policy and practice to ensure high quality learning environments for all children in schools that are sustainable centers of communities.
- [The Center for Green Schools](#) works with school decision makers, community volunteers, and thought leaders in the public and private sectors to advance sustainability at the intersection of education, public health, and the built environment.
- [The National Council on School Facilities](#) supports state level public PK-12 facilities officials in their varied roles and responsibilities for the delivery of safe, healthy, and educationally appropriate public school facilities that are sustainable and fiscally sound.
- [International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers \(BAC\)](#) works to improve the quality of life – on and off the job – of its members through access to fair wages, good benefits, safe working conditions, and solidarity among members. BAC is the oldest continuous union in North America.
- [Johnson Controls](#) is a global diversified technology and multi-industrial firm developing smart cities through integrated infrastructure, intelligent buildings, efficient energy solutions, and new age transportation systems.

Additional background and details about the coalition: basicschoolinfrastructure.org