

How Can I Encourage My Child's District to Invest Forward?

Guidance for Parents and Families

The pandemic has significantly affected students' learning and preparation for college and careers. To address these challenges, the federal government recently provided **\$123 billion to states and K-12 school districts**. This represents the largest single investment in education in history. While states and districts have great flexibility in how they spend the money, they are required to gather input from the public to guide their decisions. This is your chance to influence the spending to ensure that they are supporting your child on their path to economic opportunity beyond high school.

Surveys of parents are abundantly clear: you want your child to move on to college or career training after high school. And it should be the responsibility of the K-12 system to ensure that your student receives the training and support to realize that aspiration. Unfortunately, the **pandemic has knocked more than 25 percent of all students off-course in the pursuit of their dreams**.

As your district begins to survey families about how they should use this one-time investment, now is the time to speak up and request that they Invest Forward to help students find success beyond high school.

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Start building the path for students to successfully transition to college or career after high school in the freshman year.



Help students get work experience and build relationships with the employer community to prepare for career success.



Earn college credits and/or workforce credentials before graduation that will jumpstart college and career success.



Support students as they directly enroll in college or training programs that lead to credentials with labor market value.

When your district requests input or feedback on its spending plans, we recommend you ask:



How much of the district spending plan is dedicated to help high school students?

High school enrollment makes up about 30% of all K-12 enrollment. While spending may not match that number exactly, there should be a significant investment in the students that have faced some of the greatest disruptions in their preparation for college, careers, and beyond.



How is the district planning to help students apply for college and access financial aid to pay for it?

Districts that are successful in helping large numbers of students—especially Black, Hispanic, and students from low-income communities—enroll in college or career training programs are laser focused on providing advice and support to students and their families about the college application process and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).



How is the district giving students opportunities to connect to their college and career interests while in high school?

Students that enroll in college courses and/or participate in high-quality career training while in high school are much more likely to graduate and immediately enroll in additional education and training after high school. These experiences open doors to long-term opportunity.

And we encourage you to point your district to the Invest Forward [website](#) and materials, which offer districts [over 20 shovel-ready ideas](#) for how they can use their dollars to address these and other critical barriers to long-term student success. We have also drafted [a sample comment letter](#) that we encourage you to share with your neighbors, colleagues, and friends to let your district know what you expect to see in their spending plan.