

**Testimony of Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon  
Committee on Education and Labor Members' Day Hearing**

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and the entire committee, thank you for holding this hearing and providing me the opportunity to share my constituents' priorities with you all.

From preschool through postsecondary school, investing in education is a crucial piece of our nation's recovery from this pandemic.

As your committee crafts policies to support our schools, institutions of higher education, students, and educators through and beyond this pandemic, I ask that you please consider the needs of my district.

I represent Pennsylvania's fifth congressional district, which includes parts of Philadelphia and its suburbs.

Our K-12 schools range from some of Pennsylvania's highest performing to some of its most under-resourced. Philadelphia School District is the largest school district in the commonwealth and one of the largest in the country.

We're also a region known for its colleges and universities, and my district alone includes over twenty institutions of higher education, including community colleges.

Even before the pandemic, K-12 public schools across my region were in desperate need of repairs.

I've toured schools in my district and have seen the crumbling infrastructure firsthand.

I've watched children walk through hallways with lead paint chipping off the walls, creating dust and debris.

Local reporting has uncovered too many troubling instances of damaged asbestos, lead pipes, and asthma triggers, such as mold and mildew, inside our schools.

These unhealthy, toxic schools pose safety risks and make children, educators, and staff sick.

Especially now, as schools work to bring students back to the classroom, the need for investments in our public school facilities is even more apparent.

I want to thank Chairman Scott for his leadership on school infrastructure.

Congress made significant progress last year in passing H.R.2, the Moving Forward Act, which included legislation from the Education and Labor Committee to rebuild America's schools.

I strongly support the President's commitment to investing in the modernization and repair of our public school facilities as part of his American Jobs Plan.

Our children and school staff deserve to learn and work in safe buildings.

The pandemic has been hard for many students, and for students with disabilities, disrupted and delayed learning has had an especially outsized impact.

As we help students make up for lost time in the classroom, we need to invest specifically in K-12 special education and early intervention services included under the IDEA.

Time and again, school leaders tell me that they need additional IDEA funding.

All students are entitled to a free and appropriate education, and we need to help school districts ensure that students with disabilities get the high-quality education they deserve.

I also ask that your committee continue to lead on solutions that will make college more accessible and affordable for all.

Pennsylvanians hold \$68 billion of student loan debt, among the highest amount of any state in the country.

Like many of my colleagues, I often hear from constituents burdened with student loan debt.

Some of those constituents are still working to pay their student loans back while their children take out their first ones.

The people in my district would benefit significantly from the policies championed by this committee to expand opportunities for all students, improve the quality of higher education, and lower the cost of college.

We also need to support and invest in alternative pathways to four-year degrees, such as apprenticeships, which make up the backbone of vocational education programs in a region like mine.

As we work to rebuild our economy, it is essential to connect workers with opportunities that will give them access to the critical skills and high-paying jobs they need to support themselves and their families.

Thank you again to the committee for its work on these important issues and for allowing me the opportunity to share my district's priorities with you.