In addition to K-12 schools, IHEs have also felt the severe impact of COVID-19. Faculty, staff, and students continue to struggle to create normalcy in the midst of financial and academic challenges. The HEERF awards public colleges $14 billion to help address these challenges, and NEA supports the following funding priorities to support students, particularly students of color and under-resourced students, and to help protect the IHE workforce.

CANCEL STUDENT DEBT
The average borrower graduates with over $30,000 in debt.

NEA supports the suspension of student loan payments for the duration of the pandemic and the cancellation of $30,000 of federal student debt for every borrower. The NEA believes suspended payments should still count toward Public Service Loan Forgiveness requirements.

CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT FOR FACULTY AND STAFF
Faculty & staff should be sustained during this difficult time.

NEA supports federal funding to continue to pay both full-time and part-time faculty and staff. Students who receive work-study and teaching assistants should be included in the staff category for the duration of the pandemic.

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO STUDENTS
Students are in need of increased financial support.

NEA supports the reallocation of all remaining federal student aid funds to students in need of emergency aid as outlined in the CARES Act. This includes the support for community colleges through the Education Stabilization Fund.

SUPPORT UNDOCUMENTED AND DACA STUDENTS
Federal funds should be used to assist all students, regardless of immigration status.

NEA believes emergency COVID-19 funds for college students should not exclude DACA and undocumented students since the allocation of these funds to colleges are based on enrollment numbers that included these students.

SUPPORT HBCUS AND MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS
Black and brown students at HBCUs and MSIs have been severely impacted by this pandemic.

NEA supports debt cancellation for those who are the most vulnerable due to the pandemic as well as low-income borrowers and students who attend MSIs.