

March 20, 2017

To: Education Colleagues

From: Jane West

RE: **Special Edition of Washington Update: Overview of President Trump's FY 2018 Budget Proposal, the "Skinny" Version**

Background

On March 16, President Trump released a blueprint for his first budget proposal – for FY 2018 -- which begins October 1, 2017. Known as the "skinny" budget, this blueprint will be filled in with greater detail about proposed specific funding levels for additional programs in May. This skinny budget is a skeleton which leaves a number of questions unanswered, but does provide a broad framework.

The proposal fulfills President Trump's campaign promises to shift funding from domestic spending to defense spending. The budget boasts an increase of about \$60 Billion for the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs. These increases would be paid for by deep cuts in domestic spending with the Environmental and Protection Agency being hit the hardest with a 31% decrease. The Department of Education is recommended for a 14% decrease. All spending cuts come out of the small slice of "Non Defense Discretionary (NDD)" spending which represents only 15% of the federal budget.

Note that this is a proposal. It does not carry the weight of law; rather it is a "wish list" and a recommendation to the Congress regarding funding levels. It begins the budget process in the Congress which will continue through the summer and into the Fall whereby committees of jurisdiction will write and mark up bills outlining funding for every government program. The numbers will become real after the Congress passes its appropriations bills for FY 2018, likely in the fall of 2017.

Many in Congress have described the budget as "Dead on Arrival," which is a common response to President's budgets no matter what the party proposing it. Every program has champions in Congress, often from both sides of the aisle, so eliminating programs and/or cutting them significantly faces political challenges. But the budget does set a marker which rallies responses either in support or opposition. Most in the education community are deeply opposed to the cuts proposed for the Department of Education.

Overview of Proposed Department of Education Budget

The Department of Education's proposed budget for \$59 Billion represents a 13.5%, or \$9 billion cut from the current level of funding. In addition, there are increases recommended for some programs which are paid for by cuts in existing programs.

Winners in the President's proposed education budget are primarily within the \$1.4 B increase for school choice, featuring the following:

- \$1 billion for Title I of ESSA to allow funding to follow a student to the public school of his or her choice, sometimes called "portability"
- \$250 million new dollars for a new voucher program which would allow public funds to support private schools

- \$168 million increase for existing charter school program

Losers in the President's proposed education budget include:

- Elimination of \$2.3 billion Title II A of ESSA, funds for teacher and leader development
- Elimination of \$1.2 billion after school program, 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Elimination of \$732 billion higher education student grant aid – the Supplemental Opportunity Grants program
- Elimination of \$43 million Teacher Quality Partnership program which prepares new teachers in shortages areas via residency programs
- Elimination of \$190 million Striving Readers, a literacy program
- Elimination of \$72 million higher education international education and foreign language studies program
- Cut of \$104 million (32%) to GEAR UP, a program to recruit low income students into college
- Cut of \$92 million (10%) for TRIO, programs to recruit and support high need students in college
- Rescinding of \$4 billion from the Pell Grant surplus (grants for low income college students)

Programs which appear to be level funded in the President's budget: (note that these could very likely change when the final budget proposal comes out in May; in other words they could be cut in the next iteration of the budget proposal)

- IDEA Part B and discretionary programs including personnel preparation
- Office for Civil Rights
- Institute for Education Sciences, including special education research

Take Aways

- This is the time to begin actively communicating with Members of Congress about the programs you support. The more they hear from constituents, the more aware they will be of the impact of individual programs on their communities and what their loss would mean.
- Do not assume that because a program is not recommended for cuts in this "skinny budget" that it will not be recommended for cuts in the May full budget proposal.
- Congress has already begun its process of hearings and consideration of FY 2018 funding for education. Stay involved throughout the spring and summer so you know the status of bills and funding levels as they move through the House and Senate.