

Washington Update May 31, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

The expansive Biden budget proposal for FY 2022 is finally out – and it does not disappoint!

1. Biden- Harris Administration Unveils Massive Budget with Historic Investments in Education

On Friday before the long-awaited Memorial Day holiday, just as Members of Congress were headed home and the rest of us were finalizing our plans for the long weekend, the White House unveiled the complete version of the Biden-Harris Administration's [full budget proposal](#) for FY 2022.

The budget proposal calls for [\\$102.8 billion for the Department of Education](#)—a \$29.8 billion or 41% increase to the Department's current spending levels. This increase in funding would be the largest increase the Department has seen since its inception in 1979.

In a [statement](#), Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona said, “This proposal reflects the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to ensuring that student success remains at the heart of the Department of Education's work. It calls on Congress to prioritize the physical and mental health of students and close education equity gaps, especially in underserved communities. We need to focus on not only recovering from the pandemic but also look towards our students' education after the pandemic to ensure there are improved resources to build our education system back better than before. This budget ensures all students have access to high-quality, affordable postsecondary education, while also improving career pathways for students of all ages and levels.”

The budget is a complex document, as it includes both the typical funding recommendations for the next fiscal year which we see annually, as well as substantial new investments and programs reflected in the two massive proposals Biden previously put forward – the American Jobs Plan (often called “Infrastructure,”) and the American Families Plan. These 10-year visionary plans include funding for education along with multiple other sectors and total trillions of dollars in new spending. Congress is looking over these plans now – and negotiating with the White House on a possible infrastructure bill. The descriptions you will see below include both FY 2022 funding proposals (discretionary spending primarily) as well as proposals for new, and often mandatory spending, for both existing and new programs. The funding column in the chart below labeled “2022 Request Discretionary” is the one Congress will likely pay the most attention to. The new mandatory spending from the American Families Plan will be a tougher sell.

Some of the largest funding increases recommended in the budget include:

- \$20 billion for Title I is for a new Equity Grant, not the existing state grant program;
- \$1 billion for a new School-Based Health Professionals program for the first year of a 10-year campaign to double the number of counselors, nurses, and mental health professionals in schools;
- \$36.5 billion for Title I grants, a \$20 billion increase from FY2021;
- \$15.5 billion for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act grants, a \$2.7 billion increase to support special education and related services for more than 7.6 million pre-K through twelfth grade students;
- \$11.9 billion for Head Start, a \$1.2 billion increase for the program which serves almost 1 million low-income 3-to 5-year-olds across the nation;
- \$732 million for IDEA Part C, a \$250 million increase for early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays;
- Increase Pell Grants by \$400, with an additional \$85 billion over 10 years to increase the maximum Pell by \$1475;
- Increase TEACH grants from \$4000 to \$8000 per year for juniors, seniors, and graduate students pursuing teaching credentials in a high need field and in a school serving low-income students; in addition the GPA requirement would be eliminated.

It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of this budget proposal – in so many areas. The Department highlighted the \$15.5 billion for IDEA Part B grants to states as the “...largest increase in the Federal contribution toward meeting the excess cost of special education in two decades,” making this a significant first step on the path to fully funding IDEA.

While the budget proposal is excellent news for all of education, it is particularly good news for those concerned about the education profession, the shortage of educators and the infrastructure in higher education which provides for a pipeline of new educators. In addition to the doubling of the TEACH grants, noted above, the recommendations in the chart below are truly unprecedented and a reflection of the keen understanding of the Biden Administration of the challenges related to having enough diverse and well-prepared educators to meet the needs of all students.

Key Programs Related to Educator Support and Preparation

Program	Current level (2021)	2022 Request Discretionary	AFP New Request Mandatory	Total
IDEA Personnel Preparation	\$90.2 M	\$250 M	\$90 M	\$340 M

Teacher Quality Partnership Grants	\$52.1 M	\$132 M	\$280 M	\$412 M
Hawkins Centers of Excellence	0	\$20 M	\$40 M	\$60 M
School Based Health Professionals	0		\$ 1 B	\$ 1 B
Expanding Opportunities for Teacher Leader Development	0	0	\$ 250 M	\$ 250 M
In- Demand Credentials for Teachers	0			\$1.6 B

Congress will now begin to study the President’s recommendations and write the FY 2022 appropriations bills. The House is scheduled to begin in June. And now the advocacy really begins!!

2. IDEA Personnel Preparation Recommendation

Of all the personnel shortage areas in education, the field of special education faces the most daunting shortage. The federal program which prepares new special educators is the Personnel Preparation account, a part of IDEA. With over four decades of investment, this program has made a significant impact in delivering the workforce to carry out the promise of IDEA. However, the shortages persist and have been exacerbated during the pandemic. As noted in the table above, the budget recommends a \$160 million increase for FY 22 in discretionary funds and an additional \$90 million under the American Families Plan in mandatory funds.

The [Department of Education’s budget justification](#) which accompanies the budget proposal describes the program and how the new funds would be used to invest in special education personnel.

It notes:

The request would represent the highest level of funding ever provided under the program and a historic investment in the personnel who provide critical services to support the estimated 8.1 million children with disabilities nationwide who receive services under IDEA. Of the request approximately \$170.8 million (including peer review costs) would be used for new projects, and \$70.2 million would support the continuation of grants made in prior years.” (p. 74)

The budget justification breaks down how the additional \$170 million would be invested as follows:

- \$30 million for doctoral programs;
- \$75 million for pre-service special education teacher and related service providers with \$25 million reserved for preparing teachers for high-incidence fields with priority given to HBCUs, MSI’s and programs with a track record of placing well-qualified teachers and service providers in high-need school districts;
- \$15 million for community colleges to support associate degree programs in early childhood special education;
- \$10 million for the development of career ladder programs for paraprofessionals to obtain full licensure;
- \$30 million to develop programs for teacher coaches trained in literacy, social/emotional development, and mental health.

The additional \$90 million of mandatory funds requested through the American Families Plan would be invested in addressing teaching shortages, improving preparation and support for teachers, and to boost teacher diversity.

This recommendation is a clear indication that the Biden Administration is deeply aware of the critical shortage of special educators, including those who serve as faculty in higher education. To all of you who have worked so hard to advocate for this program -- congratulations! Advocacy matters, and your voices have been heard! The next step is to work with Congress to make these recommendations a reality!

All the best to you for a wonderful summer! Washington Update will be off next week, returning June 11.

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