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*Legislative Overview: Education
Priorities in the 117th Congress*

Transition Recommendations for 2021 and Beyond

- Fully fund IDEA
- Help students from low-income families through increased Title I funding
- Focus on teacher recruitment, retention, and professional training
- Focus on cybersecurity and student privacy
- Pass legislation to protect Dreamers and establish a pathway to citizenship
- Invest in school infrastructure
- Promote public school innovation and oppose diversion of taxpayer funds to private schools



President's FY2022 Budget Request to Congress

Proposes \$102.8 billion for the U.S. Department of Education -- a 41% increase over current funding levels

Would more than double the federal investment in Title I programs, calling for a \$20 billion increase in Title I grants. Overall Title I funding would be \$36.5 billion.

Would provide \$15.5 billion for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants -- a \$2.6 billion increase over the current allocation

<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/statement-secretary-education-miguel-cardona-presidents-fiscal-year-2022-budget>

Voucher Opposition

- Approximately nine of every 10 U.S. students (50 million) attend public schools. A recent National School Boards Action Center survey showed that 73% of voters indicate that inadequate funding and resources for public education is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- School vouchers are education tax dollars that are diverted from public schools to help subsidize the tuition of private and religious schools. Although some states and cities have limited voucher programs, the only federally funded program is in Washington, D.C.
- Many public school districts already provide educational choices such as local magnet schools, charter schools authorized by local school boards and public specialty schools, such as military academies and those offering specialized curricula for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Although voucher legislation is unlikely to pass in the 117th Congress, it is a good idea to remind representatives of why they should oppose public funds for private schools.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- **IDEA Part B grants have a direct and immediate impact on the capacity of schools to provide all necessary services to students with disabilities.**
- School districts educate an estimated 7.4 million students through IDEA, providing teachers, specialized instructional support personnel such as speech-language pathologists, therapists and school psychologists, and purchasing assistive technology.
- **A majority of students with disabilities, through proper educational supports, are able to progress in the general education environment and graduate from high school on time.**
- With more intensive supports provided through IDEA, students with more significant disabilities have an excellent opportunity to achieve academic success and successful postschool outcomes.
- **Urge your Members of Congress to co-sponsor the Keep Our PACT Act (S. 72 and H.R. 764) that would establish a multi-year plan to increase the federal investment in Title I and IDEA.**
<https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/s72/BILLS-117s72is.pdf>

Closing the Homework Gap/ E-Rate

The ARP provides \$7.1 billion in Emergency Connectivity Funding to increase connectivity for students receiving online instruction and for homework during the COVID-19 emergency period.

The fund is to cover resources for students such as “a laptop computer, tablet computer, or similar end-user device that is capable of connecting to advanced telecommunications and information services.” Eligible equipment for connectivity includes:

- (A) Wi-Fi hotspots;
- (B) Modems;
- (C) Routers;
- (D) Devices that combine a modem and router; and,
- (E) Connected devices.

An estimated 16 million students have been impacted by the homework gap.

School Infrastructure

- Urge Congress to include the **Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act** (H.R. 604 and S. 96) within the next infrastructure package.
<https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr604/BILLS-117hr604ih.pdf>
- The Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act would:
 - Provide needs-based grants to school districts from FY 2022 – FY 2026
 - Authorize school infrastructure bond programs
 - Increase funds for school construction in districts participating in the Impact Aid program that serves federally-connected students
 - Provide assistance to repair school building foundations affected by pyrrhotite

Child Nutrition

- **USDA waivers are extended through the 2021-22 school year.**
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/child-nutrition-response-90>
- Waivers cover meal times, non-congregate feeding, parent/ guardian pick-up, some reporting requirements, area eligibility, etc.
- **With this extension of waivers, all meals will continue to be at no charge for all children.**
- USDA reimbursement to districts will be at the higher rate, commensurate to the summer meals reimbursement level.
- **Flexibilities around milk, sodium, and grain targets will continue for the coming school year.**
- USDA listing of COVID-19 waivers by state:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/cn-waivers-flexibilities>.

Teacher Recruitment, Retention & Development

- Urge Congress to strengthen investments in Title II programs for teacher/school leader preparation. This includes Title II of ESEA/ ESSA and Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA).
- **Higher Education Act Reauthorization Goals**
 - Expansion of educator preparatory programs
 - Greater support for professional development and school district retention programs
 - Emphasis on supporting educators in special education
 - Continuance of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program for educators that helps districts attract and retain effective teachers and leaders
- Relevant Legislation: Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals (PREP) Act.

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Implementation

1. Education Stabilization Funding (ESSER) - \$122 billion

2. Emergency Educational Connections Program - \$7.01 billion

3. Special Education/ IDEA - \$3.03 billion

4. Assistance to Homeless Students - \$800 million

State ESSER Plans Due June 7th

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Working with and through our State Associations to
advocate for equity and excellence in public education
through school board leadership.

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The logo for the NSBA Advocacy Institute Online. It features the acronym "nsba" in a dark blue, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, the word "Advocacy" is written in a large, red, cursive script. Underneath "Advocacy", the words "INSTITUTE" and "ONLINE" are stacked in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font.

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