

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Statement by John King
Secretary
Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education,
and Related Agencies
March 22, 2016

Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to testify today on behalf of the President's 2017 Budget request for the Department of Education. The overall discretionary request for the Department is \$69.4 billion, an increase of \$1.3 billion, or 2 percent, over 2016. The 2017 Budget builds on our progress and reflects key developments over the past year, most significantly, enactment of the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S 2017 BUDGET REQUEST

The 2017 Budget Request focuses on three major priorities: (1) advancing equity and excellence for all students; (2) expanding support for teachers and school leaders; and (3) improving access, affordability, and student outcomes in postsecondary education. Throughout the Budget, the Department also promotes use of evidence and data to maximize results for students and taxpayers.

SUPPORT FOR THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

With the enactment of the ESSA in mid-December, the Administration worked hard to align the 2017 Budget with the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and to allocate resources to support the new law's focus on education equity, support for teachers, and well-rounded instruction. We are pleased that the ESSA embraces many reforms the Administration has long supported, including State-defined college- and career-ready standards, accountability for the success of all students, innovation in education, and expansion

of high-quality preschool. The Budget provides robust funding for core components of the reauthorized ESEA to advance equity and excellence and support great teachers and school leaders.

ADVANCING EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS

The first major priority in the 2017 request is to ensure all of our young people, and particularly students from low-income families and students of color and those in high-poverty schools who are the focus of the ESSA, have the chance to learn and achieve. To help close our current resource and opportunity gaps, the 2017 request provides \$15.4 billion for Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)—the cornerstone of the Federal effort to ensure that all students—including students from low-income families, students of color, students with disabilities, and English Learners—graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The request also provides \$12.8 billion for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Grant Programs, including a combined increase of \$80 million over 2016 for IDEA Preschool Grants (Part B, Section 619) and Grants for Infants and Families (Part C).

The President's Budget also includes Preschool for All, which would support expanded access to high-quality preschool for all children from low- and middle-income families, along with \$350 million for the reauthorized Preschool Development Grants program, an increase of \$100 million over 2016, in the Department of Health and Human Services request and jointly administered with the Department of Education. We also would significantly increase support for State and local efforts to meet the educational needs of English Learners in public schools through an \$800 million request for English Language Acquisition formula grants.

I am especially pleased that our 2017 Budget also includes new resources for school districts ready to take bold action to address equity gaps in their schools and communities. First,

we are asking for \$120 million to fund a new Stronger Together program that would support voluntary efforts by one or more school districts, guided by strong community input, to increase socioeconomic diversity in their schools. Research shows that States with more socioeconomic segregation in schools tend to have larger achievement gaps between low- and higher-income students, and socioeconomically diverse schools can lead to improved outcomes for students. Stronger Together would provide resources to communities that want to explore options for putting research into practice.

Another groundbreaking proposal is our Computer Science for All initiative. This proposal—\$2 billion in mandatory funding in FY 2017 and \$4 billion over 3 years—would support efforts in all 50 States to expand access for all students to computer science instruction and programs of study. The Budget also includes \$100 million in discretionary grants for Computer Science for All Development Grants for school districts that recognize the power of computer science to engage students in preschool through grade 12 in real-world computer programming and related skills in conjunction with other rigorous coursework, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in which students from low-income families, students of color, and girls traditionally are underrepresented.

Finally, the Budget includes \$500 million for the newly authorized Student Support and Academic Enrichment block grant, nearly twice the amount appropriated in 2016 for the antecedent programs. These funds can help expand course offerings across a range of areas, such as STEM and the arts, and bolster student achievement through such activities as mentoring or school counseling and expanding digital learning opportunities. The Budget proposes to give States broader flexibility in how to target these funds to ensure that the funds provided to LEAs are robust enough to make a meaningful impact on students.

EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

Our 2017 request proposes significant new resources to help ensure that all students have access to effective teachers and leaders and new opportunities for teachers to shape our approaches to improving student outcomes. First, our \$1 billion mandatory RESPECT: Best Job in the World program would support the redesign of an estimated 200 high-need schools to create models that transform these schools into the best places to advance a career in education and thereby attract and retain talented and effective teachers and school leaders. The Teacher and Principal Pathways program would strengthen our pipeline of effective educators, while Teach to Lead grants would capitalize on teachers' leadership, helping them realize their ideas for education improvement. And, to help educators advance through every phase of their careers, the Budget supports innovations in human capital management systems for districts and schools in several programs, including the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund. For new and continuing competitive grant programs for teachers and leaders that span preparation, development, and retention, we request \$525 million, an increase of \$142 million over 2016. Finally, to attract the next generation of talented educators, we propose to streamline and expand the current postsecondary assistance available to teachers into one program that will provide up to \$25,000 in loan forgiveness for serving in a high-needs school.

IMPROVING ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND COMPLETION IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Higher education is one of the clearest paths to the middle class, and our request builds on the Administration's efforts to make college more affordable and accessible and includes new initiatives promoting college completion.

The request calls for a total of \$188 billion to Federal student aid in fiscal year 2017, including \$31 billion to Pell Grants and over \$155 billion to student loans, benefiting more than 12 million students. The request renews the Administration's signature higher education proposal, America's College Promise, which would support 2 years of free community college for responsible students who get good grades and stay on track to graduate, as well as up to 2 years of college at zero or significantly reduced tuition to first-time, low-income students at 4-year Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). We also propose a new \$30 million HBCU/MSI Innovation for Completion Fund competitive grant program to foster innovative and evidence-based strategies to increase the number of low-income students completing degree programs.

The Budget proposes two new initiatives to help students complete their degrees. The first initiative, Pell for Accelerated Completion, would allow full-time students the opportunity to earn a third semester of Pell Grants in an academic year, enabling them to finish faster by taking additional courses year-round. The second initiative, On-Track Pell Bonus, would create an incentive for students to stay on track or accelerate their progress towards a degree through a \$300 bonus, effectively increasing the Pell Grant maximum award to \$6,235, for students who take 15 or more credits per semester in an academic year.

We also propose expanding postsecondary opportunity to incarcerated individuals eligible for release through the Second Chance Pell proposal that would restore their Pell eligibility with the goals of helping them get jobs, support their families, turn their lives around, and strengthen their communities.

Finally, the Administration is re-proposing other key initiatives, including rewarding colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low-income students on

time; further simplifying the FAFSA; permanently extending inflationary increases of the maximum Pell grant award; reforming and streamlining income-driven repayment plans to simplify borrowers' experience and allow for easier selection of a repayment plan, while reducing program complexity and better targeting benefits; and protecting students and taxpayers from predatory colleges that are not delivering the high-quality education that students—and taxpayers—deserve.

PROMOTING GREATER USE OF EVIDENCE AND DATA

Finally, we extend our commitment to improving student outcomes by increasing funding for programs based on evidence of success, or that help build evidence of what works in education. The Budget funds the infrastructure for evaluation within the Institute of Education Sciences, requesting \$209 million for Research, Development, and Dissemination, \$125 million for Statistics, and \$81 million for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, with a focus on using data at the local level. These requests will enable the collection of critical information, and help disseminate evidence of what works to policymakers and practitioners to improve student learning and narrow achievement gaps. In addition, the Budget would support InformED, an initiative launched in 2016 to make the Department's data and research across the education spectrum more available and actionable for internal users and for the public.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our 2017 request reflects the President's determination to make the investments necessary to expand educational opportunity, position our children for success, and promote economic growth and global competitiveness. I look forward to working with the Subcommittee to secure support for the President's 2017 Budget for education, and I look forward to your questions.