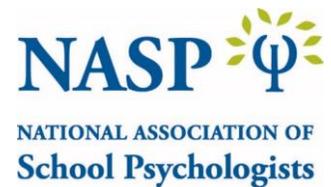


# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## President's Proposed Budget Presents Challenges for Public Education System

**Bethesda, MD**—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) believes that President Trump's proposed FY20 budget poses significant risk to the United States' public education system and students. This proposal represents an unacceptable \$8.5 billion cut in federal education funding, including the elimination of 29 programs that support effective teaching, availability of comprehensive learning supports, and overall student well-being. Although we appreciate the call for \$700 million to support certain programs operated by the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services to improve school safety and school climate, develop emergency plans, implement evidence-based mental and health services, and reduce violence, the elimination of such significant education funding undercuts the efforts of schools across the country to genuinely improve school safety and support students' individual learning needs. Moreover, it is essential that funds are used appropriately. NASP fully intends to work with Congress to protect existing funding and to ensure that funds are used to help districts implement evidence-based comprehensive school safety solutions—not on efforts to arm teachers or overly harden schools—and to train, recruit, and retain desperately needed school-employed mental health professionals. NASP strongly supports a robust public school system that protects the rights, well-being, and educational and mental health needs of *all* students in every community. As such, we also are concerned with the following.

### Underfunding Title I and IDEA

Despite the rise in the number of students in poverty, and the increase in the number of students with disabilities, the administration proposes level funding Title I and IDEA, which is tantamount to a funding cut. Furthermore, the Department of Education justified cutting several critical funding streams (e.g., Title IV-A) by arguing that the goals of the program could be met with Title I dollars. This is a shortsighted funding cut that dilutes an already lean program and asks states and districts to stretch even thinner. This, combined with the elimination of other critical programs, will result in reduced services to the students who need them the most. Importantly, when IDEA was authorized, Congress promised to provide 40% of the additional cost associated with educating students with disabilities. The current budget request represents less than 15% of the cost, leaving states and local school districts to make up for the shortfall. We have a responsibility to help states meet the needs of our nation's most vulnerable students and to help them improve low performing schools. This budget completely ignores that responsibility.

## **Eliminating the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (ESSA, Title IV Part A)**

The proposed budget eliminates funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant. This formula-funded grant enables school districts to engage in efforts to provide a well-rounded curriculum, support safe and healthy students, and promote the effective use of technology. Eliminating these funds undermines school districts' ability to provide comprehensive mental and behavioral health services, social-emotional learning, and other critical services that directly contribute to the school and life success of millions of children and youth, and it will force districts to make tough choices about which of these valuable and needed programs to cut, at the expense of students.

## **Expanding Ineffective School Choice Options**

NASP opposes efforts in this budget to create a federal "school choice" or voucher system that funnels public education dollars to pre-K–12 schools that may lack public accountability, require the loss or declination of rights afforded to students or families, or enable discriminatory practices. We are greatly disappointed that the President's budget calls for a \$50 billion tax credit to support school choice, despite an evidence base that shows schools that participate in voucher programs do not demonstrate improved academic outcomes for students when compared to traditional public schools. We believe that the administration should be focused on strengthening our public schools, which educate 90% of our students, rather than promoting ineffective private school vouchers.

## **Eliminating Public Service Loan Forgiveness**

The budget puts at risk the nation's ability to attract a skilled education workforce by eliminating public service loan forgiveness for teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, and other educators. Critical workforce shortages that already exist in these professions will only worsen as the cost of appropriate training becomes untenable. This proposal also eliminates subsidized loans, which means students would have to pay interest on loans while in school, further increasing the cost of higher education, and boxing many students out of the opportunity to pursue the education needed to serve students and communities. The federal government should be working on expanding, not decreasing, access to higher education in these essential areas of service.

## **Proposed Cuts to Medicaid**

The administration's proposal to cut funds and convert Medicaid to a block grant and/or institute per capita caps will disproportionately harm children's access to care, including services received at school, and will undermine states' ability to provide America's neediest children access to vital healthcare necessary to ensure they are able to succeed in school and beyond. School-based Medicaid programs, in particular, serve as a lifeline to children who can't access critical healthcare and services outside of their schools. Significant reductions to Medicaid spending could have devastating effects on children, especially those with disabilities, which are exacerbated by the underfunding of IDEA. Our nation's most vulnerable children deserve access to high-quality healthcare offered via Medicaid.

NASP represents 25,000 school psychologists throughout the United States and abroad. NASP empowers school psychologists by advancing effective practices to improve students' learning, behavior, and mental health. NASP is committed to working with Congress to ensure that FY2020 federal appropriations maintain critical investments in education to provide a high quality public education, in an environment that is safe and supportive for all students.