NASP Welcomes Robust Investments in President Biden’s FY2023 Budget Proposal

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is pleased to see that President Biden’s proposed FY2023 budget seeks to build upon federal investments enacted by Congress in the FY2022 appropriations bill. The President’s FY2023 proposal represents a 15% increase in education investments over FY2022 and includes key investments to both improve our mental and behavioral health infrastructure and bolster both Title 1 and IDEA. These investments would advance equity in our schools and communities, begin to remedy disparities in access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health care, and help ensure that every child has access to a robust public education. We join the President in calling on Congress to fully support these investments, including finally meeting their commitment to provide 40% of the additional cost needed to support students with disabilities.

Importantly, the President once again proposes $1 billion to address the shortages of school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers. School psychologists are critical members of school teams that support the mental and behavioral health of students and contribute to their successful learning and life outcomes. Currently, the national average ratio of school psychologists to students is 1 to 1,151, far exceeding the recommended ratio of 1 to 500.

Doubling the number of school psychologists and other school health professionals over the next decade, as targeted in the proposed budget, will require collaboration among state education agencies, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, and state and national professional organizations to enact strategies that would address the root causes of the shortages in their communities. While the President’s proposal would provide financial support for every state to address the shortages, we are concerned that this proposal limits the amount of funds that can be used to expand critical collaborative efforts that are necessary to strengthen the workforce pipeline. NASP has fought long and hard to increase federal investments for efforts to improve access to school psychologists and school psychological services, including the $111 million for the School Based Mental Health Services Program and the School Based Mental Health Professionals Demonstration Grant provided in the FY2022 omnibus appropriations bill. The President’s proposal is a significant step in the right direction, and NASP looks forward to working with Congress to secure maximum investment for these two grants and other efforts to address workforce shortages. Problems with the pipeline of school based mental health professionals must not sidelined.

Other important funding increases include the following:

- IDEA Part D Personnel Preparation grants, which help address the shortages of professionals who serve students with disabilities.
- Education Innovation and Research program to identify and scale models that improve recruitment and retention within the education workforce.
- Fostering Diverse Schools grant program, which will help increase diversity in school communities.
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• The Office of Civil Rights within the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, as well as other Departments, to increase enforcement of civil rights laws in education, healthcare, and other aspects of society.
• English Language Acquisition State Grants to strengthen state and local capacity to meet the needs of English language learners and embrace students’ native and home languages as strengths they bring to their school communities.
• Full-Service Community Schools program, which supports effective and collaborative partnerships that leverage all available school and community resources to best meet student needs.
• Project AWARE and the Mental Health Awareness Training program to support comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated state and tribal efforts to adopt trauma-informed approaches and increase access to mental health services.
• Behavioral Health Workforce Development Programs to strengthen the mental health workforce and increase training of new behavioral health providers, including school psychologists.
• Injury prevention and control programs within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to advance efforts to reduce all forms of violence—including community violence, gun violence, intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, and sexual violence.
• National Child Traumatic Stress Network to provide trauma-informed services for children and adolescents, as well as training for the child-serving workforce.

Many states are attempting to fundamentally change the way American history is taught and discussed in classrooms, how teachers are trained to lead these conversations, and how (if at all) issues of equity and diversity can be included in classroom discussion. NASP is therefore pleased to see the President include increases for programs that support schools’ ability to foster meaningful dialogue about our country’s history and address issues related to bias, discrimination, and prejudice in our schools including the American History and Civics Education program and the Equity Assistance Centers.

President Biden’s budget represents important strides in the effort to adequately invest in our nation’s schools, children, and their future. NASP is committed to working with the Administration and Congress to ensure that FY2023 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.

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