NASP Applauds Investments in President Biden’s FY2024 Budget Request

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is grateful to see that President Biden’s proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024 seeks to expand on federal investments enacted by Congress in the FY2023 appropriations bill, as well as investments made through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. The President’s FY2024 proposal represents a nearly 14% increase in education investments over FY2023, and it includes critical funding to address the youth mental health crisis and the critical workforce shortages in education. It also provides equitable supports through Title 1 and IDEA, moving the federal government closer to finally meeting its longstanding yet unfulfilled commitment to provide 40% of the additional cost needed to support students with disabilities. These investments would advance equity in our schools and communities, continue addressing disparities in access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health care, and help ensure that every child has access to a world-class, well-rounded, and inclusive public education. We join the President in calling for Congress to support these investments in our children, schools, and communities.

Notably, the President has requested $428 million to address the shortages of school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers. This funding will go toward continuation funds for awardees, but it will mostly be used for new competitions of the School-Based Mental Health Services Program grant and the Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grant, both of which seek to strengthen the workforce pipeline and place school-based mental health professionals in high-need districts.

Adequately addressing the shortages of school psychologists and other school mental health professionals over the next decade will require continued robust investments to ensure all students have access to comprehensive school psychological services. School psychologists provide critical mental and behavioral health supports to students, and they work with educators and families to contribute to successful learning and life outcomes for all students. Currently, the national average ratio of school psychologists to students is 1 to 1,127—more than double the recommended ratio of 1 to 500. Meeting recommended ratios of school health professionals is also key to fostering effective partnerships between families and school staff, who share responsibility for the academic, social, and emotional outcomes of all students.

NASP and our members have long advocated to increase federal investments supporting access to comprehensive school-based mental and behavioral health supports and to ensure that school psychologists are able to provide all the services they are trained in—not solely mental and behavioral crisis situation response. The President's proposal is a continued step in the right direction, and NASP looks forward to working with Congress to secure maximum investment for the two aforementioned grants and other efforts to address workforce shortages. It is critical that our federal elected officials continue to increase access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health supports to address the youth mental health crisis.
NASP Applauds Investments in President Biden’s FY2024 Budget Request

Other important requested funding increases for U.S. Department of Education programs include the following:

- IDEA Part D Personnel Preparation grants, which help address the shortages of professionals who serve students with disabilities.
- Educator recruitment and retention that supports a diverse, well-prepared pipeline of educators and school leaders.
- 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.
- The Institute for Education Sciences, particularly the Research, Development, and Dissemination program, to build on ongoing research and development activities to improve educational outcomes for all students.
- Fostering Diverse Schools grant program, which will help increase diversity in school communities.
- 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.

Additionally, requested funding increases for Department of Health and Human Services programs include the following:

- A more than $2 billion increase in SAMHSA mental health programs, addressing the collective mental health needs of all members of our communities.
- 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.
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network to provide trauma-informed services for children and adolescents, as well as training for the child-serving workforce.

President Biden’s budget represents an important stride in the effort to adequately invest in our nation’s schools, its children, and their futures. NASP is committed to working with the Administration and Congress to ensure that FY2024 federal appropriations maintain critical investments in education to provide a high-quality public education in a learning environment that is physically and psychologically safe and supportive for all students.

###