

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

Overview

The fiscal year 2014 request for the Department of Education aligns Federal education resources with key priorities and principles included in *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, the Administration's comprehensive plan for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that was released in March 2010. The *Blueprint* is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>.

The *Blueprint* proposes changes in the ESEA intended to help ensure that all children receive the world-class education they deserve and that America needs to compete successfully in the global economy of the 21st century. The proposal does this by re-envisioning the Federal role in education to support innovative approaches to teaching and learning that make better, more productive use of existing resources. In the current fiscal environment, we can no longer afford to invest in the status quo. Instead, we must reform our schools to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps, and inspire our children to excel so that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.

To accomplish these goals, the fiscal year 2014 request would invest in a reformed ESEA focused on raising standards, encouraging innovation, and rewarding success, while allowing States and districts more flexibility to invest resources where they will have the greatest impact. In particular, the reauthorization proposal expands the use of competition in the award of Federal education funds, modeled after the success of the Race to the Top program, which has motivated States to reform their laws and make new plans to better support educational improvement and innovation, including their systems of early education and care. The fiscal year 2014 budget also would expand investments in evidence-based approaches to improving student outcomes, including \$215 million for a new round of grants under the Investing in Innovation (i3) fund to provide incentives for the development and expansion of innovative strategies and practices that have been shown to be effective in improving educational outcomes for students.

In addition, the Administration's reauthorization plan would restructure current ESEA program authorities to reduce the number of programs administered by the Department of Education, focus more closely on desired program outcomes, and expand State and local flexibility to achieve those outcomes. The reauthorization proposal would consolidate 38 existing authorities into 11 new programs that emphasize using competition to allocate funds, giving communities more choices in implementing activities, and using rigorous evidence to fund what works. While Congress has yet to act on reauthorization of the ESEA, it already has demonstrated acceptance of the need for consolidation of existing programs by eliminating or consolidating funding for 22 of these authorities over the past 3 years.

The \$14.5 billion request for the reauthorized Title I, Part A College- and Career-Ready Students program (Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies under current law) would drive another key priority: graduating every student college- and career-ready (CCR). States would be required to adopt CCR standards in English language arts and mathematics and to implement high-quality assessments that are aligned with and capable of measuring individual student growth toward these standards.

The request also would provide \$389.2 million for a reauthorized Assessing Achievement program (State Assessments under current law) for formula and competitive grants to help

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States improve the quality of their assessment systems as they transition to assessments aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Under the reauthorized ESEA, States would use these improved assessments to accurately measure student academic growth; more reliably measure student achievement and teacher and school effectiveness; help teachers better tailor instruction to student needs; and provide better information to students and their families. The reauthorized ESEA would create a new, more flexible LEA and school accountability system under which States would measure school and local educational agency (LEA) performance on the basis of progress in getting all students on track to CCR, closing achievement gaps, improving graduation rates, and other indicators. States would provide financial rewards and additional flexibility in the use of ESEA funds for highly effective schools, and LEAs and would require rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools and LEAs. The fiscal year 2014 request includes \$658.6 million for a reauthorized School Turnaround Grants program (School Improvement Grants under current law) that would help LEAs carry out these interventions and build State and local capacity to turn around the Nation's lowest-performing schools.

Other requests that would support the goal of graduating every student college- and career-ready include \$295 million for Expanding Educational Options, which would promote high-quality charter schools and other forms of public school choice; \$300 million for Promise Neighborhoods, which funds comprehensive health, education, and social services for children in distressed communities from birth through college and career; and \$280 million for Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students, which would fund efforts to create safe and disciplined school climates and promote student health and well-being.

A critical prerequisite for graduating all students college- and career-ready is putting more effective teachers and leaders in every school. Longstanding achievement gaps closely track the talent gap found in the classrooms and schools attended by many poor and minority students, and the Administration's reauthorization plan would require States to set clear standards for effective teaching and to design evaluation systems that identify effective teachers. The fiscal year 2014 request supports a restructuring of the ESEA to more effectively recruit, train, reward, and retain effective teachers and school leaders, including a new 25 percent national activities reservation under Effective Teachers and Leaders State Grants to support efforts to improve the pathways through which candidates prepare for and enter teaching and school leadership as well as other activities to enhance the teaching and leadership professions. The request also would provide \$400 million for a new Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund, built on the strengths of the current Teacher Incentive Fund, to support State and district efforts to reform their human capital systems; \$98 million for a redesigned School Leadership Program that would focus on evidence-based professional development for current school leaders, and a total of \$411.6 million for new Effective Teaching and Learning authorities that would make competitive awards focused on high-need LEAs to improve instruction in the areas of literacy, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and other subjects.

In addition to continuing to focus Federal education resources on students from low-income families through the Title I, Part A College- and Career-Ready Students program, the Administration's ESEA reauthorization plan would retain longstanding programs and authorities designed to meet the needs of special populations, including English learners, migrant students, neglected and delinquent students, Native Americans, and homeless children and youth.

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While the Administration remains committed to working with Congress to reauthorize ESEA, the 2014 request includes proposals in several ESEA programs that would help achieve similar goals through appropriations language if reauthorization does not occur prior to fiscal year 2014 appropriations action.

- Title I Grants to LEAs. The Administration would seek a two percent State-level set-aside of funds under Title I Grants for LEAs that would be used to reward high-poverty LEAs and schools that are the highest achieving or are making the most progress in improving student achievement. Such rewards could include: (1) financial rewards for principals, teachers, and other staff; (2) college scholarships for students in high-performing schools; (3) school-level financial rewards; or (4) other innovative rewards and incentives developed by the States.
- Math and Science Partnerships (MSP). The Administration would seek language aligning the MSP program with the activities proposed in its STEM Innovation initiative, a comprehensive and far-reaching strategy to transform STEM teaching and learning through the consolidation and reorganization of Federal STEM education activities. We would retain the formula grant structure of the current MSP program, but reform the sub-granting process to make it consistent with the Department's proposed STEM Innovation Initiative. In addition, the language would allow the Department to use up to 5 percent of the appropriation for national activities, including technical assistance, evaluation, and dissemination.
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The Administration would ask for authority to use the \$100 million increase in 2014 for competitive grants to support high-quality expanded learning time models, which research suggests can produce gains in student academic achievement.
- Charter Schools Program. The Administration would seek language dedicating \$75 million of the fiscal year 2014 appropriation to the expansion and replication of high-quality charter schools and to allow grantees to use funds for pre-kindergarten services.
- Safe and Drug Free Schools National Activities. The Administration would ask for language expanding the allowable use of funds to cover additional services proposed under *Now is the Time*, the President's proposal to reduce gun violence, such as direct mental health services for students.