



WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

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PRE K-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Business Nexus

The economic growth of any region is directly related to the strength and skills of its workforce and education is a central factor in that growth. Education can enhance quality of life and produce extensive social benefits for society and its people. A substantial investment pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) to 12 and higher education programs promotes productivity and creativity and plays a crucial role in securing economic and social progress.

K-12 education leaders across the Sacramento Region are urging Members of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to adopt thoughtful legislation and policies that complement our efforts to support the success of every child from cradle to career. The highest priorities for 2021 fall into these areas:

- Provide supplemental funding and support for public pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) to 12 schools related to the health, economic and educational challenges of COVID-19.
- Ensure increased FY22 appropriations for preparation of local talent from cradle to career to help the nation ensure a successful and productive 21st century workforce.
- Provide full and fair funding to support Special Education programs.
- Provide the necessary resources to improve K-12 and college student supportive services, including mental and behavior health, basic needs, and school safety.
- Double the maximum Pell Grant and expand the program to more degree seeking students.
- Invest in college degree completion and retention programs that support student success.

PRE-K – 12 EDUCATION

Addressing the health, economic and educational challenges of COVID-19 in pre-K to 12 education

The COVID-19 pandemic **support for pre-K to 12 schools across the country has appropriately** provided what is necessary to address many of the profound impacts it will have for the next 24-36 months. We



appreciate and recognize the historic investments by Congress, the past and current administrations to mitigate impacts to K-12 schools.

Requested Action

- Support legislation which calls for the federal government to fully support schools impacted by COVID-19 and include any further targeted support for education technology and an expansion of capacity with the E-Rate program to serve public pre-K to 12 schools and communities.

Fiscal Year 2022 Education Appropriations

Federal education funds are a critical resource for local education agencies to assist in ensuring academic success for all students. We are excited about many aspects of President Biden's FY 2022 Budget proposal, but more must be done.

Requested Action

Fully fund and expand funding for the following:

- Title I program for disadvantaged schools proposed by the administration for a \$20 billion increase in the coming year with the goal of tripling overall Federal funding for the program.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the dramatic increase in funding proposed to meet the original commitment by Congressional leaders over a multi-year phase-in beginning with a \$2.7 billion increase next year.
- The Education Innovation and Research Competitive Grant, formally known as I3.
- The Student Support Academic Enrichment Grant, which enables states to submit funds to districts by formula as intended by Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Child Nutrition Reauthorization Program through the Department of Agriculture that reduces childhood hunger; and includes summer meals.
- Early childhood education programs, including Head Start, as well as setting state-appropriate income eligibility levels for those programs.
- A streamlined and more efficient School-Based Medicaid Administrative Activities (MAA) program reimbursement process.
- National Science Foundation (NSF) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) academic programs that strengthen the pre-Kindergarten to college and career pipeline to increase economic prosperity, social and emotional wellbeing, and security.

Full and Fair Funding for Special Education

Upon the initial implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal government committed to provide funding to cover 40% of the cost of special education services provided by local education agencies; however, the actual resources provided have fallen well short of that commitment.

Requested Action

- While continuing to pursue full federal funding for special education, ensure maintenance of effort provisions for existing state support, to fully provide for special education services across California.
- Provide full special education funding for infants and preschool-aged children with disabilities.
- Provide funding for student mental health services for students with disabilities, and for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Student Support, Mental and Behavioral Health Services, and School Safety

COVID-19 has exacerbated an already complex environment of change where reactions to trauma, rapidly advancing technology, academic competition, and other changes in social structures have generated greater levels of stress and pressure on today's students. There is a greater burden on institutions to support students in coping with stress and encourage a state of well-being through a prevention and early intervention approach. All students regardless of race, immigration status, zip code, and/or family income should have equal access to educational resources that include effective teaching, challenging coursework, facilities that are clean and functional, and a safe school environment.

Requested Action

- Funding to focus on expanding mental and behavioral health services for all students, especially for students in crisis which interferes with their learning and behavior.
- Programs to enhance a student's self-resilience and enable a student to cope with stress and pressure in a manner that builds protective factors and skills.
- Resources to expand education efforts aimed toward preventing vaping and substance use.
- Programs that ensure nutritional well-being for our students; this includes consideration of a universal access to school meal programs for all public-school students and the streamlining of the current eligibility requirements for the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ensure that our neediest students remain eligible to receive free-or-reduced-priced school meals.
- Funding to advance efforts for safe and supportive social and emotional learning environments for student access to community resources and support to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Bipartisan action to pass legislation that provides a path to citizenship to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) participants and other Dreamers.

Computer Science Career Education

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports 45 percent of all jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are now in computer science and information technology. However, historically computer science has been inaccessible to the majority of K–12 students. A workforce with the valuable thinking skills developed through good Computer Science programming is critical to assuring the economic



growth and well-being of our community. Increased funding for Computer Science education is necessary if our country is to meet its workforce needs.

Requested Action

- Increased funding to integrate computer science into all high school industry sector career pathways.
- Businesses must be encouraged to search for high school talent with funding to incentivize businesses to provide computer science internships for high school students.
- Small schools that provide services for expelled and incarcerated youth need funding to train young people in the fields of computer science and advanced manufacturing.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Recent Federal Investments in Higher Education

The institutions of higher education in the Sacramento Region and our students appreciate the investments made in them by Congress and the Federal Government over the past several months. Permanently funding the minority-serving institutions program, simplifying the FAFSA form, expanding Pell Grant eligibility, and offering robust aid via the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund aid has allowed more students access to higher education, while also helping colleges and universities manage their operations during the pandemic. We encourage Congress to build off of these investments by reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA) in order to preserve higher education accessibility and affordability, while also incentivizing universities that are increasing their graduation rates and closing the achievement gap and prioritizing student success. As Congress and the Administration consider future priorities, we believe that the Federal government should prioritize resources for institutions that serve the greatest number of students with need.

Federal Financial Aid Programs

A variety of federal student aid programs allow low-income students the financial flexibility to attend college while not relying on large loans. Over 60,000 students in the Greater Sacramento Region utilize the Pell Grant program, including more than 40 percent of undergraduate students at our four-year universities. We supported Congress' efforts to restore year-round Pell Grants and have seen it result in higher summer session utilization and faster times to degrees. Congress should build off prior Pell Grant eligibility expansion and double the Pell Grant, while also continuing to invest in the Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and Federal-Work Study programs. These programs benefit a full spectrum of students – including community college students, undergraduates, and students from major research institutions – by providing access to hands-on learning and professional experiences.

Requested Action

- Double the maximum Pell Grant to \$13,000 and index it to inflation.
- Allow Dreamers access to the Pell Grant program.

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- Keep the Pell Grant program surplus in the Pell Grant program.
- Extend Pell Grant eligibility to incarcerated students, also known as Second Chance Pell.
- Fund the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) program at \$1.028 billion.
- Fund the Federal Work-Study Program at \$1.434 billion.

Student Success & Basic Needs Programs

We greatly appreciate Congress passing the FUTURES Act in 2019, which permanently funded the minority-serving institutions program. A number of community colleges and universities in the Sacramento Region are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). The Sacramento Region's diverse student population and institutions of higher education benefit greatly from Title III and Title V programs. Likewise, the TRIO and GEAR UP programs have a successful track record of preparing underrepresented students for college and require additional investment.

Institutions of higher education in the Greater Sacramento Region believe that we must move beyond simply prioritizing college access and affordability, and intentionally prioritize student success. Federal efforts to support student completion and retention are needed for our nation to grow the workforce required for economic growth in the competitive global economy. Likewise, closing the achievement gap between low income, first generation and minority students also demands federal attention. Support for wraparound services, basic needs, and improved connections between community colleges and universities will benefit thousands of students. Specifically, aid for temporary housing, subsidized food, and on-campus childcare will ensure students' academic success and social mobility.

Requested Action

- Fund Title V, Parts A and B of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions program at \$266 million.
- Fund the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions program at (or above) \$20 million.
- Fund GEAR Up at \$408 million.
- Fund TRIO at \$1.28 billion.
- Fund pilot programs and long-term student success and degree completion efforts, such as the Completion Grants program proposed in the Biden Administration's FY22 budget request and American Families Plan.