

Policy Update

The Administration's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2013

Overview

On February 13, 2012, President Obama submitted his fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget request to Congress. And despite a constrained fiscal environment and tight spending caps imposed by the Budget Control Act, the budget proposes a \$1.7 billion or 2.5% increase in discretionary spending for programs in the Department of Education. However, basic foundation programs such as Title I and IDEA receive no increase, and other K-12 programs that some deem critical—such as School Improvement Grants and programs designed to support English language learners, homeless education, literacy, rural education, after school, teacher quality, and indeed the charter school programs—are all frozen at FY 2012 levels.

The administration does continue to seek funding for the Race to the Top (RTT) and Investing in Innovation (i3) by requesting \$850 million and \$150 million, respectively, for these programs. The request also calls for a significant portion of the \$850 million for RTT to be used for early childhood. Moreover, the Administration proposes to open the RTT competition to school districts as they did in the FY '12 budget request.

Additionally, the budget proposes over \$60 billion in mandatory spending for major new investments such as \$30 billion for modernizing schools and community college facilities, \$25 billion for preventing further layoffs of teachers and other educators, and \$5 billion for improving the preparation and quality of teachers and school leaders. It is important to note, however, that these programs seek authorization through the American Jobs Act, a proposal that has struggled to gain support in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Specific to Charters

For the third year, the Administration has proposed the creation of the Expanding Educational Options (EEO) initiative which consolidates two programs into one authorization: (1) Supporting Effective Charter Schools grants and (2) Promoting Public School Choice grants.

The Supporting Effective Charter Schools grants program would replace the current Charter School Programs and is designed to support competitive grants to

State educational agencies (SEAs), charter school authorizers, charter management organizations, local educational agencies (LEAs), and other nonprofit organizations to start or expand effective charter and other autonomous public schools.^{*} Furthermore, funds would also be available for competitive grants for charter schools facilities aid programs.

The Promoting Public School Choice grants program would replace the current Voluntary Public School Choice program and is designed to support competitive grants to LEAs, individually or in a consortium, and to SEAs in partnership with one or more high-need LEAs, to develop and implement a comprehensive choice program that increases the range of high-quality educational options available to students in high-need schools.

The new programs would also include a national activities authority under which the Department would reserve funds to support research, data collection, technical assistance to grantees, and dissemination activities.

The budget is requesting \$255 million to fund the EEO initiative. This amount represents a funding level that is currently allocated solely for the charter school programs, but if the budget were enacted would also be used for the Promoting Public School Choice program. This could have the effect of diluting the program's impact on charter schools. However, the Administration maintains in its budget summary that for fiscal year 2013, the Department would only make grants under the Supporting Effective Charter Schools authorization if the budget were enacted and would zero out the school choice program. Over the next year NAPCS will continue to advocate for policy that do not diminish or dilute the federal funds available for charter schools.

** NAPCS continues to express concerns both with the Administration and Congress pertaining to the expansion of eligible entities to include autonomous public schools.*

Additional Information

For additional information or questions please contact Chad A. Miller, Senior Director of Federal Advocacy at cmiller@publiccharters.org or (202) 521-2836.

More detailed summaries can be found below.

- US Department of Education - [Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Summary](#)
- Penn Hill Group – [Summary of 2013 Education Budget Request](#)
- Committee for Education Funding - [Summary of 2013 Education Budget Request](#)