



Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chairwoman

Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member

Honorable Patty Murray, Chairwoman

Honorable Roy Blunt

Re: President's Budget Request for FY2022

On behalf of the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP), we commend the Biden Administration for proposing historic investments in public education. NASISP is a coalition representing more than one million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP). SISP professionals include school counselors, school nurses, psychologists, school psychologists, social workers and school social workers; occupational therapists, physical therapists; art, dance/movement, music therapists, and speech-language pathologists and audiologists. In addition, the major national organizations representing general and special education teachers and administrators are part of the coalition. SISP provide direct supports to students and provide consultation to teachers, families, administrators, and community partners to help ensure all students thrive. As we emerge from COVID-19, SISP and the services we provide are more critical than ever to help address instructional loss, address student (and staff) social emotional learning and mental and behavioral health. While we appreciate the significant amount of money provided by the various COVID relieve packages, these emergency funds must not be seen as a substitute for robust long term education funding. We urge Congress to support many of the proposed programmatic increases necessary to help transform our public education system and set us on a path to promoting equity in access and opportunity for each and every students and offer the following comments on specific proposals.

Programs Authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act

Title I-A Education for the Disadvantaged

We appreciate the Administration's pledge to triple Title I-A spending as a way of closing equity and opportunity gaps. However, the President's budget request proposes level funding the existing Title 1 program and creating an additional \$20 billion dollar grant program aimed at closing the funding gap between majority white and majority non-white schools as and gaps in the allocation of state and local education funds. NASISP certainly supports increased investments in Title I; however, without additional information about the proposed equity grant, at this time we recommend that Congress allocate the proposed \$20 billion to the existing program for FY2022 until the specific details and nuances of how the proposed Title 1 equity grants would supplement the existing Title I program.

Title II-A, Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants

We urge Congress to provide \$3 billion for Title II-A. We appreciate the President's request of a slight increase over FY21; however it is imperative that we provide robust, job embedded and relevant professional development to teachers, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel. The COVID-19 pandemic forced all educators to quickly pivot to different methods of instruction, some of which may still be offered in districts across the country. We must equip our educator workforce with the necessary skills that allow them to provide evidence-based core instruction and effective methods of early identification and intervention for students in need of additional support regardless of instructional setting.

Title IV-A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

Title IV-A is a flexible formula grant program that provides investments in activities that support access to a well rounded education, supports safe and health students, and improve the effective use of education technology. This program is designed to be used to meet the unique needs of school communities across these three broad domains. Due to the current level of funding, many districts receive the minimum allocation of \$10,000, which does not always allow for meaningful investments to scale up or implement new initiatives. We urge Congress to allocate \$2 billion for this program to allow for more districts to receive investments above the minimum requirement.

Special Education

NASISP has long supported efforts to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We urge Congress to fulfill the President's request and fund IDEA Part B Section 611 grants to states at a minimum of \$15.5 billion dollars, Part B Section 619 preschool grants at \$598 million, Part C, which focuses on early intervention services for infants and toddlers at no less than \$732 million, and Part D Section 662, which prepares special educators, at \$300 million. These increases must be considered the first step in meeting Congress' promise of providing 40% of the additional cost of meeting IDEA mandates.

Personnel Shortages

We appreciate the Administration's commitment to increasing the numbers of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, and other specialized instructional support personnel in schools. We applaud the request for \$1 billion dollars to address the shortage of school based health professionals and look forward to working with Congress to determine the most effective way to ensure these funds provide meaningful and equitable investments to recruit, prepare, and retain these critical professionals. Further, the Administration proposes significant increases for Teacher Quality Partnerships, IDEA Personnel Preparation Grants and other initiatives contained in the American Families Plan to address teacher and other educator shortages. We urge Congress to explicitly note that these funds can also be used to recruit and retain specialized instructional support personnel. These professionals provide tremendous support to teachers and students and, if we are serious about addressing educator shortages, we must move beyond a focus on teachers and be inclusive of the wide range of professionals who support student learning.

Despite our support of the overall intention of the Budget request, we remain dismayed that the Administration and specifically the Department of Education failed to mention 'specialized instructional support personnel' in any of the budget documents, including proposals intended to address educator shortages. SISP are a distinct subset of educators and are explicitly defined in the

Every Student Succeeds Act. As Congress moves forward with FY2022 appropriations, we would appreciate the explicit mention of SISP in legislative text and report language. This provides clarity to state and local leaders that specific funds can be used to provide increased access to specialized instructional support services and personnel.

We are happy to speak further about how Congress can support SISP and the students we serve. For further information, please feel free to contact one of the NASISP Co-Chairs: Eric Masten (emasten@asha.org); Abe Saffer, (asaffer@aota.org), or NASISP Co-Chair (kvaillancourt@naspweb.org).

NASISP Members

American Art Therapy Association
American Council for School Social Work
American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American School Counselor Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators in Special Education
National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of Social Workers
National Education Association
School Social Work Association of America

CC: Honorable Miguel Cardona, Secretary, US Department of Education

The National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) is a 501(c)(6) organization that represents over a million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) nationwide. SISP professionals provide and support school-based prevention and intervention services to address barriers to educational success, ensure positive conditions for learning, and help all students achieve academically and ultimately become productive citizens. SISP collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and families to ensure that all students are successful in school. NASISP seeks to empower SISP professionals by encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and affirming their role in education's best practices and their involvement in school improvement efforts.

NASISP Co-Chairs: Abe Saffer and Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach
P.O. Box 1094 Washington, DC 20013
Phone 301.347.1652. www.nasisp.org
info@nasisp.org