

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statement by Miguel Cardona Secretary of Education on the U.S. Department of Education Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request

Good morning, Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Blunt.

I am pleased to join you today, and I am proud to testify on behalf of President Biden's fiscal year 2023 Budget Request for the Department of Education. This request reflects President Biden's deep belief in the importance of education and the success and well-being of our nation's students. It's my hope that Congress answers the President's call for increased investments at the Federal level that will help our schools continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, address long-standing inequities that have existed in our school systems, and elevate our country's education system to lead the world. Our task is to reimagine and strengthen our entire system of education, from pre-kindergarten through adult education. As we recover from the crisis, let's focus on the opportunities to do just that.

Last summer traveling in Michigan, I met a woman named Ruth who is a middle-aged woman working just to make ends meet. She had a health issue that forced her to go to the hospital during the pandemic, which opened her eyes to a future in the healthcare field. As she told me, "After seeing what our country is going through, I want to live the rest of my life helping others who are going through health issues." Using a Pell Grant, she is returning to school to be a nurse practitioner. My point is that it is never too late to go back to school, and it's never too late to seize the opportunities ahead and we can make it easier for learners of all ages like Ruth to reignite their passions and discover new ones.

FY 2022 CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

I want to begin by thanking the Members of the Subcommittee—and your staff—who worked so hard to provide a fiscal year 2022 appropriations bill. That bipartisan funding

package delivers for our students and families by making essential investments in our schools and building on a cornerstone of the Biden-Harris Administration—keeping equity at the center of all we do. This bill includes an important commitment, shared by President Biden, to significantly increase funding for the Title I program by providing \$17.5 billion in funding, a \$1 billion increase. This is the largest increase for Title I in over a decade and an important first step that we look forward to working with you to build upon. The bipartisan package makes important strides to meet the needs of the whole child, to support effective teaching and learning, and to strengthen and diversify the educator pipeline. The 2022 appropriations bill also makes college more affordable by increasing the maximum Pell Grant by \$400, which is a down payment on the President’s call to double Pell and will help more students pursue an education or training beyond high school. The President’s 2023 Budget Request builds upon this legislation by increasing investments in our schools with high-poverty rates; helping meet the needs of students with disabilities and multilingual learners; and expanding access to postsecondary education and increasing college completion.

There is one technical detail that I would like the members of this Subcommittee to keep in mind when reviewing our fiscal year 2023 Budget Request. Due to the timing of the passage of the FY 2022 appropriations legislation, the baseline for our fiscal year 2023 request levels was the fiscal year 2021 enacted level and does not reflect final fiscal year 2022 appropriations action. A comparison of our request with actual fiscal year 2022 levels could suggest that we are proposing a number of decreases for fiscal year 2023, when that is not the case. On the contrary, our goal is to maintain and build on these critical investments. The Administration is excited about the support of Congress and the many increases provided to Department of Education funding in FY 2022. We look forward to working with Congress to provide technical assistance during upcoming FY 2023 appropriations action. The numbers I will be citing in my testimony today will mostly reflect differences between the fiscal year 2022 appropriation and our request.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDING LEVELS

The President's fiscal year 2023 request calls for a significant increase in Federal support for education from birth through college and career. The proposed discretionary request is \$88.3 billion for Department of Education programs, an increase of almost \$12 billion over the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. The 2023 Budget would make historic investments in the Nation's future prosperity by prioritizing funding for five core themes that are at the heart of this Administration's vision for education in America: 1) Supporting Students Through Pandemic Response and Recovery Over the Long Term; 2) Boldly Addressing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps; 3) Supporting a Talented and Diverse Educator Workforce; 4) Making Higher Education Inclusive and Affordable; and 5) Building Pathways Through Postsecondary Education that Lead to Successful Careers.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Even with 99 percent of schools open for full-time, in-person learning, many students continue to be affected by the pandemic. We know that in our communities most impacted by COVID, their recovery could take many years. Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic continue to take a toll on the academic success, and physical, social, emotional, and mental health of students. It has also taken a toll on the well-being of our educators and school staff. Responding to these needs can often be a challenge for many schools. For example, there continues to be a critical gap, that existed prior to and was only made worse by the pandemic, between the number of school-based health service providers needed and the number of such providers currently serving in our schools, particularly in school districts and schools with high rates of poverty. This is why the Budget includes a \$1 billion investment to bridge that gap through the School-Based Health Professionals program, both by building the pipeline of such professionals and by providing the dedicated funding needed to hire them. We appreciate the additional \$90 million Congress provided to support similar activities in the FY 2022 legislation,

and we are committed to building on this investment as more is still needed. The Administration estimates that our requested funding, together with State and local matching funds, would allow LEAs to hire an additional 21,000 school counselors, nurses, social workers, and school psychologists.

Our request further supports students through pandemic response and recovery by including \$468 million to dramatically expand the Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program. A 2020 study from the Rand Corporation, *Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative*, found that community schools in New York City had a positive impact on student attendance, on-time grade progression, high school graduation rates, disciplinary incidents for elementary and middle school students, math achievement, credit accumulation for high school students, shared responsibility for student success at elementary and middle schools, and students' sense of connectedness to adults and peers for elementary and middle school students. Additional studies have found similar outcomes for evidence-based approaches to Full-Service Community Schools. Our request would allow the Full-Service Community Schools program to create an estimated 800 new community schools serving up to 2.4 million additional students, family members, and community members in districts that want to advance this approach.

For districts that may not have the capacity to implement the broader community schools approach supported by FSCS, this request also includes \$25 million for the provision of integrated student supports (ISS), one of the pillars of evidence-based approaches to community schools. ISS grants would help provide access to services that meet the social, emotional, mental and physical health, and academic needs of students and families through cross-agency efforts and partnerships between districts and with community-based organizations.

BOLDLY ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Even before the pandemic, too many elementary and secondary school students faced daunting barriers to receiving a high-quality education. This budget seeks to remove those barriers by providing the resources needed so that every student can be successful. Core to that effort is Title I, which helps schools provide students from low-income communities the learning opportunities and supports they need to succeed. This budget boosts funding for Title I by \$19 billion over fiscal year 2022 through a mix of discretionary and mandatory funding. This substantial new support for the program, which serves 25 million students in nearly 90 percent of school districts across the Nation, would be a major step toward fulfilling the President's commitment to addressing long-standing funding disparities between under-resourced schools – which disproportionately serve students of color – and their wealthier counterparts. The Budget also includes a first-time \$30 million investment to improve education and outcomes for children and youth in foster care, one of our most vulnerable populations.

The President and I are committed to ensuring that children and youth with disabilities receive the services and support they need to thrive in school and graduate ready for college and career. I am very excited that our request provides an additional \$3.3 billion over 2021 enacted levels – which would be the largest two-year increase ever outside of the American Rescue Plan – for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Grants to States, with a total of \$16.3 billion to support special education and related services for students in grades Pre-K through 12. The Budget also nearly doubles funding to \$932 million for IDEA Part C grants, which support early intervention services for infants and families with disabilities that have a proven record of improving academic and developmental outcomes. The increased funding would support States in implementing critical reforms to expand their enrollment of underserved children, including children of color, children from low-income backgrounds and children living in rural areas. The increase for Part C includes \$200 million to expand and streamline enrollment of children at risk of developing disabilities, which would help mitigate the need for more extensive services later

in childhood and further expand access to the program for underserved children. In addition, our request includes a sizeable increase for the Preschool Grants program. More than 80 percent of children participating in the Preschool Grants program have demonstrated significant improvement in academic, behavioral and social and emotional outcomes, which is consistent with numerous studies that have found that the provision of special education and related services for preschool-aged children significantly improved outcomes in these areas.

Recent results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress continue to show significant achievement gaps remain between English Learners and their peers. This is directly tied to the educational opportunities and resources that are available to support their success. These barriers to a high-quality education are especially pressing, as many states and school districts have experienced an increase in arrivals of immigrant children, including refugees from countries impacted by war. Accordingly, this Budget includes a significant increase of \$244 million to the English Language Acquisition grants program, for a total fiscal year 2023 funding level of \$1.1 billion. Further, the increased investment proposed for fiscal year 2023 would greatly strengthen the Department's capacity to work with its State and local partners to elevate meeting the needs of English learners in the context of encouraging multilingualism as a necessary skill for success in our globally competitive economy.

SUPPORTING A TALENTED AND DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

The Administration is committed to not only honoring educators but making sure they are treated with the respect and the dignity they deserve. In addition to promoting supportive working conditions and welcoming educators' voices as critical partners to improve education, we must make sure education jobs are ones that people from all backgrounds want to pursue.

For decades, the education sector has faced shortages in critical staffing areas, such as special education and bilingual education, disproportionately impacting students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. The COVID-19 pandemic and tight labor market have

made shortages worse. These shortages negatively impact the education students receive and continue to fall hardest on students in underserved communities. For example, teacher shortages in areas such as STEM, Career and Technical Education, and advanced placement and dual enrollment/early college programs can result in these high-quality pathways and opportunities being out of reach for students. In addition to comprehensive investments across several programs to support a diverse and well-prepared pipeline of educators, the Budget includes \$514 million for the Education Innovation and Research program, including \$350 million focused on identifying and scaling models that improve recruitment and retention of staff in education. These funds would support innovative efforts to improve resources and support for educators, provide teacher access to leadership opportunities that improve teacher recruitment and retention, and expand the impact of great teachers within and beyond their classrooms.

Other key investments include \$132 million for Teacher Quality Partnership grants to effectively prepare aspiring teachers by supporting pathways into the profession such as high-quality teacher residencies and Grow Your Own programs, that improve educator diversity, effectiveness, and retention; \$250 million for IDEA, Part D, to support the pipeline of special education teachers and personnel; and \$20 million for Augustus Hawkins Centers of Excellence to support teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribally-Controlled College and Universities (TCCUs), and minority-serving institutions (MSIs). We are incredibly appreciative that fiscal year 2022 appropriations provided first time funding for the Augustus Hawkins program to support teacher preparation programs at these institutions. Recognizing that school leaders are second only to classroom teachers among school factors that affect student learning, our request includes \$40 million in funding for the reauthorized School Leader Recruitment and Support program to improve the recruitment, preparation, placement, support, and retention of effective principals and other school leaders in underserved schools.

MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION INCLUSIVE AND AFFORDABLE

Too many students today are deciding that a postsecondary education is out of reach. That is unacceptable. To make higher education more inclusive and affordable, the Budget increases the maximum Pell Grant by \$1,775 over the 2022-2023 award year through a mix of discretionary and mandatory funding, helping an estimated 6.7 million students from low- and middle-income backgrounds overcome financial barriers. This historic increase is one piece of the Budget's comprehensive proposal to double the maximum Pell Grant by 2029. The Administration continues to support expanding federal student aid, including Pell Grant eligibility, to students who are Deferred Action for Childhood recipients – commonly known as DREAMers – and we are committed to working with Congress to advance this goal

Any approach we take to postsecondary education must put students and families first. Too many people currently see our student aid delivery system as broken, with a few, but notable, bad actors taking advantage of students looking to get ahead and student aid systems that have not kept pace with today's demands. Our request will improve the services we provide students and families to help them pay for college through a historic investment in Student Aid Administration. We are requesting \$2.65 billion to administer the Federal student aid programs in fiscal year 2023, an increase of \$620 million over fiscal year 2022 enacted. Specifically, the increase will allow us to implement customer service and accountability improvements to student loan servicing and ensure the successful transition from the current short-term loan servicing contracts to a more stable long-term servicing environment. The increase is also critical to ensure full implementation of the FAFSA® Simplification Act for the 2024–25 award year.

Of course, access to higher education is just one piece of the puzzle. It is also critical to help students obtain the support they need to be successful, and to provide institutions with resources to ensure their students' success. Just as so many students do not seek education beyond high school, too many start but don't complete their postsecondary degree or

certification. The President and I are committed to not only ensuring an education beyond high school is accessible and affordable, but that students are provided equitable access to resources and supports to persist and complete. The Budget supports strategies to improve the retention, transfer, and completion rates of students by creating a Retention and Completion Grant program in the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. The Budget also promotes academic success by providing critical resources to support students' basic needs, including a \$30 million increase to institutions providing affordable child care for student parents with low-incomes. The request includes significant increases for Federal TRIO programs and GEAR UP to expand services that promote access and completion in postsecondary education for underserved individuals. The Budget would also enhance institutional capacity at HBCUs, TCCUs, MSIs, and low-resourced institutions, including community colleges, by providing an increase of \$703 million over the 2022 enacted level. This funding includes a \$450 million initiative to expand research and development infrastructure at four-year HBCUs, TCCUs, and MSIs.

BUILDING PATHWAYS THROUGH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION THAT LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

While increased funding for student aid and higher education is vitally important, the key to access and affordability really begins before any student applies to college. It begins in high school and even earlier. This is why the President's Request would help create stronger college and career pathways between our Pre-k through grade 12 systems, our two- and four-year colleges and universities, and our workforce partners. We are requesting \$200 million for a new Career-Connected High Schools Initiative within Career and Technical Education National Programs, to provide competitive grants that support partnerships between local educational agencies, institutions of higher education (including community colleges), and employers to support early enrollment in postsecondary and career-connected coursework; work-based learning opportunities; and academic and career-connected instruction across the last two years

of high school and the first two years of postsecondary education. Our request also supports adult learners through a College Bridge Initiative, funded through Adult Education National Leadership Activities, and new grants to support disconnected youth without a high school diploma.

ENFORCEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS

Finally, we would prioritize efforts to enforce the Nation's civil rights laws, as they relate to education, through a 19 percent increase for the Office for Civil Rights to protect students, providing a total of \$161 million to advance equity in educational opportunity and delivery at Pre-K through 12 schools and at institutions of higher education.

CLOSING REMARKS

This is our moment to truly reimagine education so that all students can succeed. Thank you again for this opportunity to share more about the President's plan to invest in students of all ages—like Ruth from Michigan—and the schools and institutions that serve them. As I and the President have said before, our budget is a reflection of our values and I look forward to working with you to advance this historic budget request. I am committed to learning more about your individual interests and priorities related to Department of Education programs and activities and working collaboratively with each of you, to the greatest extent possible, to help improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

Thank you, and I will do my best to respond to any questions you may have.