

# Budget Proposal Includes Boost For Education

By Erik W. Robelen  
Washington

The final budget proposal of President Clinton's administration would dramatically step up federal spending on education, with generous boosts for some of his favorite programs and money to support a variety of new ones.

All told, the \$1.8 trillion fiscal 2001 budget plan unveiled last week requests \$40.1 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Education—roughly \$4.5 billion, or 12.6 percent, more than the department received for this year.

"This budget represents the largest jump in discretionary spending in the history of this department," Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley declared in a Feb. 7 briefing.

Most of the department's budget is discretionary and therefore subject to the annual appropriations process. But the total proposal also contains \$4.6 billion for mandatory programs such as

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## Republicans Take Issue With Clinton's Budget Priorities

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student loans.

How much of the Clinton proposal will actually become law remains to be seen. Gauging by the response from Republican lawmakers, who control both chambers of Congress, odds are that the coming debate will focus less on overall education spending and more on the priorities within the final budget.

"I don't think it's an issue of the amount of money," said Amy L. Call, a spokeswoman for Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee. The trouble is all the "strings" attached to federal education programs, according to Ms. Call, who said states and districts should have much more flexibility in how they spend federal dollars. Sen. Susan Collins of Maine sounded the same themes last month in the Republican response to the president's State of the Union Address.

And the debate is likely to be colored by election-year politics, with Republicans and Democrats expecting hard-fought campaigns for control of both the White House and Congress.

### Teachers a Priority

Some of the education programs Mr. Clinton likes to talk about most, such as the after-school and class-size-reduction initiatives, are among those that would see sizable increases in his proposed budget for the fiscal year that begins next Oct. 1. He is requesting \$1 billion for after-school programs, more than double this year's appropriation. The effort to reduce class sizes by providing money to hire more teachers would receive \$1.75 billion, up from \$1.3 billion this year.

The Title I program for disadvantaged students—the flagship federal program in K-12 education—would receive \$8.4 billion in grants to districts, up from \$7.9 billion this year. And the president would nearly double the amount of Title I

money that is set aside to help turn around low-performing schools, from \$134 million to \$250 million.

Mr. Clinton is proposing to create several new teacher-quality initiatives, including a \$75 million "Hometown Teachers" program to help with teacher recruitment and retention in 100 high-poverty

dards" program, designed to promote professional development linked to state standards and assessments. It would replace Goals 2000 and the Eisenhower professional-development program.

Other new programs would include \$50 million to reward states that made significant

to provide \$30 billion in tax relief over 10 years, would aim to help families pay for college.

### GOP Reaction

In general, congressional Republicans were not impressed with Mr. Clinton's plan.

"This is a disappointing budget submission from a number of perspectives," Rep. Bill Goodling of Pennsylvania, the chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said in a prepared statement. He said it would not provide enough money for Republican priorities, such as increased federal aid to districts to help them comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

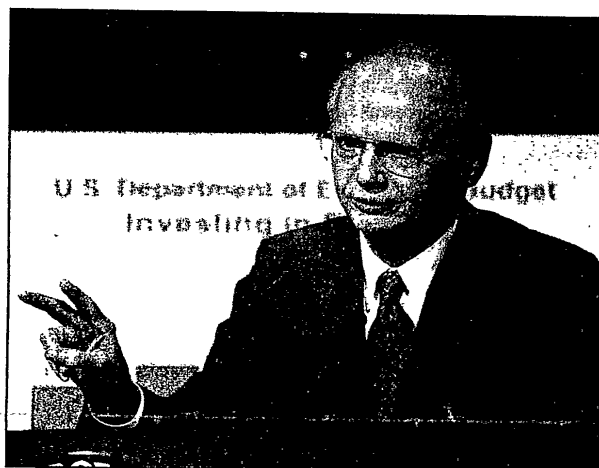
The Clinton budget would provide about \$6 billion in special education grants to states, an increase of nearly \$300 million from fiscal 2000.

The administration's plan to maintain funding for the Even Start family-literacy program at its current level of \$150 million also riled Mr. Goodling, a strong advocate for that initiative.

And he said the Teacher Empowerment Act, approved by the House last year, was better than the president's proposals for teacher quality and class-size reduction.

"Our [bill] ... is the better way to address both quality and hiring issues, by leaving those decisions to the people who know best: local school districts," Mr. Goodling said.

While applauding the overall proposed spending increases, some representatives of K-12 groups lamented that not all their priorities had received enough attention, especially Title I.



Secretary Richard W. Riley outlines \$4.5 billion in proposed increases in discretionary spending for Department of Education in fiscal 2001.

districts, a \$50 million initiative to help 10 to 12 high-poverty districts provide better pay linked to a rigorous peer-review process, and a \$50 million incentives program to reward high-poverty districts that showed the largest increases in the number of certified teachers and decreases in those teaching outside the fields for which they were trained.

"Teacher quality is always high on our agenda," said Secretary Riley, who estimated that the proposed budget contains \$1 billion overall in money to "support better teaching."

The biggest-ticket item in that category is a \$690 million request for the "Teaching to High Stan-

dards" program, designed to help close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students, \$20 million to support public-school-choice programs, and \$1.3 billion in discretionary dollars to help districts pay for school renovation projects, mostly through subsidizing seven-year, no-interest loans.

The president is also proposing to use the tax code in several education initiatives. One is a reiteration of the administration's proposal to provide \$25 billion in tax-credit bonds over two years to build and modernize schools. And a new "College Opportunities Tax Cut" program, estimated

to provide \$30 billion in tax relief

over 10 years, would aim to help families pay for college.

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"I'm really excited about a significant increase in education [funding] ... and very disappointed that they're not putting it in the flagship [Title I] program," said Richard Long, the executive director of the National Association of State Title I Directors.

Jeff Simering, the legislative director for the Council of the Great City Schools, complained about the administration's plan to nearly double the amount set aside under Title I to help turn around poor-performing schools.

"To take substantial amounts of money out of the [Title I] formula going to school districts seems to be punishing the people you're trying to help," he said.

Among the programs targeted for cuts in President Clinton's budget is impact aid, which provides help for districts that are affected financially by the local presence of federal activities and installations, such as military bases. Its funding would decline by \$134 million from this year's \$900 million level. And funding for the \$365 million Title VI block grant program would be eliminated altogether. Mr. Clinton proposed—and Congress rejected—similar cuts last year.

Joel Packer, a senior lobbyist for the National Education Association, argues that recent history is a good guide in predicting what lies ahead in the debate over the education budget.

"In each of the past four years," he said, "Congress has approved more money for education than requested by the president."

He said that since the GOP-led Congress has priorities that differ from Mr. Clinton's, Republicans typically end up including more money than the president proposes for their favorite budget items, such as IDEA, Title VI block grants, Pell grants, and impact aid, while agreeing to pay for much of what the White House wants as well.

"We get the best of both worlds," he said.

### The White House Education Budget

President Clinton's fiscal 2001 spending plan would boost discretionary spending in the Department of Education by about \$4.5 billion. Below are some highlights from his proposal:

Program	FY 2000	FY 2001 (Proposed)
Title I grants	\$7.9 billion	\$8.4 billion
Class-size reduction	\$1.3 billion	\$1.75 billion
Bilingual and immigrant education	\$406 million	\$460 million
Special education state grants	\$5.75 billion	\$6.05 billion
Impact aid	\$906.5 million	\$770 million
21st Century Community Learning Centers	\$453 million	\$1 billion
Small schools	\$45 million	\$120 million
Charter schools	\$145 million	\$175 million
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities	\$600 million	\$650 million

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education.



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