

Feb. 12, 2020

Trump budget would shift education programs to block grant

President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal 2021 includes \$66.6 billion in net discretionary budget authority for the Department of Education, a 7.8 percent decrease from fiscal 2020 enacted levels. Congress is unlikely to enact the president's budget, but the request reflects administration priorities.

The Department of Education's budget request proposes shifting funding for 29 programs to a collective block grant program. Currently these programs receive their own dedicated funding — in fiscal 2020, they received a combined \$24.1 billion in enacted funding. Under the proposal, states would have to apply for funding from the "Elementary and Secondary Education for the Disadvantaged Block Grant" program. The total funding for the block grant program would be \$19.4 billion, a 20 percent decline from the cumulative enacted funding in 2020.

Programs that would be wrapped in the proposed block grant program

2020 ENACTED FUNDING LEVELS



Charter school advocates have criticized block grant proposal

Advocates of some of the programs have criticized the proposal, including charter school supporters. Switching to a block grant system could reduce the number of states that take funding for these programs and could increase uncertainty about program funding, since applications for grants could be denied.

Moreover, these programs would be competing over a smaller total amount of money. The block grant program would have about \$4.7 billion less than the collective 2020 enacted funding these programs received.

Many of these programs provide aid for minority and disadvantaged students, including programs for Alaska native education, native Hawaiian education and rural education. Fifteen of the programs received less than \$100 million in funding in 2020.