



Florida School Boards Association FEDERAL NEWS & INFORMATION

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BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

Almost halfway into fiscal year 2022, Congress has approved a 2,700-page, \$1.5 trillion spending bill that will fund all federal agencies through September 30, 2022. The measure also includes \$13.6 billion in supplemental appropriations to address the Ukraine crisis and several unrelated measures that were able to get attached to one of the few measures that will reach President Joe Biden's desk by year end.

The process that finally resolved FY 2022 spending was lengthy and complicated, and marked by partisan bickering. Last week, attempts to include supplemental spending to address the ongoing pandemic were rejected by Senate Republicans and drew criticism from some Democrats, since the measure would have used unspent COVID relief funds for new purposes. House leadership ultimately left the spending out of the bill and approved the measure via a bipartisan vote Tuesday before heading for Philadelphia and a Democratic retreat. The Senate approved the same bill — also with bipartisan support — Thursday night.

The omnibus increases funding for the Department of Education, but by far less than President Biden had requested for FY 2022 and had been included in the earlier House and Senate proposals. The Labor, Health and Human Services and Education portion of the bill increases funding for the Department of Education by \$2.9 billion when compared to last year (a summary prepared by majority staff is [here](#)). The increase is the largest for the agency since a \$2.6 billion increase in 2018.

Friday marked the anniversary of the enactment of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan. The White House put out a [statement](#) on how the funds are “keeping America’s schools open safely, combating learning loss, and address student mental health.” The statement argues that almost all schools have reopened safely since enactment of the law, there has been unprecedented growth in education jobs, learning loss has been remediated, and the mental health needs of students have been supported, among other important uses. President Biden is expected to build on what he sees as progress in his budget request. Recent conversations with administration staff suggest that the FY 2023 budget request will be unveiled on March 23, with agency briefings on March 24. An open question is whether this plan will be the complete, detailed request, or a “skinny” budget proposal. The late enactment of the FY 2022 spending bill has complicated calculations for agency budgets for FY 2023. The Office of Management and Budget could need more time to complete the hundreds of pages of tables that come with a White House spending plan.

BUSINESS FORWARD DISCUSSES BUILDING AN EQUITABLE WORKFORCE

On Wednesday, March 9, Business Forward hosted a webinar titled, “Building an Equitable Workforce through K-12 Education and Skills.” It focused on building an equitable workforce through K-12 education, skills and closing the workplace gender gap with Senior Advisor for the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education Lexi Barrett, and Acting Deputy Director of Policy for the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Commerce David Langdon. A key theme throughout this briefing was the importance of workforce development and the crucial role that businesses have in this effort. David shared three ways that businesses can rethink their hiring practices to better connect skilled workers with employment opportunities; these are engaging in relationship building with candidates, leading with data, and implementing skills-based hiring as opposed to relying on a four-year degree requirement. Lexi emphasizes that too many students are leaving K-12 education without meaningful experiences or proper exposure to various career paths. She believes that providing these students with these experiences is one of the most effective strategies for widening career paths, especially for students from low-income and minority backgrounds. For more information on Business Forward, please click [here](#).