

American History and Civics National Activities

The Committee recommends \$3,500,000 for American History and Civics National Activities, which is \$500,000 more than the fiscal year 2020 enacted level. The fiscal year 2021 budget request proposes to eliminate this program.

The Committee supports efforts by school districts that are home to populations of Latino students to ensure public schools reflect the diversity of their districts, which may extend to the naming of schools to highlight the achievements of Latinos.

Supporting Effective Educator Development

The Committee recommends \$80,000,000 for the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant program, which is the same as the fiscal year 2020 level. The fiscal year 2021 budget request proposes to eliminate this program. SEED provides competitive grants to support alternative certification and other professional development and enrichment activities for teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Funds are included to fully support continuation costs for grants made in prior years.

The Committee is supportive of the Department's competitive preference priority for SEL in the fiscal year 2020 SEED competition and directs the Department to include the competitive preference priority in any new SEED competition in fiscal year 2021.

The Committee recognizes the positive impact SEL has on academic performance, classroom behavior, and student well-being. But studies have also shown that SEL school-based programs are more effective when they are supported by parent and family involvement. The Committee encourages the Department to support grantees that develop and implement teacher and school leader training programs on family engagement to increase the capacity of new and existing teachers and school leaders to work with families to collaboratively develop and support the social and emotional skills, habits, and mindsets of children. Efforts to promote family engagement could provide instruction of research-based, social and emotional skills, habits, and mindsets through locally relevant materials that increase the SEL competencies and capacities of teachers, school leaders, and families. Such efforts could also provide teacher and school leader training and professional development on strategies to engage families and collectively support the development of the social and emotional skills, habits, and mindsets of families.

Further, the Committee directs the Department to ensure that SEED grants are awarded to a diverse set of eligible entities, including national nonprofit organizations implementing evidence-based activities (as defined in section 8101(21)(A)(i) of the ESEA) across a number of sites which can help bring to scale evidence-based programs of national significance across the country.

In addition, the Committee encourages the Department, through the SEED program, to fund projects that increase the number of teachers with computer science certifications with a priority to increase the number of such teachers in rural public schools and public schools serving high percentages of Native students.

The Committee encourages the Department to ensure that SEED grants are awarded to a diverse set of eligible entities, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority

Serving Institutions that have a focus on improving teacher diversity and educational outcomes in urban or underserved communities.

The Committee recognizes the vital role in preparing educators so that all students have access to high-quality STEM learning opportunities. The Committee further recognizes the value in a diverse STEM teacher pipeline and encourages efforts to increase women in STEM teacher positions.

The Committee supports improving civic education in the U.S. to ensure students understand the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other founding and foundational documents including the Emancipation Proclamation. The Committee is aware that teacher subject matter expertise is a factor in student achievement. Accordingly, within SEED, the Department is encouraged to support evidence-based professional development that helps elementary and secondary educators increase civic knowledge of principles included in the U.S.'s founding and foundational documents.

Charter Schools Grants

The Committee recommends \$400,000,000 for Charter School Program (CSP) Grants, which is \$40,000,000 below the fiscal year 2020 enacted level. The fiscal year 2021 budget request proposes to eliminate this program.

CSP awards grants to SEAs or, if a State's SEA chooses not to participate, to charter school developers to support the development and initial implementation of public charter schools. State Facilities Incentive Grants and Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities awards help charter schools obtain adequate school facilities. These programs work in tandem to support the development and operation of charter schools.

The Committee requests GAO to provide a report to the Committees on Appropriations on the Department's oversight over CSP and whether the program is being implemented effectively among grantees and subgrantees. The report should include an analysis of CSP grant amounts over time that supported charter schools, with a particular focus on schools that eventually closed or received funds but never opened; the relationships between charter schools supported by CSP grants and charter management organizations; and an analysis of enrollment patterns at these schools, especially for students with disabilities. The report should examine ways to improve the Department's oversight of CSP as well as make recommendations on potential legislative changes to the program that would reduce the potential for mismanagement and ineffective operations.

Further, the Committee supports efforts by the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) to examine grantee administration of Replication and Expansion Grants, including charter management organization grantees. The Committee also supports the OIG's efforts to evaluate whether the Department adequately monitored grantees' performance and uses of funds for CSP competitions.