Budget and Appropriations: The Basics of Federal Spending

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Authorization vs. Appropriation

“authorizes” programs, provides legal power, may suggest funding levels

determines funds for discretionary spending, can fund expired laws

Authorizers write laws and appropriators fund them.
Example: Student Support and Academic Enrichment State Grants

ESSA Authorization Language
SEC. 4112 [20 U.S.C. 7112]
AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

(a) IN GENERAL – There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subpart $1,650,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 and $1,600,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2020.

FY 2021 Appropriations Language
The Committee recommends $1,220,000,000 for Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) State Grants, which is $10,000,000 above the fiscal year 2020 enacted level. The fiscal year 2021 budget request proposes to eliminate this program.

Timeline: The Appropriations Cycle

- **Feb-March:** President’s budget released, marking the beginning of appropriations process
- **March - April:** Members of Congress submit their appropriations priorities to subcommittees
- **May - July:** Congress takes testimony, holds hearings, marks-up bills
- **August:** Staff work through August recess to finalize appropriations bills
- **Sept-Dec:** Congress and President finalize bill(s) or pass continuing resolution by September 30
- **Today:** Federal agencies finalize recommendations for next fiscal year

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How Can We Make a Difference?

Fiscal Year 2021 Funding Requests:
No less than $14 billion for IDEA’s Part B Section 611 State Grant Program
$684 million to fund IDEA’s Part B Section 619 Pre-School Program
$975 million for IDEA’s Part C Early Intervention Program
$254 million for IDEA’s Part D Program
$70 million to fund the National Center for Special Education Research
$32 million for the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act