



StraightA's

Public Education Policy And Progress



PRESIDENT BUSH RELEASES FISCAL YEAR 2007 BUDGET: Education Funding Cut by \$2.1 Billion; \$100 Million Request for Striving Readers

On January 31, President Bush delivered a State of the Union address that promised to keep the economy growing with a permanent extension of the tax cuts while attempting to control the budget deficit through cuts in nonsecurity discretionary spending and curbs in the growth of mandatory programs such as Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. He also announced the American Competitiveness Initiative, which would encourage American innovation and strengthen the country's ability to compete in a global economy.

“To keep America competitive one commitment is necessary above all,” he said. “We must continue to lead the world in human talent and creativity. Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hardworking, ambitious people—and we're going to keep that edge. Tonight I announce an American Competitiveness Initiative, to encourage innovation throughout our economy, and to give our nation's children a firm grounding in math and science.”

With his budget release on February 6, President Bush put forward more details on the American Competitiveness Initiative and outlined a spending plan that cuts education spending by \$2.1 billion, or 3.8 percent, from last year.¹

“This budget request soundly targets resources where they are needed most and working best,” said **U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings**. “It will enable us to continue to deliver results for all children under No Child Left Behind, and it tackles our vital priority to improve our global competitiveness by targeting achievement in math and science.”

In a move that is sure to draw many voucher opponents' attention, the president's budget includes \$100 million for America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids. The scholarships would allow low-income students who attend schools identified as in need of restructuring to attend a private school or receive intensive, sustained tutoring assistance. A portion of the request (\$15 million) would fund the scholarship program that has operated in Washington, D.C., since 2005.

¹ From the U.S. Department of Education's fiscal year 2007 budget summary: “Department discretionary spending in fiscal year 2006 included \$1.6 billion in education assistance to areas affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the Reconciliation bill would change the funding of student aid administrative costs from mandatory to discretionary in 2007. Taking into account these one-time changes, the president's 2007 discretionary request for education would be a decline of \$2.1 billion, or 3.8 percent, from the comparable 2006 level.”

American Competitiveness Initiative to Focus on Math and Science

In his budget request, the president proposed a variety of programs under the American Competitiveness Initiative that would strengthen schools' capacity to improve instruction in mathematics and science. The Math Now for Elementary School Students initiative, which is modeled after Reading First, would receive \$125 million to implement proven practices in math instruction that focus on preparing K–7 students for more rigorous math courses in middle and high school. To help middle school students who struggle in math, the president proposed a \$125 million Math Now for Middle School Students initiative, which is based on the principles of the Striving Readers program. In addition, the president proposed \$10 million for a National Mathematics Panel, which would guide the Math Now programs, and \$5 million for an evaluation of mathematics and science programs.

To grow the pool of qualified math and science teachers, the president proposed \$25 million to get 30,000 current or retired engineers, chemists, physicists, and other qualified professionals to teach high school math and science courses. He also called for \$122.2 million—a \$90 million increase—for the Advanced Placement (AP) program to train 70,000 additional teachers for math, science, and foreign-language AP courses and increase the number of students taking and passing AP tests in these subjects.

President Bush Renews Calls for More Accountability at the High School Level

In order to “more thoroughly extend the NCLB principles to the high school level,” as the U.S. Department of Education's budget summary reads, the president's budget includes a \$1.475 billion high school reform proposal that would hold high schools accountable for student performance by requiring states to develop and implement reading and math assessments at two additional grades in high school.

The high school proposal would also provide funding for targeted interventions to improve the academic performance of the most at-risk high school students. Examples of specific interventions listed by the U.S. Department of Education include programs that combine rigorous academic courses with vocational and technical training, research-based dropout prevention programs, and programs that identify at-risk middle school students for assistance that will prepare them to succeed in high school and enter postsecondary education. (Critics of the president's proposal might recognize that these specific interventions are very similar to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Program, the School Dropout Prevention Program, and the GEARUP program—all of which did not receive funding in the president's budget.)

Academic Competitiveness and National SMART grants, funded at \$850 million, make up another part of the president's high school reform initiative. These grants, which were enacted as part of the budget reconciliation bill that the House of Representatives passed on February 1 and that the president is expected to sign, provide grants of up to \$4,000 to low-income, high-achieving postsecondary students who have completed a rigorous high school curriculum or are majoring in mathematics, science, technology, engineering, or critical foreign languages. The budget also includes \$8 million to expand the capacity of the State Scholars program, which encourages high school students to complete a rigorous 4-year course of study.

The Striving Readers program, which the president would fund at \$100 million, is the final piece of the high school reform initiative. In her introductory remarks at a department briefing on the budget, Secretary Spellings said that students cannot complete high school work and ultimately graduate and go on to college if they cannot read. “That’s why Striving Readers was a priority for the president,” she said. Unfortunately, Striving Readers is not as high of a priority in this year’s budget as it was in last year’s, when the president requested \$200 million for it.

Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Would Enforce Spending Restraint

In his State of the Union address, President Bush also promised a budget that would again cut spending. “Every year of my presidency, we’ve reduced the growth of nonsecurity discretionary spending, and last year [Congress] passed bills that cut this spending,” he said. “This year my budget will cut it again, and reduce or eliminate more than 140 programs that are performing poorly or not fulfilling essential priorities. By passing these reforms, we will save the American taxpayer another \$14 billion next year, and stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009.”

An analysis by the *Washington Post* noted that the president’s planned tax cuts would more than offset any savings that could be achieved by enacting the president’s proposed cuts to discretionary spending, Medicare, and Medicaid, among others. “All totaled,” it read, “[President Bush’s] proposals for entitlement programs—including cuts, tax hikes and Social Security partial privatization—would actually increase spending by \$551 billion.”

For education programs, the president’s budget eliminates funding for 42 programs at a cost of approximately \$3.5 billion. Among the targeted programs are the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program (\$34.7 million), Smaller Learning Communities (\$93.5 million), and Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants (\$59.9 million). A chart that outlines the president’s request for selected education programs designed to help middle and high school students is included with this issue of *Straight A’s*.

However, aside from the American Competitiveness Initiative, many of the president’s education proposals—especially his plan to fund the high school initiative by cutting vocational education, GEAR UP, and the like—were similar to last year’s budget, which was largely considered “dead on arrival” on Capitol Hill.

“Given the importance that the president placed on keeping America competitive and raising the math and science performance of our students, I’m frustrated to see education proposals that the Senate rejected 99–0 last year when it reauthorized the Perkins Act,” noted **Alliance for Excellent Education President Bob Wise**. “The administration’s budget is to education what the Super Bowl is to football, and the president gave his team the same playbook that lost last year.”

Whether a new year will bring new results remains to be seen. In the coming weeks, Congress will hold hearings on the president’s budget request and evaluate whether his spending priorities are in line with their own. With elections looming near the end of the year, members of Congress may be reluctant to enforce the spending discipline that the president’s budget requests.



STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESSES: Governors Agree on Importance of Math and Science to Future Productivity

In keeping with a theme raised by President Bush in his State of the Union address, many governors across the country also spoke about the need for more math and science graduates in their state of the state addresses. Teacher retention and recruitment and helping students pay for college tuition were also popular subjects.

Delaware

Citing marks on *Education Week*'s report card on education and fourth- and eighth-grade reading scores on the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress that were among the highest in the nation, **Governor Ruth Ann Minner (D)** said she was "extremely pleased" and "very proud" of the progress her state has made in education, but cautioned that Maryland "cannot afford to relax [its] education efforts."

In her state of the state address on January 19, Governor Minner called for continuing a program that would place a math specialist in every Delaware middle school. Created to prevent struggling middle school students from falling behind in math, the program placed 22 specialists in middle schools last year. Minner proposed to add 10 additional specialists in 2006.

She also pledged to raise awareness about Delaware's Student Excellence Equals Degree (SEED) scholarship program. Beginning with this year's high school seniors, students who graduate from Delaware high schools with at least a 2.5 grade-point average and no felony convictions are eligible to receive a 2-year college degree tuition free. Students must be enrolled full time in an associate's degree program at Delaware Technical & Community College (DTCC) or the Associate of Arts program at the University of Delaware.

Hawaii

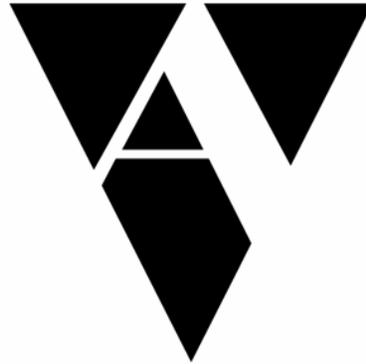
Saying that the projected \$574 million projected surplus will allow Hawaiians to "literally have it all," **Governor Linda Lingle (R)** proposed an increase of \$132.5 million for K-12 public education in addition to a series of tax reductions.

"I don't view this session as a fight between tax relief and more money for education ... or between education and saving for a rainy day ... or between saving for a rainy day and securing our economic future through investments in new energy resources," she said.

In discussing education priorities in her state of the state address on January 23, Lingle said that approximately \$90 million of the \$132.5 million increase in education spending would go toward school construction, repairs, and maintenance. She also called for immediate attention to Hawaii's "severe" teacher shortage and proposed four new laws to address it.

First, she would allow retired teachers to return to the profession without losing their retirement benefits if they taught in "difficult to fill classroom positions." Secondly, she would create an emergency certified teacher program that would allow individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher to teach in the subject in which they majored if they complete a substitute teacher training

Selected Federal Education Programs that can Help Middle and High School Students Get an Excellent Education



**ALLIANCE FOR
EXCELLENT EDUCATION**

Alliance for Excellent Education

February 6, 2006

NOTE: A table showing the amounts provided for all the programs and activities of the Education Department is available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget07/summary/appendix4.pdf>.

Selected Federal Education Programs that can Help Middle and High School Students Get an Excellent Education

<i>No Child Left Behind</i> Programs	FY 2006 Bush Budget	FY 2006 Final Appropriation (Includes a 1% across-the-board cut)	FY 2007 Bush Budget
<p><u>Title I: Grants to School Districts</u> Helps disadvantaged students meet high standards. Only 15 percent of funds currently go to middle and high school students.</p>	\$13.34 billion	\$12.71 billion	\$12.71 billion
<p><u>Striving Readers</u> Involves states and school districts in developing and implementing research-based interventions to help improve the skills of secondary school students who are reading below grade level.</p>	\$200 million	\$29.7 million	\$100 million
<p><u>Title II: Teacher Quality</u> State grants to increase student academic achievement and student performance through such strategies as improving teacher quality, increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom, and reducing class size.</p>	\$2.92 billion	\$2.89 billion	\$2.89 billion
<p><u>21st Century Learning Centers—After School Programs</u> Helps communities establish or expand school-based learning activities, including after school, weekend and summer school opportunities, particularly for students in low-performing schools and low-income communities.</p>	\$991 million	\$981.2 million	\$981 million
<p><u>Smaller Learning Communities</u> Offers competitive grants to local school districts to create smaller schools or break up larger schools by funding innovative strategies such as schools-within-schools and career academies.</p>	\$0 (Eliminates Program)	\$93.5 million	\$0 (Eliminates Program)

<i>No Child Left Behind Programs</i>	FY 2006 Bush Budget	FY 2006 Final Appropriation (Includes a 1% across-the-board cut)	FY 2007 Bush Budget
<p><u>Dropout Prevention Program</u> Assists schools with high dropout rates to implement dropout prevention programs. Identifies 10 allowable activities, including: professional development; reduction in pupil-teacher ratios; counseling and mentoring for at-risk students; and implementing comprehensive school reform models.</p>	<p>\$0 (Eliminates Program)</p>	<p>\$4.85 million</p>	<p>\$0 (Eliminates Program)</p>
<p><u>Elementary and Secondary Schools Counseling Program¹</u> Competitive grants to school districts to establish or expand the range, availability, quality, and quantity of counseling for students in elementary and secondary schools. Expands eligibility for the program from elementary schools only to both elementary and secondary schools when appropriations reach \$40 million.</p>	<p>\$0 (Eliminates program)</p>	<p>\$34.7 million</p>	<p>\$0 (Eliminates Program)</p>

¹ According to the No Child Left Behind Act, if the amount appropriated for this program is less than \$40 million, the Secretary “shall award grants to local educational agencies *only to establish or expand counseling programs in elementary schools.*” In other words, no money can be distributed to secondary schools.

Other Reauthorizations	FY 2006 Bush Budget	FY 2006 Final Appropriation (Includes a 1% across-the-board cut)	FY 2007 Bush Budget
<u>Special Education (IDEA)</u> ² Assists states in providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities ages three through 21 and early intervention services for infants and toddlers birth through age two and their families.	\$11.10 billion	\$10.58 billion	\$10.68 billion
<u>Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Program</u> Provides formula grants to States to further State and community efforts to improve vocational education programs and adult education and literacy systems.	\$0 (Eliminates Program)	\$1.27 billion	\$0 (Eliminates Program)
<u>TRIO (Under the Higher Education Act)</u> Encourages individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter and complete college.	\$369.4 million	\$828.2 million	\$380 million
<u>GEAR UP (Under the Higher Education Act)</u> Funds partnerships of high-poverty middle schools, colleges and universities, community organizations, and businesses to work with entire grade levels of students.	\$0 (Eliminates program)	\$303.4 million	\$0 (Eliminates Program)
<u>Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants (Under the Higher Education Act)</u> Addresses teacher recruitment and preparation in areas experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers through grants to teacher preparation colleges and universities working with schools.	\$0 (Eliminates Program)	\$59.9 million	\$0 (Eliminates Program)

² Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, which was signed into law by President Bush on December 3, 2004, a school district can use up to 15 percent of funding to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services, which may include scientifically based literacy instruction, for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade 3) who have not been identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.

program. She also called for a master teacher program that would pay a \$10,000 bonus annual to any of the 111 National Board Certified teachers who agree to teach for 3 years in an underperforming school and mentor other teachers. Finally, Lingle would use \$500,000 to reestablish the Hawaii Educator Loan Program, and reduce the amount of time to qualify for tuition loan forgiveness from 10 to 6 years.

Maine

In his state of the state address on January 17, **Governor John Baldacci (D)** proposed \$3 million in additional funding for high-performing small schools, a higher beginning salary for beginning teachers, and an additional \$500,000 to allow high school students to enroll in college-level courses.

“People are the most important resource in my economic plan,” Baldacci said. “We are moving toward a knowledge-based economy. In that economy, Maine people are our new economic engines. Today we have more people in our community colleges, more investments in research and development, and more technology for businesses and people. We are getting our children ready for school with early child care, increasing the number of students in college with loans, and training our adult workers with new skills and creativity.”

Michigan

In light of recent announcements by Ford and General Motors that they will cut tens of thousands of jobs over the next few years, it was no surprise that **Governor Jennifer Granholm (D)** focused on education and job creation in her state of the state address on January 25.

To help to make college affordable for Michigan families, Granholm pushed for a new \$4,000 merit scholarship for every child in Michigan who enrolls in postsecondary education. In addition, to help prepare students for college, she called for a required core curriculum for all Michigan high school students and more afterschool programs that would provide sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will more time to learn math, science, and computer technology and prepare them for a more rigorous high school curriculum.

“Right now in Michigan, we require only one course for our high school graduates: a single semester of civics,” she said. “Only one third of the students who graduate from our high schools right now have taken the math, science, and communication courses we know they’ll need to compete in our new economy.”

New Hampshire

In his state of the state address on January 18, **Governor John Lynch (D)** made it clear that he expects every high school student to graduate from high school.

“Last year an estimated 2,300 of our students dropped out of high school,” he said. “We must make it clear to our young people that we are not going to give up on them, or let them give up on themselves. We must change the law and require our children to stay in school until age 18.

State of the State Addresses (Continued from p. 5)

Education is the key to opportunity for our children, our families, and our state. The demands of a changing economy require a highly skilled and educated workforce.”

Recognizing that simply forcing students to stay in school does not necessarily equate to receiving a diploma, Lynch announced that he would hold a statewide summit in the spring to focus on strategies for keeping kids in school. The summit will focus on alternative programs, vocational high schools, internships, night programs, and the role of community colleges.

New Mexico

In what he called his “Year of the Child Agenda,” **Governor Bill Richardson (D)** outlined a long list of proposals in his state of the state address on January 17 to ensure that all children can “grow up healthy, attend world-class schools, go to a good college, get a good-paying job, and raise their family in New Mexico.”

Because many kids begin kindergarten already behind their classmates, Richardson proposed expanding access to pre-kindergarten by doubling the funding to serve nearly 3,000 kids statewide. He also advocated for a 6 percent pay increase for all teachers and instructional personnel to help recruit and retain more quality teachers. He cited a lack of parental involvement as a “glaring weakness” and sought to break down the barriers between parents and schools.

For high schools, Richardson called for a “new commitment” to match high school curricula with college entrance exams. “The tests to get out of high school should match the tests to get into college,” he said. He also supported continued development and support of career technical centers and vocational charter high schools for students whose career path might not include college but need technical training and 21st-century career skills.

“After all,” Richardson asked, “what is more pro-business and entrepreneurial than preparing a whole generation of kids to succeed and prosper 5, 10, or 20 years from now?”

Ohio

In his state of the state address on January 25, **Governor Bob Taft (R)** called for a more rigorous core curriculum in high schools to better prepare high school students for success on the job and in college, and reduce college remediation rates.

“Unfortunately, we also know that in Ohio too few high school graduates are prepared for college or a well-paying job,” he said. “The evidence is overwhelming that when it comes to our high school students, it’s not just about graduation. It’s about preparation. Only one in three of Ohio’s high school graduates have the skills they need to succeed in a good entry-level job, an apprenticeship, the military, or in college.”

Under Taft's proposal, all students would have to take 4 years of math, including Algebra II; 3 years of science, including biology, chemistry, and physics; 3 years of social studies; and at least 2 years of a foreign language. The new requirements would apply to students beginning with the graduating class of 2011. In addition, students would be required to complete the core curriculum as a condition of admission to Ohio's public 4-year colleges and universities. Students who needed remediation at the college level would have to take classes at Ohio's 2-year campuses. Taft would also give students a "college and work-ready assessment" in their junior year to see if they will graduate with the skills they need in college and the workforce. Finally, to measure how well high schools are preparing students, the state would add an indicator to the school's report card.

"For too many, a high school diploma is not a passport to success, but rather a broken promise," Taft said. "The world has raised the bar, and we must act to raise the bar for high school graduation. It's time to require all high school students to take a more rigorous core curriculum."

To help students with college tuition, Taft would give every high school student in good academic standing to earn at least one semester of college credit while in high school. He also called for tuition incentives to help increase the number of math, science, technology, and engineering graduates, as well as the number of math and science teachers.

Wisconsin

In his state of the state address on January 17, **Governor Jim Doyle (D)** introduced the Wisconsin Covenant, a new plan to encourage college enrollment and raise achievement in elementary and secondary education. He called the program a "historic commitment to make college more affordable for hardworking Wisconsin families ... while giving high school students an incentive to succeed in the classroom."

Under his plan, any eighth-grade student with some financial need can enroll in the program. By signing the covenant, the student would pledge to maintain a B average in high school, complete a specified core curriculum, and apply for state and federal financial aid. A student who meets these requirements will receive a financial aid package that meets their full financial need for tuition at any University of Wisconsin system school. While neediest students would receive grants to pay their college costs, those at slightly higher incomes would receive a mix of loan subsidies, grants, and work study.

Governor Doyle also renewed his call for the state legislature to pass his proposal to make a third year of math and a third year of science mandatory for high school graduation. "When a student gets a diploma in Wisconsin, it should really mean something," he said.

Straight A's: Public Education Policy and Progress is a biweekly newsletter that focuses on education news and events both in Washington, D.C., and around the country. The format makes information on federal education policy accessible to everyone from elected officials and policymakers to parents and community leaders. The Alliance for Excellent Education is a nonprofit organization working to make it possible for America's secondary school students to achieve high standards.



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StraightA's

Public Education Policy And Progress
Volume 6 No. 3: February 7, 2006

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Volume 6 No. 3: February 7, 2006

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Editor's Note: This issue of Straight A's contains a special insert that outlines the president's fiscal year 2007 budget request for selected education programs designed to help middle and high school students.



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