

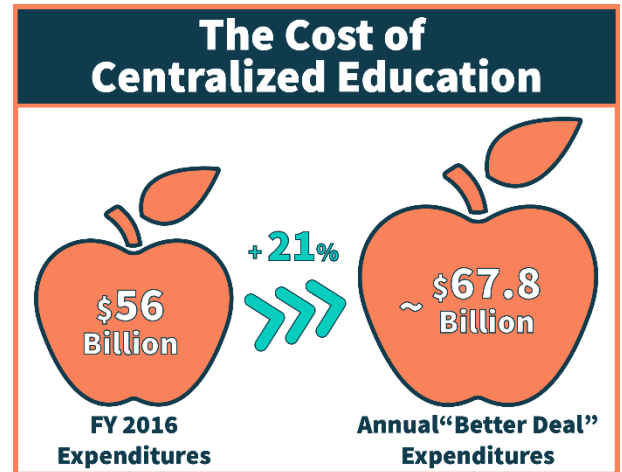


HOUSE
BUDGET
COMMITTEE

Centralized Education

As part of their “Better Deal” agenda, House Democrats have proposed another new federal program, “A Better Deal for Teachers and Students.” Supporting teachers and education is a bipartisan objective, but this plan is irresponsible. The proposal would dramatically increase federal funding for teacher compensation, school infrastructure, and resources, in addition to expanding federal regulations.¹

Increasing Federal Education Funding Would Bust the Budget. While Republicans and Democrats agree that access to quality education is an important priority, success in this space is dependent on state and local governments driving education policy and funding, not the Federal Government. This proposal continues the Democrat trend of high-cost legislation that further threatens the stability of the already precarious federal budget. If implemented, the plan would direct \$50 billion to states and school districts to increase teacher compensation, and \$50 billion for school infrastructure and resources, totaling \$100 billion over 10 years,² and accruing \$18 billion in additional debt service costs. In addition to this funding, the proposal would also designate funds for special education, increase support for Title I schools, and protect unions and collective bargaining rights.



Taxpayers are already contributing federal funding for K-12 education programs. A report by the National Center for Education Statistics shows that in fiscal year 2016, school districts received \$56 billion federal dollars for public elementary and secondary education.³

Increasing Federal Education Funding is Unworkable. This proposal fails to efficiently and effectively achieve its intended goals. Lawmakers should always strive to improve the American educational system and to support our teachers. However, this should be done by assisting state and local governments, where prudent decision-making can be made to best suit the unique specifications of the diverse communities and school districts across the nation. Federal funding for local education will inevitably come with strings attached, limiting state and local control over education, increasing centralization in the Federal Government, spending more taxpayer dollars, and imposing more federal regulations on local communities.

A Republican Solution for Improving America’s Education System. Instead of growing the Federal Government, lawmakers should focus on ensuring states and school districts are empowered to tailor their education systems to best meet the needs of the communities they serve. Increasing the federal role in local school districts would hinder this ability. Public school teachers and school infrastructure and resources deserve support, but there are ways in which states, localities, and school districts can address the priorities without interference from the Federal Government’s heavy hand. Policymakers should build from the principles in the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA),⁴ which made serious efforts to restore control and accountability to states and communities. ESSA comprehensively reauthorized the “Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (ESEA)⁵ and made reforms, among others, to provide school districts with more flexibility in their funding, repeal numerous ineffective federal programs, and restore accountability and school improvement to states and school districts. Lawmakers should continue to provide states and localities with the flexibility to determine and address their own needs, so that our teachers and – most importantly – our students have the best chance for success.

¹ “A Better Deal for Teachers and Students”, A Better Deal, <https://abetterdeal.democraticleader.gov/>.

² *Ibid.*

³ “Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts: School Year 2015-16,” National Center for Education Statistics, December 2018, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019301.pdf>.

⁴ Every Student Succeeds Act, P.L. 114-95, (2015).

⁵ Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-10, (1965).