

# American Families Plan for K–14 Districts



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Today, April 28, 2021, President Joseph Biden announced the American Families Plan, which proposes significant increases to education, including two years of free universal preschool and two years of free community college. In all, the American Families Plan includes \$1.8 trillion in investments (\$1 trillion) and in tax credits (\$800 billion) for American families and children over the age of ten. Below are some of the proposal's highlights for pre-kindergarten (pre-K) through community college education.

## Universal Preschool

The American Families Plan proposes to provide \$200 billion for free universal, quality preschool to all three- and four-year-olds. President Biden's plan strives to ensure that all publicly funded preschools have low student-to-teacher ratios, high-quality and developmentally appropriate curriculum, and supportive classroom environments that are inclusive for all students. States would cover 10% of the cost, and would phase in to about 50% of the cost over time. According to a background press briefing, the program would be available to families at all income levels. All employees participating in pre-K programs and Head Start will earn at least \$15 per hour under President Biden's proposal.

## Educator Supports

Mirroring many of the educator support programs in California, President Biden is calling on Congress to invest \$9 billion in American teachers, addressing shortages, improving training and supports for teachers, and boosting teacher diversity with the following proposals:

- Double scholarships for future teachers from \$4,000 to \$8,000 per year while earning their degree
- \$2.8 billion in "Grow Your Own" programs and year-long, paid teacher residency programs
- \$1.6 billion to provide educators with opportunities to obtain additional certifications in high-demand areas like special education, bilingual education, and certifications that improve teacher performance
- \$2 billion to support programs that leverage teachers as leaders, such as high-quality mentorship programs for new teachers and teachers of color

## School Nutrition

The President's plan will fund \$17 billion to expand free meals for children in the highest poverty districts (those with at least 40% of students participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]) by reimbursing a higher percentage of meals at the free reimbursement rate through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The plan will also reimburse an even higher percentage of meals at the free reimbursement rate through the CEP and lower the threshold for CEP eligibility for elementary schools to 25% of students participating in SNAP. Finally, the plan will also expand direct certification to automatically enroll more students for school means based on Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income data.

## Free Community College

The American Families Plan also proposes \$109 billion to provide two years of free community college. Like the state-federal government cost sharing partnership of universal preschool, states would be expected to cover 25% of the average cost of community college. States would be expected to maintain their current contribution to their post-secondary system, meaning that California could not simply pass the cost of the current California College Promise Grant program to the federal government. Students can use the benefit over three years and up to four years under certain circumstances. In addition, President Biden is calling for an over \$80 billion investment in Pell Grants, increasing the maximum Pell Grant award by approximately \$1,400. The American Families Plan also includes \$62 billion to invest in evidence-based strategies to strengthen completion and retention rates at community colleges and institutions that serve students from our most disadvantaged communities.

## Next Steps

Both the American Jobs Plan (see [“The American Jobs Plan for K–14 Districts”](#) in the April *Community College Update*) and the American Families Plan have been ruled as eligible to be approved by the Senate through the budget reconciliation process. That means, if all Democrats voted together, no Senate Republicans would be needed to pass either of the plans. It remains to be seen whether either or both of the plans will be approved in that manner or through a bipartisan compromise.