

SPOTLIGHT

Biden's Rescue Plan Includes \$130 Billion for K-12, But Some Members of Congress Might 'Balk at the Size' | The 74 Million

In his first days in office, President Biden signed a flurry of executive orders meant to pave the way for a robust and aggressive agenda to end the pandemic, reopen schools within 100 days, and undue many of his predecessor's policies. [A number of the orders carried education implications](#) - a "pause" on student loan payments will be extended through Sept., former President Donald Trump's 1776 Commission to promote "patriotic education" will be disbanded, and first steps were taken to preserve the DACA program for undocumented students.

The coming weeks promise even more education activity, as the Senate undergoes the confirmation processes for Biden's picks for Education Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Connecticut Education Commissioner [Miguel Cardona](#) and San Diego Superintendent [Cindy Marten](#), and the full Congress begins considering the new President's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill.

Nearly all of Biden's first actions on education, including the selection of his department nominees, underscore his determined focus on issues of equity. [Marten has been a vocal supporter of the President's proposal to triple Title I funding](#) and bolster special education, while Cardona, a [former English learner, teacher, and principal himself](#), likely intends to build on his record of advocating for vulnerable student groups if confirmed.



IN THE NEWS

Without Statewide Testing Data California Will Fall Short In Supporting Student Learning | CalMatters

As conversations stirred this week in states like California, Washington, and Arkansas around whether administration of statewide standardized assessments should move forward this school year, education officials, advocates, and other stakeholders continued to speak up in support of the test - or more accurately, in using data to understand trends in student learning amid the pandemic and to inform the very difficult course schools must pave to recover. [In Arkansas](#), state officials announced efforts to support teachers effectively communicate with parents on the value of testing this year and in California, where the [State Board of Education appeared to take a step back](#), district leaders expressed concern. "How can we work to rectify the growing education equity gap in California when we don't have current data about how students are doing academically?" asked Sacramento Board of Education Trustee Paul Keefer. And in [Washington](#), state officials sought to balance disparate local views on tests by waiting on a federal stance from incoming Biden administration officials, who will likely ultimately set the expectation for states on the matter of administering tests.



Prior to COVID-19, states cut \$600B in ed funding since Great Recession | Education Dive

Two reports released recently by the Education Law Center seek to provide further context for elected officials and policymakers about the dire stakes at hand as school districts brace for budget cuts. The

first report provides an analysis of state and local education funding following the Great Recession in 2008, while the second shows how varied the distribution of education dollars across states can be. ELC Executive Director David Sciarra says the reports provide timely insight for state and local leaders as they face difficult budget decisions and seek to deliver billions in federal COVID-19 relief funding as effectively as possible.



THE QUICK LIST

[Incoming Madam Vice President Kamala Harris Forever Alters the Landscape for Girls](#) | The 74 Million

[Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship](#) | Education Commission of the States

[Analysis: Teachers Unions Want a Seat at the Table When It Comes to Reopening Schools — But They Don't Want It to Be the Hot Seat. That's Why They Keep Moving the Goalposts](#) | The 74 Million

[One option for giving children their pandemic year back: Add an extra year to elementary school, forever](#) | The Fordham Institute

[Six ways to embrace the messiness of math education](#) | eSchool News