



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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U.S. Department of Education Announces New Grant Program to Provide Funding to School Districts Being Penalized for Implementing COVID Safety Measures

Today, the U.S. Department of Education announced that it will launch a new grant program to provide additional funding to school districts that have funds withheld by their state or are otherwise financially penalized for implementing strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, such as universal indoor masking. The announcement is part of President Biden's plan to combat COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of students, educators, families, and school communities.

Educators, leaders, and parents are working hand in hand in communities across the nation to protect schoolchildren returning to in-person learning, and the Biden Administration will do everything it can to support them doing right by kids.

The new grant program, Project SAFE (Supporting America's Families and Educators), anticipates using funding within the Department of Education from Title IV, Part F, School Safety National Activities, of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Local school districts would be able to apply for Project SAFE grants that will allow them to restore funding withheld by state leaders—such as for school board members or superintendents who have had their pay cut—when a school district implemented strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools. This funding will help districts improve student safety and well-being by advancing strategies to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools.

“Every student across the country deserves the opportunity to return to school in-person safely this fall, and every family should be confident that their school is implementing policies that keep their children safe,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “We should be thanking districts for using proven strategies that will keep schools open and safe, not punishing them. We stand with the dedicated educators doing the right thing to protect their school communities, and this program will allow them to continue that critical work of keeping students safe.”

The Department intends to release a Notice Inviting Applications for school districts to apply for the Project SAFE grant opportunity in the coming weeks and plans to make grant awards as expeditiously as possible and on an ongoing basis. The Department will make grant awards directly to local education agencies.

In addition to the new grant program administered by the Department of Education, President Biden’s plan includes actions to ensure schools can remain open for in-person learning and maintain the health and safety of students, staff, and families. This includes calling on all states to adopt vaccine mandates for all school employees, encouraging schools to use American Rescue Plan and other federal funds to regularly test students and school staff for COVID-19, and using the Department of Education’s full legal authority to protect students’ access to in-person instruction. As part of the American Rescue Plan, states and school districts were provided \$122 billion in funds aimed at supporting the safe and sustained reopening of schools across the country.

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All the best,

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