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NAFIS Opposes President's FY21 Education Budget Request

Administration's proposal eliminates the Impact Aid Federal Property program, cuts U.S. Department of Education Budget by 8%

Washington, DC – February 10, 2020 – The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) opposes the President's FY21 education budget request, released earlier today. In this request, the U.S. Department of Education faces an 8 percent cut, with 11 programs eliminated and 29 programs consolidated into a block grant.

For Impact Aid, the President's budget request eliminates the Federal Property program, as it has in previous years and with previous administrations. It funds the Basic Support program at its FY20 funding level. It also funds the other Impact Aid line items – construction, children with disabilities and facilities maintenance – at FY20 levels.

NAFIS strongly opposes the elimination of the Impact Aid Federal Property program, urging Congress to reject this proposal and instead increase funding for both the Basic Support and Federal Property programs.

Impact Aid is the Federal Government's reimbursement to school districts for the presence of nontaxable Federal property (i.e. military installations, Indian Lands, Federal low-rent housing, national laboratories and grasslands) and federally connected students. Funding appropriated annually by Congress goes directly to school districts for any general fund purpose, including academic materials, technology, staffing or transportation, supporting all students. The elimination of Federal Property and what amounts to a decrease in Basic Support when considering the rising costs of education would result in cuts to personnel, academic materials, technology, transportation and other general operating expenses, which support all students.

"Students attending federally impacted schools should not be disadvantaged in their learning opportunities because of the presence of non-taxable Federal property in their school district," said NAFIS Executive Director Hilary Goldmann. "We should continue to prioritize students in these districts and ensure they have the opportunity to learn and thrive."

"Since 1950, Congress has recognized its responsibility to support schools and communities affected by a Federal presence," Goldmann continued. "NAFIS calls on Congress to meet this responsibility by

disregarding these proposed cuts and providing, at a minimum, a \$2 million increase to Federal Property and a \$50 million increase to Basic Support. These increases would help fund school districts newly eligible for Federal Property payments as a result of the Federal Government acquiring more land and allow school districts receiving Basic Support to provide additional programs and opportunities that give their students – which include large numbers of Native American and military-connected students – the chance to meet their full potential.”

In addition, NAFIS opposes the drastic cut to the U.S. Department of Education and the consolidation of most elementary and secondary education programs and urges President Trump and Congress to work together to invest in programs to support our nation’s students.

The President’s budget request prioritizes school choice through a \$5 billion “Education Freedom Scholarships” proposal. NAFIS opposes shifting public taxpayer dollars to private school voucher schemes. Such a proposal will drain dollars from the public education system and could lead to long-term deficits in Impact Aid funding.

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The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) represents the 1,200-plus federally impacted public school districts that together educate more than 10 million students across the nation. Federally impacted school districts are those located on or near nontaxable Federal property—including military installations; Indian Trust, Treaty and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands; Federal low-income housing facilities; and national parks, national laboratories and other Federal buildings and property. These school districts, which are demographically and geographically diverse, receive Impact Aid, a Federal education program that reimburses school districts for the lost local revenue and additional costs associated with the presence of Federal property. To learn more, visit

<https://www.nafisdc.org/>.