



Keeping the Promise for America's Children

In high school, I took Ms. Julia Chismar's economics class. She was the kind of teacher who poured tremendous energy into each day's lesson. She sacrificed her time to mentor extracurricular teams, encouraging students to take on new challenges. Ms. Chismar always believed in me, I think more than I even believed in myself.

The promise we make in America is that every child should have access to an education that will give them the power to live a life of their choosing. I believe that the way our government approaches education should center on students, teachers, and parents.

America has so many teachers like Ms. Chismar, who enter their profession committed to unlocking students' potential. Our classrooms are filled with students who go to school each morning eager to deepen their understanding of a subject they love. And parents in every community want the best for their children, so that they have opportunities to explore and learn, to build on their knowledge each year they are in school, and finish high school with the tools they need to succeed in the world.

But that's not the reality for far too many children in America. Far from putting our kids on a level playing field, America's education system takes already vast disparities and makes them worse. Some public schools give first graders iPads on the first day, others are struggling to afford textbooks. Some parents are easily able to afford quality early education programs, others struggle to find any form of child care while they balance multiple jobs. Some children sit in air-conditioned classrooms and spend one-on-one time with teachers who can give them the mentorship they need to thrive, other children sit in overcrowded, overheated classrooms where their teachers don't have the time to get to know them well enough to realize what they are capable of.

My administration will focus on providing students the skills and the support they need to succeed by investing early and prioritizing equity. Education priorities need to be focused on preparing kids for 2054, not 1954. We will make crucial improvements to early childhood learning so all students are prepared for kindergarten, and resource our K-12 teachers and schools to ensure students can learn and succeed regardless of their family income or zip code. Closing funding gaps by directing more resources to historically underserved children and communities can pave the path for the more equitable and accessible K-12 system that our students deserve.

We will support parents by ensuring universal access to affordable child care and pre-K, and offering new programs to bridge the gap after school and over the summer, when working parents have fewer options to keep their children safe and engaged.

And my plan will empower teachers. This is personal for me. When I met my husband, Chasten, he was teaching in Chicago Public Schools. I've seen up close the incredible challenges that educators across the country face—from late nights grading papers, to emptying their own bank accounts to pay for school supplies, to acting as counselors and social workers in addition to educators. Their earning power has fallen over the past few decades. Teachers and school leaders of color are underrepresented in K-12



education, despite research showing that their work improves outcomes for students of color and benefits all students. And early childhood educators, who are predominantly women and disproportionately women of color, earn on average less than \$11 per hour.¹ We need to honor teachers like soldiers, and pay them like doctors. That’s why, as President, I will raise salaries for educators in early education and K-12. I will create more and better ways to recruit, train, and retain diverse talent for our schools. I will increase professional development opportunities for our education workforce and make sure schools have the resources they need to be exceptional places to teach and learn.

When we get this right, our kids will start kindergarten ready to succeed. They will have greater educational opportunities, including those outside a traditional classroom—lessening the pernicious effects of poverty and race on access to quality early childhood and public education. We will trust teachers and their expertise, and our system will nurture students’ curiosity, creativity, and ingenuity—achieving better competency in math and language arts, and higher high school graduation rates. By the time they graduate, our students will be prepared to go to college if they choose, and will be equipped with the skills to start careers in well-paying jobs that fit our changing economy.

Our society and economy overall will reap the benefits of students’ knowledge, creativity, and skills, but my set of proposals is about more than just training the future workforce. It is also about preparing the next generation of citizens and future voters. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once wrote that education is the “real safeguard of democracy.” When we strengthen our education system, we strengthen our democracy. And with these policies, we won’t just teach students about America’s founding value of freedom; we will embed it into the American experience for all.

Pete’s plan will:

- Provide affordable, universal full-day child care and pre-K for all children, from infancy to age 5, serving more than 20 million children, with a landmark \$700 billion investment.
- Create over 1 million new, good-paying child development jobs.
- Narrow academic opportunity gaps between students in high-income and low-income districts.
- Triple funding for Title I schools to invest in a truly equitable public education system, no matter a child’s zip code, race, or background, and eliminate the wage gap for Title I teachers.
- Launch the Education Access Corps to prepare and retain future educators to teach in Title I schools.
- Double the proportion of new teachers and school leaders of color in 10 years.
- Support strong unions for educators and staff and raise wages for early childhood educators.
- Dramatically reduce discipline disparities in early education as well as K-12.
- Expand mental health services in schools for students and teachers.
- Give every child access to after-school programs and summer learning opportunities.

¹ Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. “[Early Childhood Workforce Index: 2018](#).” Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. 2018.

PART I: EARLY EDUCATION

The early years of child development are a time of explosive growth and possibility, and investments that support families during this period help children build skills, stay healthy, and succeed in adulthood.

Universal child care will add an estimated \$200 billion to annual GDP and combat the \$57 billion in annual lost wages, productivity, and revenues that currently result from the lack of a robust early childhood infrastructure.² But the quality of early education varies significantly, and it is far too expensive for many families. In many places, a year of child care costs more than a year of college tuition.³ Where public subsidies are available for preschool or child care, complicated paperwork can make it hard for parents to access. Furthermore, working families must also find coverage after school and during the summer, and convenient, safe options can be in short supply. Worse still, many families simply can't afford the few programs that are available.

In addition to passing [paid family leave](#) for all workers, Pete's administration will increase quality, access, affordability, and equity in the early childhood system, prioritizing the child care workforce via support for credential and skill-building, coaching and mentoring, and long-overdue pay increases. He will expand access to critical supports that enable learning, such as interventions that target social and emotional development through evidence-based models like early childhood mental health consultation. And Pete will invest in child care provider infrastructure for infants and toddlers—currently the most under-resourced and unaffordable part of the system—and in equitable strategies, such as those designed for dual language learners and children with disabilities.

Ensure universal, affordable, and high-quality early learning opportunities for all children

To maximize the critical period of growth in children's first five years of life, early learning programs in America must be high-quality, affordable, and accessible, and they must work for all children, especially those from historically marginalized communities. Today, Americans with young children get little public assistance, worsening the vast inequalities that set in before children even meet their first public school teacher. To address this need, Pete will ensure universal affordability for all families, add significant support for transportation and program counseling, and raise program quality standards.

- **Make high-quality, full-day early learning opportunities affordable for every family, and free for those most in need.** Under Pete's plan, no family will have to pay more than seven percent of their income in early learning costs, and families earning below median income will pay between zero and seven percent of income—dramatically reducing current spending that often exceeds 20 percent of income.⁴ Families in poverty will have fully subsidized care. This

² ["America's Child Care Crisis Imperils the Nation."](#) Council for a Strong America. January 18, 2019.

³ Zillman, Claire. ["Childcare Costs More Than College Tuition in More Than Half of U.S. States."](#) Fortune, October 22, 2018.

⁴ Malik, Rasheed. ["Working Families Are Spending Big Money on Child Care."](#) Center for American Progress. June 20, 2019.

means an average savings of over \$10,000 per child per year for those families making below median income, and significantly reduced costs for all families.⁵

To achieve these goals, Pete will make a landmark new \$700 billion investment over the next decade, building on and unifying existing funding streams to finance a major new universal subsidy program, while also continuing Obama-era efforts to strengthen and expand Head Start and Early Head Start into full-time programs accessible to many more low-income families. Funding streams will include the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Preschool Development Grant Program, parts of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

- **Provide families with exceptional freedom of choice by ensuring they can afford the early learning option that’s best for them.** Most families receiving benefits will pay a proportional share of the program’s cost, or a “copay,” which will reflect the family’s income level, with subsidies covering the remainder, and provider incentives for quality. This provides families with exceptional choice, spanning Head Start programs, local public programs, various private centers, and high-quality home-based programs. States will shoulder a share of early learning subsidy costs, as they do in the current system.

Promote equity across the early learning system

Pete’s administration will increase the quality, equity, and impact of early learning programs. He will invest in strategies that promote system equity, including resources for low-income children, children of color, children with disabilities, and dual language learners. In addition to targeted investments, Pete will also work to eliminate barriers to integration within the broader early childhood landscape, for example working with states to ensure that providers can serve fully, partially, and non-subsidized students in the same classroom through blended funding or other models.

- **Invest in transportation and program navigation resources to reduce barriers to accessing high-quality care.** Pete will spend \$1 billion annually on safe transportation assistance, especially in rural areas, that enables families in low-income communities to choose early learning that is right for their children, starting from infancy. In addition to making the system easier for families to use, this voluntary program will accelerate integration in the early childhood system. Pete will also invest in program navigation resources for families who want them, building on successful pilots in King County, Washington.
- **Create a \$10 billion equity fund.** This fund will support, test, and scale new practices and innovative policies to bridge the opportunity gaps that hold back children from historically marginalized communities. These programs will seek to accelerate progress for children of color, children from low-income families, and children with disabilities using novel teaching methods and materials, targeted support services, school-family partnership programs, communication and personalization technologies, and other innovative strategies.

⁵ Ibid.

- **Expand access to dual language curriculum in early education.** Children who are dual language learners—nearly one in four of all young children—are often taught in English-only instructional models, which can inhibit learning and are contrary to best practices.⁶ Pete will support expanded access to bilingual early education programs to serve students from a range of language backgrounds.
- **Support families from the start with voluntary nurse and social worker home visiting programs.** Home visits from well-trained professionals—such as nurses and social workers—that start early in pregnancy can help parents navigate stressful and complex aspects of pregnancy and caring for newborns.⁷ These programs help families support their children’s development during the critical early years. Pete will expand and fully fund intensive, evidence-based, voluntary home visiting for very low-income parents from early pregnancy through a child’s second birthday.
- **Invest in the foster care system and provide greater services to families undergoing trauma.** America’s foster care system serves one percent of all children every year, a number that has increased dramatically alongside the opioid epidemic.⁸ These children, and the families, caretakers, and social workers that support them, deserve much greater assistance. Pete will increase federal funding for foster care support by \$1 billion annually, through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. New funding will provide greater support services to families undergoing trauma and foster parents stepping up to care for vulnerable children. His administration will also leverage recent policy changes to improve and modernize foster care systems, including by supporting passage of the bipartisan Family First Transition Act. Federal foster care policy will build on the examples of states like Rhode Island, North Carolina, and Washington that are leveraging better data management tools to reduce placement delays, improve child-caretaker matching, streamline service delivery, and keep more children on track for education and labor market success.⁹

Make the early childhood system easy to use for parents and providers

The most critical problem with our early learning system is that it lacks adequate funding, leaving out children and families in need. But it’s also too complicated for families to easily apply for and enroll in services, and for providers to stitch together multiple funding sources to deliver them. Finding an affordable program, that is of sufficient quality and conveniently located, is a headache for parents. Pete’s plan will build on the leadership of states like New Hampshire and Maryland in addressing this problem.¹⁰

⁶ Counseling@NYU. “[1 in 4 Students is an English Language Learner: Are We Leaving Them Behind?](#)” NYU Steinhardt School. May 1, 2018; Garcia, Amaya. “[Policy Recommendations: Dual Language Learners.](#)” New America.

⁷ Sandstrom Heather. “[Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs and Health.](#)” Health Affairs. April 25, 2019.

⁸ [The AFCARS Report, Preliminary F.Y. 2018 Estimates as of August 22, 2019 - No. 26](#); Meinhofer, Angélica, and Yohanis Angleró-Díaz. 2019. “[Trends in Foster Care Entry Among Children Removed From Their Homes Because of Parental Drug Use, 2000 to 2017.](#)” JAMA Pediatrics 173 (9): 881–883. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1738.

⁹ Annie E. Casey Foundation, “Every Kid Needs a Family.” 2015; Children Need Amazing Parents (CHAMPS), “Policy Playbook, 2nd Edition.” 2019.

¹⁰ Adams, Gina. Hannah Matthews. “[Confronting the Child Care Eligibility Maze.](#)” Urban Institute. December 2013.

- **Appoint federal leadership that prioritizes improving and coordinating early childhood supports.** Pete will appoint Secretaries of Health and Human Services (HHS), Education, and Housing and Urban Development committed to expanding equitable opportunity for America’s children. An executive administrator with deep experience in child-serving programs will be empowered to make the most of the newly unified, universal child care program, overseeing both the expanded Head Start and new universal subsidy infrastructure from within HHS.
- **Offer programs year-round, eliminate “cliffs” that penalize families for increasing their income, and make annual registration easier.** All programs will be offered to parents for a full calendar year. Annual eligibility renewals will be made quick and easy. All program benefits will phase in and out gradually alongside family income, rather than sharply around eligibility “cliffs” that keep families from taking pay raises so they don’t lose benefits. This builds on successful reforms in states like Colorado.¹¹
- **Coordinate early learning and care with other benefits.** Building on successful examples from states including Washington,¹² New Jersey,¹³ and Ohio,¹⁴ Pete will help states develop more efficient program applications and benefit payments across early learning programs as well as other family support programs including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Both mobile-friendly processes and greater access to program counselors will streamline programs.
- **Offer early learning program counseling for parents who want it.** Growing research suggests that program counseling—supported by small public investments—can result in better long-term outcomes for families.¹⁵ Pete’s plan will fund innovative partnerships with states and communities to build customized, culturally responsive, and linguistically accessible counseling services that help families access the best early learning opportunities for their children.
- **Invest in provider growth and quality through the Provider Excellence Initiative** to enable early-learning providers to seek support and financing for investments in quality improvements. Many more high-quality early learning programs will be able to prosper in low-income communities once more parents can afford these services. But we can’t rely entirely on the market to meet this demand right away. Pete will launch a new initiative building on state and local examples, such as the Seattle Preschool Program’s family child care pilot, to expand seats and build quality in mixed-delivery settings with technical assistance and funding. He will further develop existing quality ratings systems to help parents find high-quality early learning programs,

¹¹ Birken, Brittany. Erin Moriarty-Siler, Roxane White. “[Reducing the Cliff Effect to Support Working Families.](#)” The Aspen Institute. April 23, 2018.

¹² “[Cross-System Collaboration to Better Support Babies in Washington: Strengthening Partnerships Between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Home Visiting Systems.](#)” Zero to Three. January 8, 2019.

¹³ “[Cross-System Collaboration to Better Support Babies in New Jersey: Providing Families with a Single Point of Entry for Accessing Services.](#)” Zero to Three. January 8, 2019.

¹⁴ “[Ohio Launches a New Separate Intake System.](#)” Zero to Three. June 4, 2018.

¹⁵ Bergman, Peter. Raj Chetty, Stefanie DeLuca, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence Katz, & Christopher Palmer. “[Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice.](#)” Opportunity Insights. August, 2019.

make targeted investments in programs in low-income areas and areas with high minority populations to ensure equal access, and address care deserts in rural areas and areas of high need, including near institutions of higher education.

Invest in the child development workforce and create over one million new, good jobs

The early childhood workforce is the most critical factor in the success of a strong early learning system. But early childhood educators, who are predominantly women and disproportionately women of color, earn on average less than \$11 per hour.¹⁶ Pete’s administration will provide significant new investment in increasing wages, investing in the current workforce, and attracting new professionals to the early learning field who reflect the diversity of our communities.

- **Invest in early childhood wages and workforce development.** Early childhood professionals should have greater opportunities to pursue certificates, credentials, and college degrees in flexible ways that build their teaching and caregiving skills and have an immediate impact on program quality and children’s development. That’s why Pete will invest \$2 billion per year in dedicated workforce development funding for training, certification, and wage increases. Those already in the early childhood workforce will have opportunities to receive competency-based credits for existing skills. Expanded federal funds will be contingent on states setting fair and appropriate CCDF payment rates that are current, commensurate with other similarly qualified professionals, and enable providers to take home a fair wage.
- **Support strong unions for educators and staff.** As outlined in Part II, and reflective of his comprehensive plan to [empower workers](#), Pete will defend the right to strong unions for early education and K-12 teachers and staff.
- **Expand and improve public service loan forgiveness for early childhood educators.** As outlined in his [American Opportunity Agenda](#), Pete will provide earlier loan forgiveness and full debt cancellation to individuals in public service jobs, including early childhood educators, after 10 years of service.

Improve our knowledge about child development

High-quality early learning programs can make a transformative difference for lower-income children,¹⁷ but we still know too little about the long-term relative benefits of particular strategies including, for example, specific teacher training programs, classroom pedagogies, early health interventions, and techniques to help more parents reinforce early learning at home. Research and development (R&D) on the early childhood years is funded at approximately \$3.5 billion per year—just two percent of annual

¹⁶ “[Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings](#).” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
¹⁷ Heckman, James. “[Early Childhood Education: Quality and Access Pay Off](#).” Heckman.

R&D spending on health care.¹⁸ Pete will improve our knowledge of how to improve child outcomes starting early in life, re-investing this knowledge in continuous improvement of our early learning system.

- **Improve data linkages between early learning and K-12 systems.** Pete’s administration will partner with states to further develop comprehensive Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) that connects early learning program data—with strict privacy controls—to existing K-12 data systems. This data integration will improve analysis of the impact of early childhood investments to help inform more targeted and strategic investments, and help K-12 teachers recognize and address learning gaps right away to assure success in kindergarten and beyond.
- **Expand research on child development.** Child development contributes enormous benefits to our society and economy, every year producing a cohort of new adult workers, entrepreneurs, inventors, and investors with total future lifetime incomes worth trillions of dollars.¹⁹ Yet we conduct virtually no large-scale R&D on this process, especially compared to industries such as energy, transportation, and communications.²⁰ That is why Pete will expand funding for child development R&D at the National Science Foundation and add \$5 billion in new annual funding for the National Institute of Health.

PART II: GREAT TEACHERS AND GREAT SCHOOLS

Pete’s landmark investment in universal, high quality early education will set the stage for children to start kindergarten ready to succeed, but the work doesn’t stop there. America’s public school system has been a springboard to opportunity for generations—but it has also replicated racial and socioeconomic inequalities that hurt students of color and students from low-income families. Compared to other countries, America has far greater opportunity gaps for low-income students and students of color. Our math and language arts competency scores lag behind peer countries.

To combat inequality, raise educational performance, and prepare American students for the 21st Century, Pete’s administration will invest over \$300 billion in new federal funding for Title I schools, which serve our students in the most need, invest in mental health, expand after-school and summer learning programs, and increase instructional resources for teachers. He will support creativity and excellence in the classroom, expanding access to arts and hands-on STEM learning to prepare students for 2054—not 1954.

Pete’s Department of Education will partner with states to increase students’ competency in math and language arts, raise high school graduation rates, and narrow the achievement gaps that keep students of color from reaching their potential. By the time they graduate, our students will be prepared to go to

¹⁸ Varmus, Harold. David Lane. “[Investing in Our Future: A National Research Initiative for America’s Children for the 21st Century.](#)” 1997. Estimate adjusted for inflation; Research America “[U.S. Investments in Medical and Health Research and Development 2013 - 2016.](#)” 2017.

¹⁹ Each year sees a new cohort of four million 18-year-olds “graduate” from minor status. In that year, each of these adults has an average expected lifetime income with present discounted value around \$1 million. This implies new total wealth of \$4 trillion contributed by the parents who raised them. Parents, not taxpayers through public schools, bear the vast majority of financial and labor costs involved in raising children.

²⁰ Varmus, Harold. David Lane. “[Investing in Our Future: A National Research Initiative for America’s Children for the 21st Century.](#)” 1997.

college if they choose, and will have the critical skills to start careers in well-paying jobs that fit our changing economy.

Make our public schools drivers of equity

The health of our democracy and economy depend on our ability to provide all children access to high-quality education. But too many students are denied the opportunity to learn from great teachers in engaging classrooms. From a lack of adequate resources and pervading racial segregation to unevenly targeted and enforced disciplinary policies, students of color, students with disabilities, and low-income students are consistently denied access to the support they need to thrive.

At the same time, too many state and local funding policies increase disparities by providing fewer resources for our lowest-income schools.²¹ This undermines the intent of federal Title I funding and hinders our ability to provide adequate services and support to the students who need them most. To ensure that all students—regardless of race, ability, or income—have access to a quality public education, Pete will:

- **Invest in a truly equitable public education system by tripling funding for Title I schools.** Title I schools—those schools with high numbers of students from low-income backgrounds—need more resources, not fewer, if their students are to have equal opportunities to succeed. Pete will triple funding for Title I to support additional services for low-income students above and beyond state and local funding resources, as well as to raise teacher salaries.
- **Close the opportunity gap by reversing inequitable funding structures at the state and local level.** State and local per-pupil spending in the districts serving the highest populations of students of color in America is 13 percent lower than per-pupil spending in the most predominantly white districts.²² Pete will target his increases in Title I funding above current levels to support states and districts that implement equitable education funding formulas to provide more state and local resources to low-income schools—ending abuses like South Carolina’s ‘Corridor of Shame,’ a district with historically inevitable school financing.²³
- **Increase racial integration of schools and neighborhoods.** School integration benefits all students, yet 50 years after *Brown vs. Board of Education*, most students still attend effectively racially segregated schools.²⁴ Pete will create a dedicated \$500 million fund to incentivize and support community-led racial and economic school integration, which is proven to improve student outcomes. He will reinstate the Obama Administration’s guidance on the voluntary use of race in state- and district-level strategies to integrate schools, immediately remove the restrictions on the use of federal funds to support state and local busing initiatives as part of local efforts to

²¹ Chingos, Matthew. “[How Progressive is School Funding in the United States.](#)” Brookings Institute. June 15, 2017.

²² Amerikaner, Ary and Ivy Morgan. “[Funding Gaps: An Analysis of School Funding Equity Across the US and Within Each State.](#)” The Education Trust. February 2018.

²³ “Some Changes Being Made for Schools in Corridor of Shame.” Wis News. August 21, 2007.

²⁴ “[Nonwhite Districts Get \\$23 Billion Less Than White Districts Despite Serving the Same Number of Students.](#)” Ed Build. 2019.

voluntarily integrate schools, and increase collaboration across federal and state agencies, including the Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Education, to integrate housing and public schools.

Pete will also strengthen accountability for school districts by instituting a federal pre-clearance process that requires consideration of racial and socioeconomic integration as part of any major district boundary change. Because the majority of American students attend neighborhood schools, past and present housing discrimination accounts for about 75 percent of school segregation.²⁵ Accordingly, Pete will direct the Department of Education and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to create guidance to help state housing and education departments work together to integrate housing and schools, including through dedicated funding for affordable housing in high-performing school districts. He will take aggressive steps against localities using zoning or other development regulations in a manner that restricts integration.

- **Break the school-to-prison pipeline.** Pete will eliminate federal support for policies and practices that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, reinstate Obama-era guidance to address discipline disparities, and invest in successful district-level solutions that reduce the use of exclusionary discipline. School discipline policies and practices disproportionately penalize Black and Latinx students and students with disabilities, and render less serious consequences for white students. Black students are three times more likely than white students to be suspended or expelled for similar infractions,²⁶ a disparity that begins as early as preschool.²⁷ In K-12, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be suspended as children without disabilities.²⁸ The consequences of this discriminatory enforcement go beyond school: students who are suspended or expelled are three times more likely to enter the juvenile justice system.²⁹

To break the school-to-prison pipeline, Pete will reinstate guidance to address discipline disparities under Title VI and joint guidance issued by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to address discipline practices in early childhood settings. Through a new grant program, he will invest in identifying and replicating district-level solutions that reduce the use of exclusionary discipline while maintaining classroom order, addressing student behavior, and supporting healthy development. Pete will encourage states to pass legislation that eliminates suspensions for discretionary infractions, such as “disrespect” or dress code infractions, where bias is most likely to seep in. He will also direct the Department of Education to issue guidance on non-punitive alternatives like restorative justice and positive behavioral supports.

- **Ban for-profit charter schools and ensure equal accountability for public charter schools.** Pete’s priority is strengthening and investing in public schools to ensure that they have the capacity to best serve students. Because the profit motive distorts priorities in K-12 education,

²⁵ Monarrez, Tomas. “[Segregated Neighborhoods, Segregated Schools?](#)” The Urban Institute. November 2018.

²⁶ Green, Erica. “[Why Are Black Students Punished So Often? Minnesota Confronts a National Quandary.](#)” New York Times. March 18, 2018.

²⁷ Quinlan, Casey. “[New Data Shows the School to Prison Pipeline Starts as Early as Preschool.](#)” Think Progress. June 7, 2016.

²⁸ Harper, Kristen. “[Black Students and Students with Disabilities More Likely to Receive Out of School Suspensions, Despite Overall Declines.](#)” Child Trends. April 19, 2019.

²⁹ “[School to Prison Pipeline.](#)” ACLU. 2019.

Pete will ban for-profit charter schools. He will promote comparable levels of accountability and transparency between charter and traditional public schools, including adding a requirement that states report annually on charter authorizer performance, and take action against authorizers responsible for low-quality charter schools. He will work with states to ensure that policy innovations from charter programs that benefit students can be subsequently shared to strengthen the traditional public school system—and that educators in traditional public schools have the power to innovate in their own classrooms. And because public dollars should fund public schools, Pete will continue to oppose the implementation of any federal school voucher program.

- **Support students with disabilities, including by fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** As outlined alongside other education efforts in his [“Dignity, Access, and Belonging” plan](#), Pete will fight for students with disabilities to have access to high-quality, inclusive public education. This includes fully funding IDEA, which will help schools hire and retain more highly qualified special education teachers and provide more services to students with disabilities.
- **Invest in English language learners and bilingualism.** Over nine percent of American public school students are English language learners.³⁰ Studies show that dual language programs have many cognitive and academic benefits for all students.³¹ In fact, research finds that dual language learners learn English faster, and score higher in math and reading when they are taught in their home language, alongside English. As President, Pete will treat bilingualism and biliteracy like the great benefit it is by increasing investments in and expanding access to schools’ English language learner and dual language immersion programs in early childhood and K-12 education, and incentivizing states and districts to pivot away from the English-only status quo. To build a strong and diverse pool of language teachers, the School Leadership Lab program will support multilingual high school students, paraprofessionals, teacher’s aides, and after-school program leads to become certified teachers.
- **Support Native students.** As shared in his plan for [Indian Country](#), Pete will significantly invest in funding the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to make critical repairs and improvements to BIE school facilities and to recruit, train, and retain strong teachers—especially those from Indian Country. He will ensure that the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act regarding tribal consultation and supporting Native language and culture are fully funded and implemented. He will also ensure that every Native-serving school has the internet it needs, and enhance classroom and wrap around supports for native students.³²
- **Increase accountability for fair treatment of students by empowering the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights to fully investigate violations of Title VI, Title IX, and IDEA.** Pete would reverse policy changes made by Secretary DeVos that restrict the Office of

³⁰ Bialik, Kristen, Alissa Scheller, and Kristi Walker. “[6 Facts about English Language Learners in U.S. Public Schools](#).” Pew Research Center. October 25, 2018.

³¹ Steele, Jennifer L., Robert Slater, Gema Zamarro, Trey Miller, Jennifer J. Li, Susan Burkhauser, and Michael Bacon. “Dual-Language Immersion Programs Raise Student Achievement in English.” RAND Corporation. April 2017.

³² “[Broadband Access for Native-Serving Schools](#).” EducationSuperHighway. June 2018.

Civil Rights (OCR) from looking beyond individual complaints of discrimination to address systemic issues. Pete will also call for increasing OCR’s funding to investigate and resolve cases quickly to ensure justice for all students.

- **Promote equity by ensuring the federal government collects data on student experience.** The biennial Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) requires every school to provide data on the potentially disparate experiences of students, including the availability of advanced courses, experiences with school discipline, and access to other resources. Secretary DeVos recently proposed eliminating parts of this survey, including many of the questions that show where schools may be falling short. Pete’s Department of Education will reinstate questions that Secretary DeVos removed and invest in a robust CRDC by providing additional supports and incentives for schools to provide accurate, timely data and by expanding the topics covered.
- **Invest in rural school transportation.** Pete will partner with states and the Department of Transportation to make targeted investments to expand access to safe school transportation in rural areas and transit deserts.

Support excellent and diverse educators

Supporting students requires building a fairly compensated and racially and culturally diverse teaching workforce. Teacher quality is one of the most important factors in student achievement. Having an experienced teacher in kindergarten increases students’ average annual earnings by nearly seven percent—on average tens of thousands of dollars over their lifetime.³³ But teacher compensation has stagnated over the past two decades.³⁴ Today, there is not a single state where teachers make salaries comparable to other college graduates.³⁵ Teacher recruitment and retention suffers as a result of low pay and difficult working conditions.

Educators who work in Title I schools play a critical role in our economy and democracy. Positions in Title I schools should be valued—fairly paid, with opportunities for promotion and a meaningful work environment. Right now, the opposite is often true: the job is harder, the pay is lower, and the working conditions can be challenging.

Pete will also focus on diversifying the teaching profession, with a particular focus on racial diversity. By 2024, 56 percent of students in our public schools will be children of color—and we must make critical investments to ensure that educators match their diversity.³⁶ Studies show that same-race teachers have an enormous impact on students of color: Black male students who are taught by a Black male teacher in

³³ Chetty, Raj. John N. Friedman, Nathaniel Hilger, Emmanuel Saez, Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, & Danny Yagan, 2011. "[How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence from Project Star](#)." The Quarterly Journal of Economics. Oxford University Press. December, 2011.

³⁴ Allegretto, Sylvia, and Lawrence Mishel. "[The Teacher Pay Penalty Has Hit a New High: Trends in the Teacher Wage and Compensation Gaps through 2017](#)." Economic Policy Institute. September 18, 2018.

³⁵ Allegretto, Sylvia and Lawrence Mishel. "[The Teacher Pay Gap is Wider Than Ever: Teachers’ Pay Continues to Fall Further Behind Pay of Comparable Workers](#)." The Economic Policy Institute. August 2016.

³⁶ "[The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce](#)." US Department of Education. July 2016.



elementary school are much less likely to drop out of high school, and Black students who have two Black teachers by third grade are 32 percent more likely to attend college.³⁷ And students of all races benefit from being taught by faculty that is equally diverse.³⁸

To support educators in a way that reflects their value, Pete will:

- **Eliminate the wage gap for Title I teachers.** Pete will triple funding for Title I schools to increase salaries for teachers, school leaders, and school support staff; support recruitment, training, and retention of diverse educators; and expand funding for supplemental services for students. Districts will be required to use the increased funding to first close the salary gap in Title I schools so these jobs are competitive with other jobs in their area that require similar education and training, and to invest in additional supports for students, including mental health services and curricular innovation.
- **Support strong unions for educators and staff.** To make the 21st Century economy work for everyone, all of our nation’s workers should have the bargaining power they need to demand good jobs, fair pay, and safe workplaces. As part of Pete’s comprehensive [labor plan](#), he will impose strong, multimillion-dollar penalties for interference with union elections and level the playing field in elections by requiring “equal airtime on company time,” so that workers hear from union organizers and not just employers. He will defend the right to strong unions for K-12 and early education teachers and staff.
- **Empower teachers to best serve their students.** Great teachers care about the students in their classroom, and want to best facilitate their learning and growth. Pete’s Department of Education will work to enhance teacher and student support services and promote the inclusion of teachers in decision-making at the district and state level in order to support teacher empowerment and improve retention rates.
- **Establish the Education Access Corps to prepare and retain future educators.** Pete’s administration will work with states to identify a select group of high-quality, multi-year collegiate teacher preparation programs to serve as academies to train the Education Access Corps. These will include programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). Programs in every setting will include early exposure to classroom settings and training in cultural competency and combating bias, including racial bias. Academy graduates will commit to teach in a Title I school and receive a portable teaching license that qualifies them to teach in any state. Tuition costs will be covered as a deferred loan, of which 25 percent will be cancelled after three years of service and the rest fully forgiven after seven years of teaching in a Title I school. After their seven-year commitment, alumni will receive a stipend to mentor new Academy and Corps members. Pete will also expand this

³⁷ Gershenson, Seth, Cassandra M.D. Hart, Constance A. Lindsay, and Nicholas W. Papageorge. “[The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers](#).” March 2017.

“[Black Students Who Have One Black Teacher More Likely to Go to College](#).” The Johns Hopkins University. November 12, 2018.

³⁸ Cherng, H.-Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. “[The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers](#).” *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 407–420. 2016.

program to early childhood educators, building on examples like Pennsylvania’s partnerships with community colleges and universities to support students and unify curriculum standards.

- **Provide earlier student loan forgiveness to teachers, including rural teachers, and full debt cancellation after 10 years of service.** Providing more support to those entering public service, including those who are teaching in rural public schools, will make it more affordable for those teachers to remain with their students. Through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, Pete will ensure that teachers receive cancellation of 5 percent of their debt in each of their first three years of service; 10 percent in each of the next four years; and 15 percent during the next three, providing full cancellation of teacher debt in exchange for 10 years of service and rewarding every contribution these borrowers make to their communities.
- **Double the proportion of new teachers and school leaders who are people of color in 10 years.** Pete will invest in diversifying the teaching workforce and growing the leadership of school leaders of color, who currently make up less than one-quarter of all school principals.³⁹ Pete will set new guidelines around the use of Title II funds to invest in recruiting, training, and supporting the next generation of school leaders of color, and require new transparency about racial diversity in the teacher workforce. His Department of Education will require state departments of education to disaggregate by race their data on staff hiring practices and student outcomes. Districts submitting school improvement plans to states will also be asked to identify strategies to improve teacher racial diversity—which research has shown is a driver of success for all students⁴⁰—as a key component of their plans.
- **Reduce the teacher shortage in rural areas by 50% over 15 years.** As outlined in his plan to expand [rural opportunity](#), Pete will invest in rural education, including with an additional \$50 million to the existing Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program to expand “grow your own” teacher preparation programs, expanding public service loan forgiveness, and investing in workforce development for special educators serving rural schools.
- **Create the School Leadership Lab.** Pete will create a fund to support states and districts to increase the diversity of school staff to reflect the diversity of the student body as a whole. The Lab will build programs to recruit, train, and develop existing school staff, after-school directors and staff, local community educators, paraprofessionals, and teacher’s aides to become school counselors and teachers.
- **Incentivize states and districts to prioritize school climate through a new School Climate Innovation Fund.** Creating safe and secure schools requires investing in positive, trusting relationships within the school community. The vast majority of school shooters are not strangers

³⁹ DeRoche, John, Jason Hill, and Randolph Ottem. “[Trends in Public and Private School Principal Demographics and Qualifications: 1987-88 to 2011-12.](#)” National Center for Education Statistics. US Department of Education. April 2016.

⁴⁰ Cherng, H.-Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. “[The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers.](#)” *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 407–420. 2016.

to their targeted schools.⁴¹ Pete knows that we cannot solve school violence only by trying to keep the bad guys out. That’s why he will reward schools that intentionally focus on creating positive conditions for teaching and learning. Modeled after the Education Innovation Research Fund, he will initiate a five-year grant to provide funding for states and districts to develop, test, and scale school climate solutions, including for reducing discipline disparities for students of color and students with disabilities, and addressing mental and physical health needs, including trauma. The grant will prioritize schools demonstrating the highest need and those from states that prioritize indicators of school climate as part of school quality assessment.

- **Invest in strategies to recruit, support, and retain special education teachers, especially in rural areas.** The Department of Education runs the \$87 million Personnel Preparation program designed to provide quality training and development for special educators.⁴² Pete will increase its funding to \$150 million and add a focus on special educators serving in rural schools.⁴³
- **Encourage national service alumni to become teachers and school leaders.** Pete’s [A New Call to Service](#) plan will dramatically expand opportunities for young people join AmeriCorps programs, many of which focus on education. His administration will recruit young alumni of AmeriCorps’s education programs to become teachers, school counselors, or other school support staff through additional incentives like accelerated public service loan forgiveness.
- **Triple funding for the Student Success and Academic Enrichment Grant Program (SSAE),** which provides funding for schools to invest in three critical areas: ensuring students are safe and healthy; using technology in the classroom effectively; and providing students a well-rounded education that includes instruction in the arts, foreign languages, physical education, and social studies. Pete and his administration’s Department of Education will work with Congress to triple SSAE funding to \$3.5 billion and develop guidance and regulations to ensure no SSAE funds are spent on unproven and potentially dangerous actions, such as arming school staff.

Prepare students for the future economy

Education priorities need to be focused on preparing kids for 2054, not 1954. Our economy depends on our public education system to prepare the next generation of scientists, entrepreneurs, artists, teachers, engineers, architects, and leaders—and many jobs that don’t yet exist. Our education system must meet the needs of an evolving global economy, or else we risk being left behind. This includes investing in school buildings that are modern, energy efficient, and equipped with advanced technology. And it means supporting students in building the interpersonal skills and connections to be successful in college and careers, and investing in research to better support teachers in nurturing whole-child development.

⁴¹ Jonson, Cheryl Lero. “[Preventing School Shootings: The Effectiveness of Safety Measures.](#)” *Victims & Offenders* 12, no. 6 (October 24, 2017): 956–73.

⁴² “[Fiscal Year 2020 Budget.](#)” Department of Education. 2019: Page 21.

⁴³ Latterman, Kelly and Sarah Steffes. “[Tackling Teacher and Principal Shortages in Rural Areas.](#)” National Conference of State Legislators. October 2017.



Pete believes that focusing on the whole student is essential to equity and success. Annual testing can help hold systems accountable for educating all students, and Pete supports focusing on additional integral aspects of student experience. He will continue to ensure we have the information we need to provide an equitable opportunity for all students. To deliver this vision, Pete proposes to:

- **Kickstart innovation in teaching and learning through a new \$3 billion fund.** Pete will launch a \$3 billion fund for research, testing, and evaluation of three education innovation goals. He will partner with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors and work with teachers, parents, and researchers to set community-led goals. These could potentially address measuring whole child development, developing new measures to help us understand what students know and can do, crafting new teacher-led assessments to improve teaching and learning, identifying practices that improve equity, and exploring innovations in career pathway models.
- **Launch the Jobs of the Future program for Title I districts.** Pete will establish a federal fund for Title I districts to provide students with apprenticeships through paid, on-the-job training in emerging sectors of our economy such as computer science, health care, and clean energy. Through public-private partnerships, districts will partner with employers to provide student participants with additional academic interventions and comprehensive support services. Private entities would provide hands-on learning opportunities or apprenticeships in emerging sectors.
- **Make access to experiential learning, STEM learning and Advanced Placement courses more equitable.** To move toward equitable access to STEM learning, Pete will increase federal investments and incentivize state and local investments in elementary, middle, high school, and college programs to increase readiness and competitiveness in STEM and in fields of growing employment opportunities, especially health professions, software, finance, and alternative energy. Pete’s administration will prioritize expanding access to children from historically marginalized communities and communities underrepresented in STEM—including girls, students of color, English and dual language learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural communities.
- **Prepare students for construction and engineering careers by establishing the Infrastructure Accelerator Program.** Pete will include school infrastructure spending as part of his national infrastructure plan in order to improve our schools and prepare students for careers in high-growth fields like construction. Contracting priority will be given to companies that agree to provide apprenticeships to students from the districts and schools they’re working in, so that students receive on-the-job skills such as construction and clean energy installation.
- **Provide reliable internet service at every public school.** Pete will ensure that every child, regardless of where they live, has full access to digital learning opportunities. He will support Federal Communications Commission (FCC) initiatives to streamline approval processes and leverage the federal E-Rate program so every classroom has access to world-class Internet speeds for digital learning. He will specifically address access to internet for rural and Native students.

Strengthen schools as the backbone of our democracy

A strong, well-functioning democracy depends on informed and engaged citizens working to realize our ideals. Our public schools must do more than educate and prepare our next generation of workers—they must educate and prepare our next generation of citizens. Preparing students for citizenship means prioritizing the arts and humanities as part of a well-rounded education and seeing to students’ socio-emotional development as well as their academic skills.

- **Prioritize federal support for arts education.** Arts education is an important component of a high-quality education. Students who participate in the arts benefit from improved critical thinking skills, attend schools with more positive school cultures, and show increased achievement in other subjects.⁴⁴ Pete will prioritize federal support for arts education by increasing funding for the Assistance for Arts Education Program.
- **Increase funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).** All students should see history and culture accurately represented in museums, libraries, and other cultural institutions. Pete will increase funding for the NEA and NEH, including specifically for arts education, and will support the Arts Education Partnership. He will create targeted grant funding aimed to promote the ongoing documentation of history and promotion of culture in the United States. He will support the ongoing digitization of Library of Congress resources to increase accessibility, funding for museums and art installations in urban and rural areas, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which plays a critical role in providing state and local grants for educational activities.
- **Increase federal support for community schools.** In the community school model, schools serve as community centers, where partners come together to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, and families. Pete will increase funding for the Full Service Community Schools grant program to expand access to well-rounded, comprehensive community supports that are built through community schools.
- **Ensure students are prepared to be engaged citizens.** Pete will help schools increase instructional time in social studies and civics, subjects that enable students to learn and engage with the skills that support strong citizenship. In addition to tripling resources for the Student Success and Academic Enrichment Grants to \$3.5 billion, Pete will increase funding for the American History and Civics National Activities Grants so high school graduates are better prepared to be engaged citizens.
- **Create opportunities for more high school students to participate in national service through Pete’s [A New Call to Service](#) plan.** Pete will create one million paid service opportunities by 2026, including through new Service Year Fellowships targeting high school

⁴⁴ Ruppert, Sandra S. “[Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement](#).” National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. 2006.



students and opportunity youth, who are out of school and work. An emphasis will be placed on high-quality service positions, on-the-job training, mentorship, and leadership development.

PART III: WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT

High-quality early education as well as excellent teachers and schools in the K-12 years are a strong start to supporting students—yet many of the factors behind student success have roots outside of the classroom. Once children start K-12 schooling, access to safe and effective learning environments remains extremely unequal during out-of-school time in the afternoons, evenings, weekends, holidays, and summer breaks that together comprise about *two-thirds* of children’s time. Pete will provide support for these additional gaps in children’s skill development opportunities outside the K-12 system. His administration will also make sure that every school has the staffing and resources to address students’ physical, mental, and social well-being.

Level the playing field outside of the classroom

- **Ensure all children have access to outside of the classroom K-12 and summer learning opportunities.** Pete will make high-quality before- and after-school and summer programming available to all children up to age 12, including transportation and meals as needed, solving a critical gap in childcare access for working parents. Programs will enjoy state-level flexibility within federal guardrails like progressive family copays and streamlined enrollment. Like similar plans championed by Senator Harris, this will help combat the “summer learning loss” that leads to academic regression, particularly for children from low-income families.
- **Support access to creative out-of-school learning, including STEAM and sports.** Many traditional public schools and community organizations offer after-school and summer programs that will be eligible for funding—increasing the number of students who can benefit from high-quality local programs. Supplementary K-12 subsidies will give students opportunities to study subjects that interest them such as art, music, dance, science, engineering, computer programming, and sports. This will transform how children experience time outside of school, increase student engagement in school, and generate critical new knowledge about how different children build skills in different contexts. These programs will build on learnings from thriving after-school and summer program ecosystems in cities like Chicago, Seattle, and New Orleans.

Prioritize mental health in our schools

Young people’s mental health has sharply deteriorated. 70 percent of teenagers report feeling that anxiety and depression are major problems among their peers.⁴⁵ Suicide has doubled among middle school students—the first time in history that more die by suicide than from car crashes.⁴⁶

Nearly 80 percent of children who need mental health care do not receive it, and too many students lack daily access to a school nurse or school mental health provider.⁴⁷ Caring for students’ wellness is essential for them to be successful.⁴⁸ We must also better support our teachers, who often experience high stress levels and poor mental health.⁴⁹ To improve mental health in schools, Pete will:

- **Expand access to mental health care in schools.** Having a mental health clinician onsite care helps early identification of a mental health issue and timely treatment.⁵⁰ Pete’s administration will bring greater mental health services into schools, as outlined in his [Healing and Belonging mental health plan](#). Pete will support [Mental Health First Aid](#) courses in schools and legislation, like the Mental Health in Schools Act, to enhance the provision of mental health care in schools.⁵¹
- **Reinstate the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools as a principal office in the Department of Education.** Pete’s administration will create an office with dedicated, experienced leadership in the Department of Education to foster safe and supportive schools. This office, originally established in 2002, was demoted after significant cuts in funding for safe schools efforts.
- **Close the gap in access to school counselors at Title I and rural schools.** Pete will invest in a strong, diverse pipeline of mental health professionals to fill school mental health positions. His administration will also support broadband and educational technology so students can access remote school counseling and other mental health services, especially in rural areas. Further, Pete will also support employee wellness programs to prioritize educators’ own mental health needs.
- **Equip teachers and school staff to help students when they need it.** Teachers are often at the front line of identifying students’ mental health needs. In addition to dramatically increasing the number of dedicated mental health professionals in schools, training and coaching programs can increase teachers’ knowledge and confidence to support children’s social and emotional development and discuss mental health with their students and colleagues.⁵² Evidence-based interventions such as early childhood mental health consultations provide teachers with mental health expert coaches to help them foster the social and emotional development of all of the children in their care, manage challenging behavior, identify trauma and red flags, and reduce the use of exclusionary and harsh discipline practices. Programs like the National Alliance on Mental

⁴⁵ Horowitz, Julia Menasce and Graf, Nikki. “[Most U.S. Teens See Anxiety and Depression as a Major Problem Among Their Peers.](#)” Pew Research Center. February 20, 2019.

⁴⁶ “[Suicide Kills More Middle School Students Than Car Crashes.](#)” NBC News. November 4, 2016.

⁴⁷ Lohmann, Raychelle Cassada. “[What’s Driving the Rise in Teen Depression?](#)” U.S. News & World Report. April 22, 2019.

⁴⁸ Michael, Shannon L., Caitlin L. Merlo, Charles E. Basch, Kathryn R. Wentzel, and Howell Wechsler. “[Critical Connections: Health and Academics.](#)” *Journal of School Health* 85, no. 11 (June 2015): 740–58.

⁴⁹ “[2017 Educator Quality of Work Life Survey.](#)” American Federation of Teachers and Badass Teachers Association.

⁵⁰ Chamberlin, Jamie. “[Schools expand mental health care.](#)” APA Monitor. January 2009.

⁵¹ “[H.R. 1211 - 114th Congress \(2015-2016\): Mental Health in Schools Act of 2015.](#)” Library of Congress. March 3, 2015.

⁵² Jorm, Anthony F., Betty A. Kitchener, Michael G. Sawyer, Helen Scales, and Stefan Cvetkovski. “[Mental Health First Aid Training for High School Teachers: a Cluster Randomized Trial.](#)” BMC Psychiatry. BioMed Central. June 24, 2010.

Illness’s Ending the Silence program for middle and high school students can complement Mental Health First Aid to increase awareness around mental health and addiction needs.⁵³

- **Support LGBTQ+ students and educators.** Pete will appoint a Secretary of Education who is committed to LGBTQ+ equality and safety in the public school system, and to building a culture of inclusion that starts in the Department of Education. In addition to supporting the Equality Act to ensure non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people in education and other areas of life, Pete will support curriculum that recognizes the contributions of LGBTQ+ Americans throughout history; reinstate Obama-era guidance on the treatment of transgender students, including with respect to pronouns, restrooms, and dress codes; and promote a greater sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ youth through his We Belong mentorship program.

Invest in child and family well-being

Today, more than half of a working family’s income is consumed by housing,⁵⁴ health care, and child care costs⁵⁵—and when kids grow up and go to college, expenses only increase.⁵⁶ Pete will make landmark investments to [lower costs in health care, college, child care, and housing](#). He will take aggressive actions to [close the gender wage gap](#), lower child poverty, and combat homelessness and housing insecurity for families with children.

- **Dramatically reduce child poverty**, including by narrowing the gender wage gap, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- **Guarantee universal health care coverage for children and families through [Medicare For All Who Want It](#).**
- **End child homelessness and lower housing costs for parents with children.** Pete will invest \$430 billion in affordable housing and other measures to unlock access to affordable housing for over seven million families. This includes ending child, family, and youth homelessness and ensuring that all eligible families with children receive housing choice vouchers—as well as optional wrap-around services that unlock access to the neighborhood that can best support economic mobility.

⁵³ [“NAMI Ending the Silence.”](#) National Alliance on Mental Illness.

⁵⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics. [“Consumer Expenditures - 2018.”](#) Economic News Release. September 10, 2019.

⁵⁵ Malik, Rasheed. [“Working Families Are Spending Big Money on Child Care.”](#) Center for American Progress. June 20, 2019.

⁵⁶ Powell, Farran, and Emma Kerr. [“What You Need to Know About College Tuition Costs.”](#) U.S. News & World Report. September 18, 2019.