Good Monday Morning. At the conclusion of this message you will find the Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update for June 14, 2021.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education. Have a good week!

Best,

J..T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update
June 14, 2021

Congressional Update

House Education Committee Explores Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Yesterday, June 10, the House Education and Labor's Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services held a hearing titled, "Ending Child Hunger: Priorities for Child Nutrition Reauthorization." Lawmakers on the panel explored several issues related to the School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs among other nutrition ~~programs aimed at child~~ren and students. This hearing was especially timely considering the pandemic, which necessitated significant, if temporary, changes to these programs in order for them to continue to meet the needs of students. Witnesses included representatives from Chicago Public Schools, a nonprofit focused on childhood hunger, a childhood nutrition advocate, and a celebrity chef. An archived webcast of the event, including witness testimony, can be viewed here.

Infrastructure Talks Continue

As previously shared the past few weeks, lawmakers in Congress and the Biden Administration continue to negotiate on a potential investment in the nation's infrastructure. Last week, President Biden ended talks with Senator Capito (R-WV) after both sides failed to find common ground on a proposal. More recently, a bipartisan group of ten Senators announced that they have reached agreement on a different infrastructure package. However, details regarding this proposal have been scarce and the topline figure—just shy of $1 trillion—remains short of President Biden's goal of at least that amount in "new spending" rather than repurposing existing federal resources. This has been a recurrent issue throughout the infrastructure debate, with Democrats favoring a larger investment and Republicans favoring a narrower approach.

With time running out before the long summer recess in August, it remains unclear how or when these talks will be resolved.

Administration Update

USED Publishes "Maintenance of Equity" Guidance

On Wednesday, June 9, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) published new guidance providing important details for states and local school districts regarding the implementation of so-called "Maintenance of Equity" (MOEq) provisions contained in the recently passed American Rescue Plan (ARP). This provision is intended to prevent states and school districts from disproportionally reducing funding to the highest poverty school districts and schools. The guidance, in the form of an FAQ, explains how districts and states should go about implementing various aspects of the MOEq provision, including how to appropriately calculate poverty levels and ensure wider compliance with both the spirit and intent of the law. In addition, USED also published a new report exploring the disparate impacts of the pandemic on students and also announced an upcoming summit, open to the public, focused on related equity issues.

New Legislation

H.R.3797 — 117th Congress (2021-2022) To amend section 2202 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to authorize States to expand the uses of the childcare stabilization funds to include support to improve and increase the availability of safe child care facilities, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep. Spartz, Victoria [R-IN-5]

H.R.3789 — 117th Congress (2021-2022) To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to eligible schools to assist such schools to discontinue use of a derogatory or discriminatory name or depiction as a team name, mascot, or nickname, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep. Pallone, Frank, Jr. [D-NJ-6]

H.R.3767 — 117th Congress (2021-2022) To establish an Educational Equity Challenge Grant program administered by the Department of Education. Sponsor: Rep. Hayes, Jahana [D-CT-5]

H.R.3704 — 117th Congress (2021-2022) To have education funds follow the student. Sponsor: Rep. Good, Bob [R-VA-5]

NSBAC Releases National Public Opinion Poll on Education

On Tuesday, at the first session of the Advocacy Institute, NSBAC released the results to the national poll it conducted on public schools. You can access the poll by going directly to the NSBAC website at https://nsbac.org The findings are from a nationwide survey of 1,000 likely 2022 voters with oversamples of 100 African American, 100 Latinx, 100 AAPI, 100 Native American, and 100 parents of school-age children who are likely 2022 voters. The poll results are available to the public. The bipartisan poll was conducted by Lake Research Partners and Chesapeake Beach Consulting.

Some highlights include:

- Voters continue to value the job public schools are doing in their community with 55 percent rating them positively.

Learning loss among students due to the COVID-19 pandemic is a key priority, with 88 percent saying it is a problem, including 65 percent who say it is a “very big” problem.

- 89 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of Republicans, and 70 percent of independents view easier access to technology and broadband as important. The largest obstacle for public school districts, named by 66 percent of voters as challenging, was having quality broadband and internet access at home to attend school online.
- 59 percent of voters think funding for public schools should be increased. Of those who believe it should be increased, 86 percent would support an increase in funding even if it meant they would pay more in taxes.
- 61 percent of voters say it is better to allocate funds to improving public education and schools, compared to only 18 percent who support vouchers to pay for students to attend private or religiously affiliated schools.
- 74 percent say a lack of personalized learning focused on individual needs is a problem.