Good Morning. I hope each of you had a wonderful holiday weekend. At the conclusion of this message is the Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update for July 6, 2021. The United States Congress is on recess this week and will return to Washington on Monday, July 12.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the material contained in this report.

Have a good week!

Best,

J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

July 6, 2021

Congressional Update

House Sets Funding Cap for Education Programs

On Tuesday, June 29, the House Appropriations Committee approved topline allocations for each of the 12 bills that compose the federal discretionary budget for the upcoming 2022 federal fiscal year (FY 22) set to begin October 1, 2021. These allocations detail how much funding will be available, overall, for each of the departments, agencies, and programs falling under the jurisdiction of each of these funding bills. Of note, House appropriators have proposed to significantly increase funding by $40.5 billion for the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill—a 21% increase over last year's enacted levels. The Labor-HHS-ED appropriations legislation provides funding for the U.S. Department of Education and the programs it administers. While the proposed increase for this portion of the federal budget does not mean that all these extra funds will go towards K-12 education, it provides a substantial opportunity for lawmakers to appropriate funds in that way should they choose to do so.

Program-level funding for this bill has not yet been released, but the House Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up and ultimately pass this legislation on July 12. As these efforts continue, NSBA's advocacy team will remain engaged with Capitol Hill to ensure the K-12 community receives a robust investment for the upcoming fiscal year.

Administration Update

USED Releases ARP Funding for Students with Disabilities

The recently passed American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides an additional $3 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On Thursday, July 1, USED released these funds to states via a prescribed formula contained in the law. Additional information regarding this disbursement of funds can be found here.

NCES Reports Drop in Public School Enrollments

Data released by USED's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released data earlier this week showing that enrollments within K-12 public schools dropped by approximately three percent during the 2020-21 school year when compared to one year earlier. The decline in enrollments was particularly pronounced among the nation's youngest learners, with preschool and kindergarten enrollments dropping by 22 and nine percent, respectively. Eighteen states in total experienced declines of at least three percent or more. While these figures are preliminary, NCES' acting commissioner, Peggy Carr, called the findings "concerning." Final data on national enrollments in K-12 schools are expected to be released in the spring of 2022.

Secretary Cardona Releases Proposed Grant Priorities

On Wednesday, June 30, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona published proposed priorities and related definitions for future discretionary grant program opportunities administered by USED. After the priorities are finalized later this year, the Department will be able to select any of them to emphasize certain policies based on these high-level priorities. The newly proposed priorities include:

- Priority 1 - Addressing the Impact of COVID–19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty.
- Priority 2—Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources, Opportunities, and Welcoming Environments.
- Priority 3—Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning.
- Proposed Priority 4— Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs
- Proposed Priority 5—Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post Enrollment Success
- Priority 6—Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change.
- Comments in response to these proposed priorities must be filed by July 30 of this year.

FCC Launches Emergency Connectivity Fund

Earlier this week the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), inviting applications from eligible schools and libraries (and consortia of schools and libraries) for prospective home broadband and related device costs for the period July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. The application window closes on August 13, 2021. Authorized by the American Rescue Plan, the ECF provides $7.2 billion in funding to schools and libraries to purchase broadband

plans and devices for students, school staff, and library patrons.

New Legislation

H.R.4282 — 117th Congress (2021-2022) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Pilot Program, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Del. Plaskett, Stacey E. [D-VI-At Large]

H.R.4198 — 117th Congress (2021-2022) To establish the Mental Health in Schools Excellence Program to increase the recruitment and retention of school-based mental health services providers, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep. Fitzpatrick, Brian K. [R-PA-1]