

Good Saturday Morning! Please find the January 18, 2020 Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update at the conclusion of this message. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education in the Commonwealth.

Have a great weekend!

Best,

J.T.

## **Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update**

January 18, 2020

### **Congressional Update**

#### **House Education Committee Invites Sec. DeVos to Provide Budget Testimony**

With the fiscal year 2020 appropriations process now in Congress's "rear view mirror", legislators are beginning to prepare for the fiscal year 2021 budget debate. The White House recently announced that the president plans to send his annual budget request to Congress on February 10. Following submission of the President's proposed budget, cabinet members and agency leaders testify in the Senate and House about their budget needs and respond to questions posed by legislators. This week, House Education and Labor Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) asked Education Secretary DeVos to testify before his committee on either March 24 or April 1. The Department has not yet confirmed when the Secretary will appear before the committee, but NSBA expects the Department to announce her plans before the end of the month.

#### **House Leaders Planning Floor Debate about Infrastructure**

House Democratic leaders are planning to release sweeping infrastructure legislation following the Martin Luther King Jr. Day recess. Although the contents of the legislation have not been announced, NSBA expects the measure to include investments for school facilities. Early last year, the House Education and Labor Committee passed legislation, the Rebuild America's Schools Act, that proposed to provide \$100 billion for direct grants and low-cost financing to help states and local communities upgrade their school facilities. The measure would fund \$70 billion in grants and \$30 billion in bonds to help address critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in schools across the country. Although infrastructure legislation could pass the House, cutting a deal with the Senate and White House may be very difficult, particularly during this contentious election year. NSBA will closely monitor the process and provide additional information to members when the legislation is published.

### **Administration Update**

#### **Department of Education Publishes School Prayer Guidance**

This week, the Department of Education announced updated guidance titled "Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools". In addition, the law requires that, as a condition of receiving ESEA funds, school districts must certify in writing to its state education agency that it has no policy that prevents, or otherwise denies participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in public schools as detailed in this updated guidance. The official guidance will be published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, January 21, 2020, but readers can already access it on the Department of Education's [website](#).

#### **NCES Publishes High School Dropout and Completion Report**

The National Center for Education Statistics released a report titled "[Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2019](#)". The report "provides the most recent year of data available for each dropout and completion rate, summarizes long-term trends, and examines the characteristics of high school dropouts and completers. Five rates are presented to provide a broad perspective on high school dropouts and completers in the United States: the event dropout rate, the status dropout rate, the status completion rate, the adjusted cohort graduation rate, and the averaged freshman graduation rate. The report also provides information about individuals who completed an alternative high school credential."

## **New K-12 Bills**

[H.R.5620](#) To provide for a Federal partnership to ensure educational equity and quality. Sponsor: [Rep. Trone, David J. \[D-MD-6\]](#)

[H.R.5611](#) To promote State requirements for local educational agencies and public elementary and secondary schools relating to the prevention and treatment of concussions suffered by students. Sponsor: [Rep. DeSaulnier, Mark \[D-CA-11\]](#)

[H.R.5607](#) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a grant program to make grants to eligible local educational agencies to carry out food waste reduction programs, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Pingree, Chellie \[D-ME-1\]](#)

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