

Good Monday Morning! Below is the October 28, 2019 Federal Advocacy and Public Policy Update with the latest from Washington, D.C. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a good week and thank you for all you do on behalf of public schools in Virginia.

Best,

J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

October 28, 2019

Congressional Update

House Education and Labor Committee to Vote on the College Affordability Act

This Tuesday, October 29, the House Education and Labor Committee plans to debate and vote on a Democratic bill, the College Affordability Act, to update the Higher Education Act (HEA). NSBA has been actively involved in the HEA reauthorization debate given the law's educator recruitment and preparation programs and provisions. Specifically, we called on the Senate and House education committees to substantially increase the HEA's funding for helping school districts to work with educator preparation programs and other partners to address growing teacher workforce shortages, including in very high need subjects, such as special education, and in high need communities, including sparsely populated rural areas. The committee's summary of the College Affordability Act can be accessed [here](#). NSBA will closely monitor Tuesday's committee debate and will recap the panel's discussion and vote during the next weekly update.

Department of Justice Awards \$85.3 million in School Security Grants

The Department of Justice [awarded](#) more than \$85.3 million in grants designed to bolster school security, including funding to educate and train students and faculty. The grants also provide additional support to first responders who arrive on the scene of a school shooting or other violent incident. The grants were authorized by the STOP School Violence Act of 2018 which empowered the Department of Justice to provide funding to states, local governments, and federally recognized Indian tribes to prevent and reduce school violence. More details can be found in the corresponding [fact sheet](#).

Democrats Question Department of Education's Commitment to Civil Rights Protection

Fifty-nine House Democrats sent a [letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) questioning the Department's commitment to civil rights protections for LGBTQ students. The letter cited several concerns, including a recent study by the Center for American Progress that found that the OCR was more than nine times less likely to take corrective action on sexual orientation and gender identity-related complaints under the current administration when compared to the Obama administration.

Administration Update

Department of Education announces Outstanding School Leadership Award Recipients

The Department of Education [announced](#) the 2019 recipients of the Terrell H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership. The Department of Education, together with the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the Association for Middle Level Education, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, presents the Bell Awards to a select group of outstanding principals of National Blue Ribbon Schools. The ten principals will be honored during an awards ceremony on November 14.

Department of Education sends letter to Chief State School Officers regarding ESSA, School Identifications Reporting, and Technical Assistance

Chief state school officers recently received a letter from Assistant Secretary Brogan focused on ESSA State Plan Amendments, School Identifications Reporting, and Technical Assistance. The letter emphasized the following points:

States must submit proposed amendments for review and approval prior to implementation – amendments related to accountability determinations for the 2020-2021 school year must be submitted no later than February 3, 2020 in order for changes to be implemented in time to make accountability determinations.

The letter reminds states they must identify the following categories of schools: Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools, Targeted Support and Improvement schools, and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement schools. States must meaningfully differentiate and identify schools no later than the beginning of each school year based on the prior year's data.

Finally, state and local report cards must include the number and names of all comprehensive support and improvement schools or those implementing targeted support and improvement plans.

The Department then identifies technical assistance resources, which include The State Support Network's [State Support for School Identification and Improvement Community of Practice](#), [Needs Assessment Guidebook](#), [Leveraging Evidence-Based Practices for Local School Improvement](#), and several resources from the [Center on School Turnaround](#), as well as the Department's guide to [ESSA Flexibilities](#).

Notable K-12 Bills

[H.R.4835](#) To provide grants to improve trauma support services and mental health care for children and youth in educational settings, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Hayes, Jahana \[D-CT-5\]](#)

[H.R.4826](#) To award career pathways innovation grants to local educational agencies and consortia of local educational agencies, to provide technical assistance within the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education to administer the grants and support the local educational agencies with the preparation of grant applications and management of grant funds, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Craig, Angie \[D-MN-2\]](#)

[H.R.4822](#) To promote and ensure delivery of high-quality special education and related services to students with visual disabilities or who are deaf or hard of hearing or deaf-blind through instructional methodologies meeting their unique learning needs, to enhance accountability for the provision of such services, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Cartwright, Matt \[D-PA-8\]](#)

[H.R.4776](#) To direct the Secretary of Education to establish a competitive grant program to award grants to local educational agencies to address implicit bias in elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Norton, Eleanor Holmes \[D-DC-At Large\]](#)

[S.2681](#) A bill to promote and ensure delivery of high-quality special education and related services to students with visual disabilities or who are deaf or hard of hearing or deaf-blind through instructional methodologies meeting their unique learning needs, to enhance accountability for the provision of such services, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Sen. Markey, Edward J. \[D-MA\]](#)

[S.2670](#) A bill to award career pathways innovation grants to local educational agencies and consortia of local educational agencies, to provide technical assistance within the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education to administer the grants and support the local educational agencies with the preparation of grant applications and management of grant funds, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Sen. Smith, Tina \[D-MN\]](#)

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