

Good Saturday Morning! At the conclusion of this message you will find the Federal Advocacy and Public Policy Update for February 15, 2020. I would also like to direct your attention to the two attachments to this message which provide a listing of legislation we have been tracking during the 2020 Virginia General Assembly Session.

This past week, we reached the mid-point of the 2020 session. Your VSBA lobbying team has engaged on a record 349 bills this session. This is a dramatic increase over the last few years. To assist you in your work, we have compiled a crossover report which is divided into two sections, one for legislation we have been tracking in the House of Delegates, and a second for legislation we have been tracking in the Senate. You can find a list of the most important legislation by viewing our [Crossover Report](#).

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding any items that are under debate in Washington or Richmond. Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education in the Commonwealth.

Have a great weekend!

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Best,

JT

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

February 15, 2020

### **Congressional Update**

#### **President Trump Submits Fiscal Year 2021 Education Budget Request to Congress**

The White House released President Trump's fiscal year 2021 budget request this week, including his proposed budget for the Department of Education. The president asked Congress to cut the Department of Education's total budget by 8.4% and urged legislators to combine 29 Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs – including Title I – into a single funding stream called the “Elementary and Secondary Education for the Disadvantaged Block Grant”. Under the president's proposal, the new block grant would receive \$19.4 billion, which represents a \$4.8 billion cut to the covered programs. NSBA does not expect Congress to adopt the president's request – he has sought similar cuts every year of his tenure - but the size of the proposed reductions is notable. Delivery of the president's budget to Capitol Hill marks the beginning of the annual congressional budget process. During the coming weeks, the Senate and House appropriations committees will hold several hearings before beginning to draft the twelve separate bills that annually set funding levels for federal operations and programs.

#### **Senate and House Focus on Cybersecurity, including Cyber Attacks on School Districts**

The Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity director testimony this week before the Senate Homeland Security Committee that at least "89 universities, colleges, or school districts were impacted by ransomware" in 2019. This figure does not include dozens of other types of cyberattacks on school districts, including phishing and other hacks that did not feature demands for ransom, but which nonetheless were costly and compromised student, teacher, and other employee data. At the same hearing, the Executive Director of the Texas Department of Information Resources echoed DHS's concern about schools' network security, noting that at least 15 Texas school districts were subject to recent ransomware attacks. Separately this week, the House Homeland Security Committee approved a bipartisan bill called the State and Local Cybersecurity Improvement Act to “make grants to States to address cybersecurity risks and cybersecurity threats to information systems of State, local, Tribal, or territorial governments, and for other purposes.”

## **Administration Updates**

### **Administration Establishes School Safety Clearinghouse**

The Trump Administration launched a new School Safety Clearinghouse website: [SchoolSafety.gov](https://www.schoolsafety.gov). The clearinghouse is designed to serve as a “one-stop-shop of resources for K-12 administrators, educators, parents, and law enforcement to use to prepare for and address various threats related to safety, security, and support in schools.” In conjunction with the announcement, Secretary DeVos said, “[a]ll students deserve a safe learning environment, and the Federal School Safety Clearinghouse is an essential resource for information and best practices...because every school community has its own unique needs, SchoolSafety.gov equips decision makers with resources for developing, customizing, and implementing actionable school safety plans.” The site includes a “School Safety Readiness Tool, an assessment that assists users in evaluating their respective school’s safety posture across 10 foundational elements of school safety.”

### **Department of Ed Invites Comment about Proposed Sexual Misconduct Study**

Section 8546 of the Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to have laws, regulations, or policies in place that prohibit all state education agencies, districts, schools, or any school employee, contractor, or agent from “assisting an individual in obtaining new employment if they know, or have probable cause to believe, that the individual has engaged in sexual misconduct with a student or minor in violation of the law.” The U.S. Department of Education has proposed to examine the development and implementation of such laws and policies, including evaluating the challenges states are having in implementing the requirements of Section 8546. The [Federal Register notice](#) announcing the study indicates that it is not intended to determine compliance with this particular section of ESSA, rather it will be used to inform the Department in technical assistance efforts to states. The Department is accepting comments about the study until March 11, 2020.

### **Department of Ed Invites Applications for Special Education Personnel Grants**

This week, the Department of Education invited applications for the following IDEA competitive grant: “Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities – Leadership Development Programs: Increasing the Capacity of Leaders to Improve Systems Serving Children with Disabilities”. This discretionary grant focuses on personnel preparation in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children and youth with disabilities, and to ensure those personnel have the skills and knowledge to be successful serving those children. The estimated available funds for the competition are \$1,600,000. Applications are due by April 13, 2020. Further information is available [here](#).

### **New K-12 Bills**

[H.R.5854](#) 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. \[D-NJ-6\]](#)

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**Attach 1:** [VSBAHouseBills.htm](#)