

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

### **Congressional Update**

#### **"It's Time for a Great IDEA" Campaign Launched During NSBA Capitol Hill Day**

As part of the 2019 Advocacy Institute, NSBA hosted a media briefing earlier this week focused on our new campaign to urge Congress to update and fully fund the federal share of investments in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The briefing, held in the U.S. House of Representatives' Rayburn Office Building, included remarks by Representative John Katko (R-NY), NSBA President Frank Pugh, NSBA Executive Director Tom Gentzel, South Carolina School Boards Association President-elect Charles "Chuck" Saylor and Assistant Superintendent for Special Education Services Traci Hogan of Greenville County, South Carolina Schools, and NSBA Director and California School Boards Association Past-President Chris Ungar, who is also a member of the National School Boards Action Center (NSBAC) Board of Directors.

"It is imperative students with disabilities and their families are supported in their educational pursuits. Unfortunately, the federal government is not meeting its promise to these individuals as they strive to reach their goals," said Representative Katko (R-NY). "The federal government is leaving state and local governments to pick up too much of the tab when it comes to special education funding. In a time when students with special needs are graduating from high school at an increasing rate and experiencing educational achievement, the federal government should want to be a part of that success. I am pleased to once again advocate for full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act."

This event was a highlight of NSBA's Capitol Hill advocacy day that included the participation of hundreds of school board members from across the United States, who met with their congressional delegations to discuss the IDEA campaign. Among other policy priorities, school board members led discussions with their federal leaders about measures to strengthen the Higher Education Act's investments in teacher preparation; address support for immigrant students and teachers covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; and, provide support for school infrastructure construction and financing.

The video announcing NSBA's IDEA campaign is posted [here](#). Also, please find pictures from NSBA's Capitol Hill advocacy day [here](#). The password to access the pictures is advocacy2019.

#### **House and Senate Democrats Introduce School Infrastructure Legislation**

House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) and 153 cosponsors introduced legislation this week to create a new "\$70 billion grant program and \$30 billion tax credit bond program targeted at high-poverty schools with facilities that pose health and safety risks to students and staff." The measure, the Rebuild America's Schools Act (H.R.865), is similar to legislation championed by Chairman Scott during the 115th Congress. NSBA expects the legislation to be a primary focus of the Committee's work this year. In addition to providing new funding for school infrastructure, including broadband and digital learning initiatives, the bill calls for the development of a comprehensive national database on the condition of public school facilities. As a reference, NSBA's letter regarding the Rebuild America's Schools Act from the 115th Congress is posted [here](#).

#### **House Education Subcommittee Leaders Named**

The House Education and Labor Committee announced its list of subcommittees for the 116th Congress, along with the Members of Congress who will lead them. The Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education will be led by Del. Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Northern Marianna Islands) and Representative Rick Allen (R-GA).

The Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment will be led by Representative Susan Davis (D-CA) and Representative Lloyd Smucker (R-PA). Also, a new subcommittee focused on Civil Rights and Human Services will be led by Representative Susan Bonamici (D-OR) and Representative James Comer (R-KY).

## **Administration Update**

### **New ESSA Guidance Published**

The Department of Education published proposed Every Student Succeeds Act guidance, which is designed to clarify the law's "supplement, not supplant" requirements and highlight the new flexibility districts have to demonstrate compliance. The public comment period will be open for 30 days. Comments can be submitted by emailing [oesefeedback@ed.gov](mailto:oesefeedback@ed.gov) no later than February 25, 2019.

### **Government Accountability Office Releases New Report Examining K-12 Program Performance**

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report this week titled "[K-12 Education: Challenges to Assessing Program Performance and Recent Efforts to Address Them](#)". The report, requested by Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), focused on four performance evaluation areas: (1) oversight and monitoring; (2) data quality; (3) capacity; and (4) methodological limitations.

In requesting the report, Senator Johnson noted that education grant awards have generally increased in number and size over the past decade; and, raised questions about how the Department of Education assesses the performance of the wide array of education programs. NSBA does not expect any specific near-term Congressional action as a result of the report.

Gina G. Patterson, Executive Director  
Virginia School Boards Association  
200 Hansen Road, Suite 2  
Charlottesville, VA 22911  
800-446-8722 or 434-295-8722 Office  
434-295-8785 Fax  
[gina@vsba.org](mailto:gina@vsba.org), [www.vsba.org](http://www.vsba.org)

Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training and services.