



VSBA
Virginia School Boards Association
Leadership · Advocacy · Support

Federal Advocacy Update



Good Morning. Below you will find the Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update for April 25, 2020. Congressional leaders and members of the Trump Administration continue to discuss further relief measures that will likely be debated in May. The next few weeks are very important as we advocate for more funding for K-12 public education in new supplemental appropriations from the federal government.

If you have any questions, please contact me. As always, thank you for all you are doing on behalf of public education in the Commonwealth.

Have a good weekend!

Best,

J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

April 25, 2020

Congressional Update

Congress Passes Additional Emergency Relief

This week, Congress approved a \$484 billion coronavirus relief bill (H.R. 266). The measure provides additional funding for small businesses (\$380 billion), hospitals (\$75 billion), and disease testing (\$25 billion). The bill does not include additional funding support for education, or other parts of state and local government, but NSBA expects Congress to begin working on another spending bill that will most likely address growing local needs. The next emergency bill is expected to originate in the House. NSBA is continuing to urge Congress to provide additional funding of at least \$200 billion for K-12 education including full funding or IDEA or a minimum of \$13 billion for the program in the current crisis to help offset expected state and local revenue losses associated with the economic downturn, along with dedicated funding to help connect students that lack broadband to online learning. NSBA is actively supporting legislation offered this week by U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.) to address the homework gap issue. H.R. 6563 would create a special \$2 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund administered through the E-rate Program for schools and libraries under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission. The funds would be used to purchase Wi-Fi hot spots, modems, routers and internet-connected devices. NSBA will urging Congress to include this legislation as part of the next supplemental package.

Administration Update

Department of Education Publishes Application for K-12 Relief Funding

The CARES Act provided \$30 billion in education relief funding, including \$13.5 billion for K-12 education. Yesterday, the Department of Education announced the process for releasing the \$13.5 billion in CARES Act funding dedicated to supporting K-12 education to the states, promising no more than a 3-day review of state

applications. States have until July 1 to apply for the funds and have a year to use them. Any funds not used must be returned to the Department of Education who will reallocate the funds to other states. The announcement of funds, state certification and agreement form, and state allocation funding table can be found [here](#). As a reminder, the Department of Education has a [dedicated website](#) for resources related to COVID-19 that includes guidance, FAQs and a variety of other resources that are updated often.

Department of Education Announces Green Ribbon School Awardees

The Department of Education [announced](#) the 2020 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, District Sustainability Awardees, and Postsecondary Sustainability Awardees. In total, 39 schools, 11 districts and five postsecondary institutions “are being honored for their innovative efforts to address the three “Pillars” of the program: reducing environmental impact and utility costs, improving health and wellness, and ensuring effective sustainability education”.

Department of Education Announces Two New Discretionary Grant Programs for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services

“Parent Information and Training Program – Technical Assistance for Parent Training and Information Centers” – This grant program, authorized under the Rehabilitation Act, funds State Level Parent Training and Information Centers and one national Center. These state centers provide training and information to individuals with disabilities and their parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives. The national center provides technical assistance to the state-level centers. The priority for this grant competition will fund a national parent training and information center. The Administration has requested \$300,000 for new awards for this program for fiscal year 2020. Applications are due by June 22, 2020 and further information is available [here](#).

“Training and Information for Parents of Children with Disabilities – Parent Training and Information Centers and Parent Information and Training Program” – This grant program will support projects to provide “impartial training and objective information to enable individuals with disabilities, and the parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives of the individuals...to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the vocational, independent living, and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.” This grant program will fund 65 Parent Training and Information Centers to meet the needs of parents of children with disabilities and the training needs of youth with disabilities. The estimated available funds for this grant program total \$21,195,248. Applications are due by June 22, 2020 and further information is available [here](#).

GAO Releases Report Citing Quality Issues with Restraint and Seclusion Data

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a [report](#) stemming from the analysis of school year 2015-2016 restraint and seclusion data. The report examined: (1) the effectiveness of CRDC data quality control procedures; (2) selected districts’ interpretation of CRDC’s restraint and seclusion definitions; and (3) selected districts’ use of data. GAO analyzed CRDC’s quality control processes for school year 2015-16, and interviewed officials from seven stakeholder groups and over 50 school and district officials in three states. The GAO found that the Education Department’s “data quality control processes were insufficient to detect problematic data in its Civil Rights Data Collection”, which is the data used to enforce federal civil rights laws. The GAO noted that “absent more effective rules to improve data quality, determining the frequency and prevalence of restraint and seclusion will remain difficult”. Further, the Department of Education “will continue to lack information that could help it enforce various federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination.”

J.T. Kessler
Government Relations Specialist
Virginia School Boards Association
200 Hansen Road, Suite 2
Charlottesville, VA 22911
800-446-8722 or 434-295-8722 Office
434-295-8785 Fax
jason@vsba.org, www.vsba.org