

Good Afternoon,

The latest Federal Policy & Advocacy Update for June 21, 2019 can be found below. Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education in the Commonwealth. Have a good weekend!

Kind Regards,

J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

June 21, 2019

Special Update on E-Rate and Broadband

FCC is Considering a Cap on the Universal Service Fund

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (NPRM) proposing an overall cap on the Universal Service Fund (USF) and a sub-cap on the E-Rate and Rural Health Care programs. E-Rate is a crucial program in aiding schools and libraries to connect to high-speed broadband that is important for learning in today's modern world. This proposal could force the four programs funded under USF, including E-Rate, to battle each other for funds. The FCC is calling for comments by a July 15 deadline with reply comments due thirty days later. Due to the summer recess, NSBA has joined other organizations calling for an extension of time for comments until September so teachers, librarians, and other educators on summer break can respond to the NPRM. However, NSBA is preparing an advocacy campaign to get as many comments in as possible for the upcoming deadlines. In addition to requesting the comment period extension, NSBA has joined with other organizations that are part of the Education and Library Networks Coalition (EdLiNC) to express strong concern over the proposal. E-Rate is a highly successful program. Placing a cap on the overall USF and sub-capping E-Rate with Rural Health creates several potentially dangerous scenarios for these important programs. NSBA will be providing additional information on this issue and the campaign around it in the coming days.

Congressional Update

House Passes Fiscal Year 2020 Education Spending Bill

Earlier this week, the House passed (226-203) a "minibus" spending package that includes substantial funding increases for education, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's major programs. Unfortunately, the Senate appropriations process remains stalled. A meeting this week between Senate Republican leaders and the White House yielded no agreement on overall spending levels, which will further delay the body's work. The Senate process will not move forward until Senate Republicans and the White House agree on aggregate spending levels. The path forward is very uncertain at this time, even as the end of the current fiscal year (September 30) draws ever closer. While these negotiations continue, NSBA plans to continue educating members of the Senate about school boards' fiscal year 2020 funding priorities, including increases in the Every Student Succeeds Act's major formula programs.

House Education and Labor Committee Holds Final Higher Education Hearing

On Wednesday, the House Education and Labor Committee held its fifth and final hearing regarding the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, titled "Innovation to Improve Equity: Exploring High-Quality Pathways to a College Degree". The hearing covered topics such as: dual enrollment and early college high school, how higher education institutions are helping to ensure completion for the most vulnerable students, what actions higher education institutions have taken to work with high schools to ensure college readiness, how working with local businesses to create internships or earn while you learn opportunities has assisted with graduation rates, and how individualized counseling of students helps to keep them on track for graduation. Ranking Member Foxx (R-NC) said that bold reform is needed to ensure all Americans have the opportunity to prosper and that we need to reimagine antiquated concepts to ensure success. She went on to say that we need to broaden our ideas of what postsecondary education looks like in order to meet the needs of today's students. Chairman Scott (D-VA) noted in his closing statement that the hearing marks nearly 20 hours of testimony over the past few months with regard to how Congress should update the Higher Education Act. He cited several prominent themes from the hearings: the federal government needs to invest to make higher education more affordable; state authorizers and accreditors have to do a better job in ensuring a high quality education; federal leaders need to provide students the support they need to complete their education and must invest in chronically underfunded institutions. He also noted that innovation cannot come at the expense of quality and equity. Written statement of the committee leaders and witnesses as well as a video archive of the hearing are available [here](#). NSBA's HEA work continues to focus on strengthening the law's educator recruitment, preparation, and retention provisions.

New Senate HELP Committee General Counsel

U.S. Department of Education, Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs, Peter Oppenheim, began a new role this week as the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's General Counsel. Prior to his work at the Department of Education, Oppenheim served as the Education Policy Director and Counsel for Senator Alexander (R-TN) on the HELP committee.

Administration Updates

Department of Education Releases Final Guidance on Title I Supplement Not Supplant

The Department of Education released a [non-regulatory informational document](#) for Supplement Not Supplant under Title I, Part A of the ESEA. The document is designed to help states and school districts understand the intent of Title I's supplement not supplant requirement and how to comply with it. The Department also released a [summary response](#) to the comments that were submitted as part of the public comment period for the draft informational document.

Department of Education Announces New Grant Applications

This week the Department published a correction notice in the Federal Register on a discretionary grant program for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education:

"Applications for New Awards: School Climate Transformation Grant Program – Local Educational Agency Grants" – On June 10, 2019, USED published a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 2019 for the School Climate Transformation Grant Program. This notice omitted a phrase in Absolute Priority 2. This notice corrects this language, as well as identical language in Absolute Priority 4. The deadline for applications remains the same, July 22, 2019. Further information can be found [here](#).

The Department also published notice about two discretionary grant programs for the Institute of Education Sciences:

"Applications for New Awards: Education Research and Special Education Research Grant Programs" –The Institute of Education Sciences seeks to expand knowledge and understanding of: (1) Developmental and school readiness outcomes for infants and toddlers with or at risk for a disability; (2) Education outcomes for all learners from early childhood education through postsecondary and adult education; and (3) Employment and wage outcomes when relevant. The Institute will conduct eight research competitions in fiscal year 2020 through two of its centers: the National Center for Education Research and the National Center for Special Education Research. These competitions will focus on: education research, education research training, education research and development centers, statistical and research methodology in education, systematic replication in education, special education research, special education research training, and systematic replication in special education. Further information, including when each of the applications are due, is available [here](#).

"Applications for New Awards: Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems" – The SLDS program awards grants to state educational agencies to design, develop, and implement statewide longitudinal data systems. The program is designed to help states create comprehensive P-20W systems that ensure accurate and timely data, increase efficiency of data to be analyzed to support continuous improvement, facilitate research, among others. The estimated available funds to support the first year of grant funding totals \$26,132,000. Applications are due by September 17, 2019 and further information is available [here](#).

Notable K-12 Bills

[S.1911](#) A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to provide training services linked to employment demand through Upskill Accounts, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Sen. Harris, Kamala D. \[D-CA\]](#)

[S.1878](#) A bill to establish universal child care and early learning programs. Sponsor: [Sen. Warren, Elizabeth \[D-MA\]](#)

[H.R.3368](#) To establish a tax credit for on-site apprenticeship programs, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Sanchez, Linda T. \[D-CA-3\]](#)

[H.R.3366](#) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to prohibit the stigmatization of children who are unable to pay for school meals, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Omar, Ilhan \[D-MN-5\]](#)

[H.R.3315](#) Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act Sponsor: [Rep. Haaland, Debra A. \[D-NM-1\]](#)

[H.R.3291](#) SNACKS Act Sponsor: [Rep. Wright, Ron \[R-TX-6\]](#)

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