

Good Morning! Please find the August 12, 2019 Federal Advocacy & Policy Update below. The United States House of Representatives and the United States Congress are in recess until after the Labor Day holiday. Congress will reconvene on September 6, 2019.

Kind Regards,

J.T.

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

August 12, 2019

### **Congressional Update**

#### **Democratic Senators Express Concern about New Tax Forms Impact on Student Aid Applications**

Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Doug Jones (D-AL), Tom Carper (D-DE), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) sent a [letter](#) to Secretary DeVos highlighting how the changes to tax Form 1040 could create difficulties for students using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and questioned the Department of Education's plans to alleviate disruptions for students. This problem is arising at a time when some states, such as Louisiana, are requiring all high school seniors to complete the FAFSA to boost postsecondary enrollment rates.

### **Administration Update**

#### **SAMHSA Publishes Mental Health and Substance Use Guidance**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a [joint informational bulletin](#) this week. The bulletin provides the public, including states, schools, and school systems, with information about addressing mental health and substance use issues in schools. The guidance includes examples of approaches for mental health in schools and describes some of the Medicaid state plan benefits and other Medicaid authorities that states may use to cover such services. It also includes best practice models to facilitate implementation of quality, evidence based comprehensive mental health services.

#### **Department of Education Invites Special Ed Grant Applications**

This week, the Department of Education published the following notices about discretionary grants managed by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services:

“Applications for New Awards: Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities – National Technical Assistance Center for Systemic Improvement” – The purpose of this program is to “promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities by providing TA, supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research.” This competition includes one absolute priority: National Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center for Systemic Improvement. The estimated funds for this cooperative agreement total \$6,250,000. Applications are due by September 9, 2019, and further information is available [here](#).

“Applications for New Awards: Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities – Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center for the Development and Implementation of High-Quality Instruction, Interventions, and Services for Children with Disabilities” – The focus of this grant is to create a Center that will develop resources in order to enable children with disabilities to progress in light of each of their own circumstances; support LEAs, CMOs, private school associations, and schools to develop high-quality individualized educational programming. The estimated available funds for this award total \$2,000,000. Applications are due by September 6, 2019, and further information is available [here](#).

### **NSBA Update**

The Reply Comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on the cap for the Universal Service Fund and sub-cap for E-Rate and Rural Health Care Program are due by 11:59 pm EST on Monday, August 26, 2019. NSBA encourages all states to take advantage of this opportunity to let the FCC know the importance of E-Rate and how the program helps enable high-speed broadband so schools and libraries can connect adequately to the Internet.

NSBA is also monitoring several recent other Congressional proposals and will provide fuller information on them next week. They include a proposal to decrease the allocation for Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee by \$5 billion and redirect the funding for President Trump's proposed border wall expansion. While that proposal will likely not have broad support, it will need to be addressed during the appropriations process. There is also an effort that has been reported today, that U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, is soliciting other members to look at bipartisan ways to help states address school safety issues and assist individuals with serious mental health problems. As more information is developed next week, NSBA will provide further details on both issues along with our planned next steps to address them.

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