

Good Morning! Below please find the October 7, 2019 Federal Advocacy & Policy Update. Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education in the Commonwealth. Have a good week!

Best Wishes,
J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

October 7, 2019

Congressional Update

House Education Committee Poised for Busy Fall

Congress is adjourned for a two-week recess, but NSBA expects the House Education and Labor Committee to have a busy schedule when Members of Congress return to Washington on October 14. Only 40 legislative days remain on the 2019 calendar, so committee leaders are planning to move quickly on several areas. The Higher Education Act (HEA) appears to be on top of Chairman Scott's fall "to-do" list. Committee Democrats plan to re-introduce, and the committee may consider, an updated version of the AIM Higher Act, which was their comprehensive plan to reauthorize the HEA during the 115th Congress. In addition to working on the HEA reauthorization process, bipartisan committee staff are using the congressional recess to continue work on draft legislation to codify key elements of the National Apprenticeship Act's regulations, with the goal of modernizing federal apprenticeship policies and funding streams. These two major strands of work may also be supplemented with committee hearings on key education policy topics.

Democratic Senators Urge FCC to Scrap E-rate Cap Plan

Earlier this year, the Federal Communications Commission published a notice of proposed rulemaking, which proposed a new aggregate cap over the federal Universal Service Programs, including the E-rate, which is designed to ensure that all schools have affordable access to high capacity broadband. NSBA filed comments strongly opposing this proposed regulatory change and coordinated opposition from all state chapters. We also worked with our Education Libraries Network Coalition (EdLiNC) partners to fight the proposal, including building opposition to it on Capitol Hill. Last week, 30 Democratic senators, led by Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) wrote a letter to the FCC Commissioners expressing their opposition to the plan. Due in part to the strong reaction from education groups, including school boards, NSBA does not expect the FCC to act on the USF cap rule making until 2020.

Executive Branch Update

GAO Releases two New Reports of Interest to School Districts

This week, the Government Accountability Office released reports focused on Head Start oversight and educating foster care youth. The first report, [Head Start: Action Needed to Enhance Program Oversight and Mitigate Significant Fraud and Improper Payment Risks](#), found vulnerabilities in centers' controls for eligibility screening and detecting potential fraud. The report may include lessons for Head Start programs managed by school districts. The second report, [Foster Care: Education Could Help States Improve Educational Stability for Youth in Foster Care](#), noted that local staff turnover and the cost of transporting students to their original school were among the challenges to providing stability. Both papers were shared with the Senate and House education committees.

Department of Education Publishes CTE "Data Story"

The Department of Education recently released an interactive [data story](#) designed to highlight career and technical education (CTE) in U.S. high schools and outcomes for students who participate in these programs. According to the Department's announcement, "the data shows that CTE participation -- especially focusing one's studies by taking two or more CTE classes within the same career cluster -- is positively correlated with both future employment and future earnings. Yet, while 77% of students take at least one CTE class while in high school, only 37% of participants focus their studies on a single career cluster." State education agencies are currently working to develop long term plans for implementing the latest version of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The plans must be submitted to the Department of Education during Spring 2020 and now is good time for school board members interested in CTE to work with their state agency on their state plan's development.

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