



VSBA
Virginia School Boards Association
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Federal Advocacy Update



Good Saturday Morning. At the conclusion of this message is the September 26, 2020 Federal Advocacy and Public Policy Update. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) this week that would keep the government open until after the election and a new budget can be agreed upon. The U.S. Senate is expected to pass the measure next week prior to the end of the Fiscal Year on September 30th.

Have a good weekend!

Best,

J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

September 26, 2020

Congressional Update

House Passes Continuing Resolution

On Tuesday, September 22, the House voted on an overwhelming bipartisan basis ([359-57](#)) to extend current federal funding levels through December 11, 2020. Known as a [Continuing Resolution](#) (CR), this legislation is intended to put further consideration of longer-term funding for federal programs, including funding for K-12 education, off until after the November elections. Of note, the CR extends waiver flexibilities for several child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program, through the end of September 2021. NSBA has been advocating for these waiver flexibilities throughout the pandemic. These flexibilities are currently set to expire at the end of 2020. The Senate has formally begun its consideration of this legislation and is expected to vote on the legislation early next week—just before current federal funding is set to expire on September 30. Given the bipartisan support for the bill, the CR and nutrition waivers are widely expected to pass before this deadline.

Pandemic Relief Negotiations Remain Stalled

Members of Congress, along with the White House, remain in a state of disagreement on the size and scope of a much-needed pandemic relief package. Last week, President Trump voiced support for a \$1.5 trillion aid package—a figure much closer to the House-passed HEROES Act totaling over \$3 trillion. In a further sign that the parties may be nearing a smaller-scale deal, Speaker Pelosi (D-CA) on Thursday directed her committee chairs to develop a pared-back pandemic relief package likely to total over \$2 trillion. This latest development indicates that Congressional Democrats are now softening their earlier negotiation position to attempt to reach agreement. Reports indicate that the chamber could vote on this new proposal as soon as next week. While text of this latest legislative effort is not yet available, most of the pandemic relief proposals to date have included significant K-12 education emergency funding to help schools and districts deal with the ongoing pandemic.

House Education & Labor Committee Passes Apprenticeship Bill

Late last week, Representative Susan Davis (D-CA) and Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) introduced the [National Apprenticeship Act of 2020](#)—a bill that would reauthorize the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 and modernize

the nation's apprenticeship system. On Thursday, September 24, the House Education and Labor Committee marked-up and passed this legislation on a party-line vote. The comprehensive proposal would, among other changes, create quality standards for pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs and increase the alignment of these efforts with education systems to provide clearer pathways for students and learners to access these opportunities. The bill is expected to be considered by the full chamber sometime before the end of the year, but there is no specific date for consideration at this time. More information about the proposal can be found [here](#).

Administration Update

USED Announces New K-12 Education Grants

Under Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the U.S. Department of Education (USED) is permitted to set-aside two percent of this funding for technical assistance and capacity building. As part of these efforts, [USED's Secretary DeVos announced](#) new funding for two grant programs aimed at helping more students access a broader range of courses (well-rounded courses) and to provide additional resources for schools to deliver USED's interpretation of personalized learning (student-centered learning) as being interpreted for this measure. For this year, USED plans to provide \$9.6 million to several SEAs and LEAs to expand and enhance the delivery of these opportunities, particularly for educationally disadvantaged students. The press release states "The Well-Rounded Education Through Student-Centered Funding Demonstration Grants Program allows funding to follow individual students so that school districts can allocate resources in a way that provides a customized approach to education that considers individual needs in order to improve academic achievement."

NSBA notes that funding following students to private schools is not included as part of most definitions for true personalized learning. This includes the definition used by the [USED Office of Educational Technology](#) which states that "Personalized learning refers to instruction in which the pace of learning and the instructional approach are optimized for the needs of each learner. Learning objectives, instructional approaches, and instructional content (and its sequencing) all may vary based on learner needs. In addition, learning activities are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated." The interpretation being used by USED for this announcement is not consistent with how most experts on the subject view the practice. It should also be noted some public schools are already engaged in personalized learning by offering a portfolio of different learning options and models allowing for better understanding of the needs of each individual child. NSBA expects personalized learning, as recognized by most credible education experts, to be a growing trend for public schools in the future and the transformation of public schools.

USED Seeks Input on Perkins CTE Innovation Grants

On Thursday, September 24, USED [published notice](#) in the Federal Register seeking public comment and input on the proposed requirements, priorities, and selection criteria for the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act's (Perkins V) Innovation and Modernization Grant program for fiscal year 2020. This grant program is broadly aimed at supporting evidenced-based projects that will improve and modernize career and technical education programs. Comments are due by October 26.

Recent Legislation

[H.R.8357](#) To ensure access to apprenticeships for underrepresented groups, eliminate barriers and ensure completion of apprenticeships, and invest in successful apprenticeship intermediaries. Sponsor: [Rep. Jayapal, Pramila \[D-WA-7\]](#)

[H.R.8339](#) To expand opportunities for pre-apprenticeships programs. Sponsor: [Rep. Fudge, Marcia L. \[D-OH-11\]](#)

[H.R.8334](#) To provide premium pay to educators at public schools for each hour of in-person work. Sponsor: [Rep. Horn, Kendra S. \[D-OK-5\]](#)

[H.R.8328](#) To support the establishment of an apprenticeship college consortium. Sponsor: [Rep. Harder, Josh \[D-CA-10\]](#)

[H.R.8325](#) To amend the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to extend National School Lunch Program requirement waivers addressing COVID-19, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Davis, Rodney \[R-IL-13\]](#)

[H.R.8317](#) To encourage employer participation in the national apprenticeship system. Sponsor: [Rep. Trahan, Lori \[D-MA-3\]](#)

[S.4649](#) A bill to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth. Sponsor: [Sen. Loeffler, Kelly \[R-GA\]](#)

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