



# Federal Advocacy Update

## Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

Good Monday Morning. Please find the Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update for March 28, 2022 below. If there are questions regarding the information found in this week's report, do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a great week!

Best,

J.T.

### Congressional Update

#### **President's Budget to Be Released This Week**

President Biden is expected to release his Administration's Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget request to Congress. The publication of this budget request will formally begin the federal FY23 budget and appropriation process. Congress will hold hearings in the coming weeks to examine the president's proposal and will begin to craft the 12 individual funding bills that fund federal operations and laws like the Every Student Succeeds Act. This work must be completed by the beginning of the federal fiscal year, October 1, or Congress will be required to pass stop gap spending legislation until the work is complete.

### Administration Update

#### **FCC Announces Third Window for Connectivity Funds**

On Wednesday, March 23, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced the opening of a third application filing window for the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program. Created as part of the American Rescue Plan, the ECF Program allows eligible schools and libraries to apply for financial support to purchase connected devices like laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and broadband connectivity to serve unmet needs of students, school staff, and library patrons at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This third opportunity to apply for funding will open on April 28 and is set to close May 13. Eligible schools, libraries, and consortia will be able to submit requests for funding to make eligible purchases for equipment and services for a time period between July 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023 to meet unmet connectivity needs. More information on how to apply can be found [here](#).

In addition, the FCC approved and announced a 12<sup>th</sup> wave of ECF funding commitments totaling \$68 million which will support 140 schools and 25 libraries across the country. The FCC reports that the total commitments to date for the ECF are over \$4.7 billion and that these efforts have funded over 10 million connected devices and 5 million broadband connections.

### **U.S. Department of Education Letter to Educators and Parents Regarding New CDC Recommendations and Their Impact on Children with Disabilities**

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) announced additional guidance on March 24 to assist in addressing the needs of students with disabilities during COVID-19. The Department's letter to educators and parents cites the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) February 2022 framework for identifying COVID-19 Community Levels ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/...](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/)) and shares policy guidance and examples of processes to help maintain safe, in-person learning.

The letter includes sections on leveraging the individualized education program or Section 504 process to ensure schools have protections in place to protect in-person learning; continuing use of layered prevention strategies to keep school communities safe; and ensuring students receive education and services in the least restrictive environment. You can access this guidance online at [www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/...](http://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/)

### **New Legislation**

SR **3899** - 117th Congress (2021-2022) A bill to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to reauthorize and update the Act, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: **Sen. Scott, Tim [R-SC]**

The VSBA Executive Director and lobbyists are in daily contact discussing legislation and policies that drive the Association's lobbying efforts, including the decision to send action alerts to the membership. The Association's lobbying efforts are based on positions contained in the VSBA Legislative Positions Handbook that is approved each year by the VSBA Delegate Assembly. Local school boards are not bound to this handbook and can adopt local positions on legislation and policy.

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