



## Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Team

April 16, 2021

### NSBA Weekly Update

#### Congressional Update

##### **Congress Returns from Spring Recess**

After spending the last two weeks on spring recess, both the House and the Senate returned to Capitol Hill this past Monday. Upon Congress' return to Washington, D.C., House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) formally invited President Biden to address a joint session of Congress on April 28, setting the stage later this month for an event similar to the annual State of the Union address.

While they were away, lawmakers were confronted with two major developments during the break—President Biden's \$2.3 trillion infrastructure [proposal](#) and the release of his administration's initial "skinny" budget [request](#) formally kicking off the Congressional budget and appropriations process. As Congress considers President Biden's FY 2022 budget request, administration officials, likely including Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, are expected to testify in the coming months regarding the significant new education investments envisioned by the new administration in this budget (a date to examine the U.S. Department of Education budget request has not yet been set).

In addition, lawmakers from both parties continue to digest the latest infrastructure proposal from the President. While Democratic leaders in both chambers were largely supportive of the plan, many Republicans remain opposed to the proposal. Instead, Republicans are reportedly expected to develop and release a much narrower counteroffer, with a price tag substantially smaller than President Biden's initial proposal. As these discussions evolve, NSBA's advocacy team will continue to remind lawmakers of the significant infrastructure needs of the K-12 community to ensure more students are able to access a high-quality education in world-class facilities across the nation.

#### Administration Update

##### **USED Continues to Staff Up**

This week Secretary Cardona continued his school reopening tour across the country—dubbed by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) as the "Help is Here" Tour—highlighting state and local work to safely reopen schools and emphasizing the impact the American Rescue Plan (ARP) is having on these efforts. As Secretary Cardona's tour continues, USED has been busy re-staffing the agency and building out its leadership team. Late last Friday, April 9, the Department announced [several](#) new appointees for various posts through the agency. In addition, the Senate education committee began formal [consideration](#) of James Kvaal's nomination to be Undersecretary of Education—a posting that will oversee postsecondary education policy efforts for USED. Next week the committee will hold an executive session to further consider both Kvaal's nomination as well as Cynthia Marten, who was recently nominated to the number two posting at the Department.

## Bills

- [H.R.2539](#) To direct the Secretary of Education to make grants for hate crime prevention and prejudice reduction education, and for other purposes. **Sponsor:** [Rep. Velazquez, Nydia M. \[D-NY-7\]](#)
- [H.R.2520](#) To assess the impact of school closures due to COVID-19, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Johnson, Dusty \[R-SD-At Large\]](#)
- [S.1126](#) A bill to amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 and the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 to strengthen research in adult education. Sponsor: [Sen. Reed, Jack \[D-RI\]](#)

## Discretionary Grants

- **“Activities for Traditionally Underserved Populations”** – This grant program awards funding to minority entities and Indian Tribes to improve the quality, access, and delivery of services under the Rehabilitation Act. Through this notice, the Department is awarding funding for one cooperative agreement that would provide \$905,240 in the first year, and \$910,490 in years two, three, four, and five. Applications are due by June 14, 2021, and further information is available [here](#).
- **“Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities – Interdisciplinary Preparation in Special education, Early Intervention, and Related Services for Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities Who Have High-Intensity Needs”** – This discretionary grant program seeks to “(1) help address State-identified needs for personnel preparation in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children, including infants, toddlers, and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically-based research, to be successful in serving those children.” The estimated available funds for this program total \$8,000,000, contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of applicants. Applications are due by June 22, 2021, and further information is available [here](#).

## NSBA Update

**Upcoming Advocacy Institute June 8-10, 2021:** The NSBA federal advocacy and public policy team is excited to be focused on organizing this year’s Advocacy Institute which will take place June 8-10, 2021. We urge you and your members to participate in this major online event championing public schools. [nsba.org/AI2021](https://nsba.org/AI2021)