

Washington Update May 17, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

Today marks the 65th Anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court landmark decision that established the principle that separate is not equal. How far have we come? Much to contemplate here. You will see below that a House education panel spoke loud and clear on that topic: we have a long way to go.

1. **Trump Proposes Taking More Funds from Pell Grants – to Fund Moonshot? Huh?**

This week President Trump submitted to Congress some revisions to his original budget request. Notably, he took back the proposed cut he originally made for Special Olympics (after great bipartisan outrage); but he also added a new cut in the form of an additional \$1.9 billion to the Pell grant surplus. It appears that the Pell cut would go toward funding the President's proposed 2024 NASA moonshot! Education advocates were outraged. As Jon Fansmith of the American Council on Education put it: "Do I want to make college more expensive to fund space travel to the moon and Mars?" Hmmmm...

The President had already requested a \$2 billion cut in Pell funding. So the total \$3.9 billion recession would result in the Pell surplus being exhausted by 2022! This request is likely to be ignored on Capitol Hill, as no one -- Republican or Democrat -- ever really contemplated cutting Special Olympics. And while the Pell Surplus has been modestly raided in the past, a \$3.9 billion cut is highly unlikely.

The House is on tap to finish this week having four of the twelve appropriations bills (including for education) ready to go to the floor for a vote. Another two will have moved through subcommittee, bringing the House closer to meeting its goal of having all 12 funding bills on the floor during the month of June. Meanwhile the Senate appears to be stymied until a final deal is reached on the budget caps. Recall that the House generated their own budget caps in order to move funding bills, knowing that at some point they would have to negotiate with the Senate. That time is coming soon.

See: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2019/05/15/pell-grant-nasa-moonshot-outraged-education-advocates/3671037002/>

2. **House Panel Adopts 2 Bills to Address School Segregation on 65th Anniversary of Brown vs. the Board of Education**

On Thursday, the House Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), adopted two pieces of legislation intended to curb the growing racial segregation in K-12 schools. In opening the markup, Chair Scott noted:

"The legacy of systemic inequality and racial segregation continues to deny millions of children the opportunity to reach their full potential. Instead of

confronting this injustice, the federal government has continually retreated from its role in promoting school diversity, erasing decades of progress toward educational equity. These two bills will help reverse that trend.”

Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-NC), said that while her Democrat colleagues have good intentions, the resulted legislation is shortsighted and intended to make political points. Republicans opposed both bills while Democrats supported them by a 26-20 vote.

The first bill, the Strength in Diversity Act of 2019 (HR 2639), offers voluntary incentives to community efforts to integrate schools. The second bill, The Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act (HR2574), restores a private right of action to file disparate impact claims under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and creates a monitor at the Department of Education responsible for investigating racial discrimination complaints.

Two recent studies document the rise of segregation in schools:

- The share of “intensely segregated” schools enrolling 90% or more non-white students was 18.2% in 2016 – three times higher than in 1988: Civil Rights Project at UCLA and Center for Education and Civil Rights at Penn State: <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/harming-our-common-future-americas-segregated-schools-65-years-after-brown/Brown-65-050919v4-final.pdf>
- The percentage of K-12 public schools with high percentages of poor and black Hispanic students grew from 9% in the early 2000s to 16% in 2013-14 : Government Accounting Office: <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345>

See: <https://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/hr-2574-equity-and-inclusion-enforcement-act-and-hr-2639-strength-in-diversity-act-of-2019>

3. Study of Teacher Shortages Proposed

The Labor/HHS/Education funding bill passed by the House Appropriations Committee this month includes a call for a study on teacher shortages. The Committee report calls for the study to be conducted by the Department of Education and the Department of Labor. The Committee report describes the study as follows, in part:

“The Committee is concerned by the wide-ranging teacher shortages experienced in many States and districts across the country. In particular, the Committee is concerned by national research which shows that rural districts, where salaries are lower and districts are forced to rely on provisionally licensed teachers, can be hit particularly hard by teacher shortages. Similarly, in school districts with higher minority student populations, shortages have necessitated lower standards for teacher certification and other professional qualifications...The report should

examine trends in teacher shortages and factors contributing to challenges with teacher recruitment and retention. The analysis should include, but not be limited to an examination of the following factors: personnel to support students with disabilities; geography, the characteristics of communities impacted, including student demographics, area median income, or per-pupil spending; the diversity of the educator workforce; and issues related to licensure...”

This provision is an important federal acknowledgement of the severe teacher shortages in our nation. For it to be enacted, the Senate would have to adopt it also.

See p. 217-218:

<https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/FY2020%20LHHS%20Filed%20Report%20-%20HR2740.pdf>

4. **Higher Education Act Rewrite Still Moving**

A spokesperson for the office of Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, reiterated that they intended to have a draft Higher Education Act reauthorization bill ready by the end of May. We know staff are working hard to meet that goal. The House appears to be watching and thinking, but no announcements yet. This is definitely one to stay tuned on. There is a lot in the bill related to teachers and teacher preparation!

5. **New Resources for Educators**

- **The Learning Policy Institute** is out with a new report *California's Positive Outliers: Districts Beating the Odds* which finds that when teachers hold substandard credentials (emergency, waiver, intern), there is a negative impact on student achievement. Half of teachers entering the CA workforce in 2017-18 came in on substandard credentials: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/positive-outliers-districts-beating-odds-report>
- **The Center for American Progress** has put out a report examining anti-discrimination protections for students attending private schools and students using private school vouchers, education savings accounts and tax credit scholarships: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2019/05/13/469610/danger-private-school-voucher-programs-pose-civil-rights/>
- **The state of Mississippi** is tackling their teacher shortage challenge head on with a \$4.1 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation which will support state-run teacher residency programs beginning with four high-need districts and three colleges or

universities. Residents will be supported by a stipend and receive an MA after completing their year of course work and internship. At the start of this school year Mississippi had 2100 unfilled teaching positions and the number of new teaching licenses granted between 2011 and 2018 was down 50%. See:

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2019/05/state_run_residency_program_teachers.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=teacherbeat

- **The Institute for Education Sciences** issued a report examining the nation's only federally funded voucher program (in DC) noting that the program has had no effect on student achievement after three years, but a positive impact on student satisfaction: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20194006/pdf/20194006.pdf>
- **Nobel laureate economist James Heckman** and colleague Ganesh Karapakula look at the life outcomes of Perry Preschool participants at midlife, as well as the outcomes of their own children: <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/perry-preschool-midlife-toolkit/>

Wishing you all the best for a great spring weekend!

See you on twitter: @janewestdc

Best,

Jane