

Washington Update May 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the Ides of May. We remain in a swirl of uncertainty writ large, but in particular for education. California State University – the largest system in the country -- this week announced the fall semester will be fully online; at the other end of the spectrum, Purdue University in Indiana announced it will be fully open for in-person classes. Most colleges and universities are still studying and planning with decisions forthcoming - likewise with K-12 schools. Someone said to me this week that while she is hoping for recovery, she is also hoping that we don't aspire to return to the way it was...rather we use our creativity to address the inequitable systems in place and revolutionize schooling with equity at the core of our work. Well put, I thought. I'm looking for ways we might do this. Any thoughts? Let me know.

1. Speaker Pelosi Unveils Next COVID-19 Relief Bill with a \$3 Trillion Price Tag

The House of Representatives is in town and scheduled to vote late today on the next COVID-19 relief bill – dubbed the HEROES Act. Considered by many to be a messaging bill and the wish list of Speaker Pelosi (D-CA), it is not expected to receive Republican support. Even so, a number of progressive Democrats believe it does not have enough relief and may vote no. Likewise, there may well be a few Republicans who cross over to support it.

The 1815 page bill includes almost \$1 trillion to support state and local governments and another \$100 billion for education. Key features include:

- \$90 billion for education distributed to Governors through the Education Stabilization Fund. Of that:
 - \$58 billion for K-12 local education agencies
 - \$37 billion for higher education; of that \$27 billion for public institutions of higher education and an additional \$10 billion including \$1.7 billion for HBCUs and MSIs
 - \$4 billion for governors to support K-12, higher education and related activities
 - \$450 million each for the Bureau of Indian Education and outlining areas
 - In addition, \$1.5 billion is included to expand internet connectivity
 - In addition, maintenance of effort provisions are required for state funding and restrictions on student eligibility (such as DACA students) are prohibited

- An additional \$10 billion is set aside from the state and local funds for institutions of higher education that includes \$7 billion for private non-profits

Educators across the board praised the bill and lauded its continued investment in education. These numbers are likely the high-water mark for education spending in the

next COVID-19 relief package; however, they do fall short of requests made by K-12 educators who were looking for \$250 billion.

When the bill clears the House, it will go to the Senate for consideration. Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is in no hurry to take it up. He has argued that the CARES Act funding is not yet fully distributed and its impact is not yet known – so it is premature to move to the next bill. He has also indicated that liability provisions preventing legal action against businesses related to the pandemic will be a priority in any forthcoming bill.

On a promising note, 28 Senators issued a bipartisan letter requesting additional funding for education in the next COVID-19 relief bill. The letter was led by Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL) and Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

<https://www.speaker.gov/heroesact>

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2020/05/covid-relief-schools-60-billion-democrats-bill.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaign-k-12

<https://www.jones.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Education%20workforce%20letter%20V3%2005112020.pdf>

2. On the Senate Side – a Virtual Hearing and an Aspiration for Regular Order

In a Senate first, the HELP Committee convened a virtual hearing this week – with Chairman Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Murray (D-WA) participating from their homes. A member of Sen. Alexander’s staff tested positive for the virus. Since Sen. Alexander was exposed, he decided to stay at home as a precaution. In another first, Sen. Alexander’s pooch, Rufus, stole the spotlight from the witnesses becoming an instant internet sensation.

Top federal health experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci of NIH, testified about Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School. Dr. Fauci reported that it is unlikely that a vaccine or treatment will be available before schools are due to open in the fall. Others expressed caution about the likelihood of conditions needed being in place so that a return to in-person schooling is warranted. Subsequent to the hearing, President Trump has repeatedly called for the in-person re-opening of schools in the fall.

On another note, and in an effort to restore a semblance of regular order, Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), Chair of the Appropriations Committee, has indicated that he would like to have all 12 FY 2021 appropriations bills marked up by July 4. The routine appropriations process has been knocked off kilter due to the pandemic, and virtually no hearings on the topic have been held since the President’s budget proposal came out in February. Further complicating the process is the fact that subcommittees do not yet know what their allocations will be, and the spending cap for FY 2021 offers very little

room to maneuver. It's hard to imagine anything more than a simple extension of this year's funding – a continuing resolution – for next year, given the need for the focus on COVID-19 relief.

<https://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/covid-19-safely-getting-back-to-work-and-back-to-school>

<https://thehill.com/blogs/in-the-know/in-the-know/497371-senators-dog-rufus-steals-spotlight-during-senate-health>

<http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2020/05/trump-fauci-reopen-schools-covid.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2-rm&M=59575597&U=1595124&UUID=048db4853d88ca82835a9e9198cad282>

<https://www.rollcall.com/2020/03/31/coronavirus-disrupts-appropriations-schedule/>

3. Concerns about CARES Act Implementation Continue

Two key areas of concern have developed as Sec. DeVos has been implementing the CARES Act. For the K-12 distribution, she set aside funding to create a “microgrant” voucher-like competition for school districts to provide funding to parents to purchase services. In the higher education realm, she has limited the students eligible for financial relief so that international students and DACA students will not receive funds. These developments did not go unnoticed by House Democrats, who included retroactive prohibitions against both moves in the HEROES Act which is under consideration in the House today.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/05/13/betsy-devos-cares-act/>

4. VP Biden Announces Education Task Force

As the presidential campaign continues in a dull roar in the background of the pandemic, presumptive democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden announced several task forces designed to unify Biden supporters and former Sanders supporters. The task forces will make recommendations to the committee which will develop the Democratic National Committee's 2020 platform. A key issue to watch in the development of the platform will be charter schools, as many on the task force are skeptical (to put it mildly). In 2000 the Democratic platform called for tripling the number of charter schools. Members of the Task Force include:

- Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH) (co-chair of Task Force)
- Heather Gautney, Fordham University sociology professor; former education adviser to Sen. Sanders (co-chair of Task Force)
- Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), Chair, House Committee on Education and Labor

- Randi Weingarten, President, AFT
- Lilly Eskelsen Garcia, President, NEA
- Former Attorney General Eric Holder
- Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)
- President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Vanita Gupta
- Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
- Alejandro Adler, Columbia University
- Maggie Thompson, formerly with Generation Progress
- Christina Vilsack, former first lady of Iowa
- Hirokazu Yoshikawa, New York University

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/wesleywhistle/2020/05/13/biden-and-sanders-announce-education-unity-task-force/#5f819f5a8f4d>

5. CEF Webinar of Interest Friday, May 22

The Committee for Education Funding is holding a Research Briefing on Education Technology: Equity of Access, Assessment, and Research Findings – Friday, May 22, 9:30-11:00 a.m. ET. Join [via Zoom](#) or dial in at 301-715-8592, meeting ID 994 9698 4362. Panelists include:

- [Verna Lalbeharie](#), Managing Director of Digital Age Personalized Learning, American Institutes for Research
- [Noelle Ellerson Ng](#), Associate Executive Director of Policy and Analysis, AASA: the School Superintendents Association
- [Sean J. Smith, PhD](#), Professor of Special Education, University of Kansas
- Corey Williams, Federal Lobbyist, National Education Association
- Higher education panelist still pending

6. New Resources for Educators

Higher Education:

- **The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education** has launched an impressive State policy tracking map providing easy access to state by state changes related to educator preparation in response to the pandemic: <https://edprepmatters.net/2020/05/aacte-state-policy-tracking-map/>
- **Education Dive** offers a great interview with Terry Hartle of ACE for an overview of the pandemic, its impact on higher education and implications for the political/policy making world: <https://www.educationdive.com/news/higher-eds-top-lobbyist-discusses-coronavirus-congress-and-changes->

[ahead/577695/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Issue:%202020-05-12%20Higher%20Ed%20Daily%20%5Bissue:27263%5D&utm_term=Education%20Dive:%20Higher%20Ed](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/05/15/size-state-budget-cuts-becomes-clearer)

- **Inside Higher Education** reports on pending state budget cuts for higher education: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/05/15/size-state-budget-cuts-becomes-clearer>
- **Ed Week** features an opinion piece by **Sara Kerr and Paige Kowalski** recommending how education researchers can shift to seek answers to how best function in this rapidly changing landscape: <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/05/15/the-5-urgent-questions-ed-researchers-can.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=59575597&U=1595124&UUID=048db4853d88ca82835a9e9198cad282>
- Faculty members at the **University of Central Florida** **Lisa Dieker and Rebecca Hines** have created a series of podcasts “*Practical Access*” providing tips for teachers which can also be used in higher ed teacher prep courses: <https://practicalaccess.buzzsprout.com/>

K-12 Education:

- **Chiefs for Change and Johns Hopkins University** provide recommendations for reopening K-12 schools: [NEW: @chiefsforchange report, produced in partnership with @JHUEdPolicy, outlines relevant research and provides key recommendations for reopening K-12 schools. More here: #COVID19 https://chiefsforchange.org/new-chiefs-for-change-johns-hopkins-institute-for-education-policy-report-provides-expert-analysis-of-research-offers-recommendations-for-reopening-k-12-schools/](https://chiefsforchange.org/new-chiefs-for-change-johns-hopkins-institute-for-education-policy-report-provides-expert-analysis-of-research-offers-recommendations-for-reopening-k-12-schools/)
- **Chalkbeat** reports on concerns of older teachers as schools reopen: <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/5/9/21252608/older-teachers-heath-concerns-coronavirus-return-to-schools>
- **The Learning Policy Institute and the National Association of Secondary School Principals** report on principal turnover with 42% of principals reporting they are considering leaving their positions: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/supporting-strong-stable-principal-workforce-report>

Stay safe. Be well. Count your blessings.

See you on twitter @janewestdc

Best,

Jane