



## **January 31, 2022 – Federal News and Information**

### **BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS**

With the House and Senate in recess last week, there was no public progress on resolving FY 2022 appropriations. The current short-term extension of government funding expires on February 18. Unless House and Senate appropriations leaders very quickly agree on a topline for spending and the split between defense and non-defense spending, there won't be time to agree on every programmatic funding level, which means Congress would need to extend current funding for a third time to keep the government open while negotiations continue. This week, there were rumors that a one-week continuing resolution (CR) might be needed. A temporary extension through April was also hitting the rumor mill. Regardless of the length of the next CR, it is certain that FY 2022 spending will ultimately be resolved via an omnibus measure. While there is still posturing around a full-year CR versus a detailed package, the latter seems more likely an effort to get the support needed to complete the process.

There is no agreement on topline numbers yet — key figures to the math of determining funding for programs. The specter of policy riders and both parties insisting on the inclusion or exclusion of various proposals is also slowing action. Advocates continue to advocate for quick action on a bill that provides increases for education programs.

In other news, the House introduced a sweeping innovation and competitiveness bill last week and plans to debate and pass it this week. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the 2,900-page bill, called the "America Competes" act, would "supercharge" investment in chips and boost U.S. manufacturing and research capacity, as well as advance U.S. competitiveness and leadership. The bill's provisions are important to higher education and research agencies, but they also include important proposals around STEM education. (The 109-page section-by-section of the bill is [here](#).) Once the House passes the measure, advocates will be readying letters to conferees who will hammer out differences between the House bill and the Senate [United States Innovation and Competition Act](#), which was passed by that chamber last year.

There was not much to report about a Democratic strategy to pursue the Build Back Better (BBB) reconciliation bill, or parts of it. President Biden and some congressional leaders have spoken publicly about breaking out portions of the proposed Build Back Better reconciliation bill and considering them as standalone bills. They could use the budget resolution's reconciliation protection to do a much smaller bill that would require only 50 votes to pass in the Senate, or they could call up bills under regular procedures, but those would require 60 votes to pass the Senate, a bar that is likely to be hard to reach on most of the provisions.

### **FCC ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL \$240 MILLION IN ECF PROGRAM**

On Tuesday, January 25, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced an additional \$240 million in its Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program support. According to a news release by the FCC, this is its eighth wave of program support. FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel addressed the program's success, saying, "In a little over six months, this program has helped over 12 million students across the nation get the digital tools they need to connect with teachers and online educational resources. This program is an important part of closing the homework gap and connecting library patrons across the country." The FCC notes that over 600,000 students will be supported in this round of funding. To read the FCC's news release, please click [here](#). A list of schools and libraries that have received funding commitments by the FCC is accessible on this [page](#).



## Florida School Boards Association FEDERAL NEWS & INFORMATION

### EDUCATION SECRETARY CARDONA OUTLINES AMERICAN EDUCATION PRIORITIES

On Thursday, January 27, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona made remarks on his plans for continued recovery in the pandemic and his plans for broader improvements to the American education system. During the address, Cardona said, "Reopening schools — and keeping them open — while critical, is insufficient. Our hardest and most important work lies ahead. Our students' success is at stake. Not just the students we serve today, but for those who have yet to be born. Our task is not only to improve our education system from where it was before the pandemic, but also to take bolder action to elevate it to lead the world." Four major points where the Department of Education is hoping to make improvements in the next few months and years include (1) support students through pandemic response and recovery; (2) boldly address opportunity and achievement gaps; (3) make higher education more inclusive and affordable; and (4) ensure pathways through higher education lead to successful careers. To access a transcript of Cardona's remarks, please click [here](#). To watch the address click [here](#).

### CASEL WELCOMES DR. AALIYAH SAMUEL AS PRESIDENT AND CEO

On Friday, January 28, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) held a webinar on "The State of Social and Emotional Learning in 2022." The introductory webinar, hosted by Dr. Timothy Shriver, co-founder and chair of CASEL, welcomed the organization's new president and CEO, [Dr. Aaliyah A. Samuel](#). The webinar allowed Dr. Samuel to outline her vision for CASEL and the field of social and emotional learning (SEL). As a parent, practitioner and policymaker, Dr. Samuel outlined the current lack of understanding around social and emotional learning and how it has been politicized. She acknowledged that parents are children's first teachers and SEL has always been about parental engagement. Moreover, SEL has always supported traditional academics and complements mental health and well-being activities within schools. In her new role, she hopes to better define SEL and encourage partnerships between family, schools and communities. [Dr. Samuel tells us](#) that [collaboration](#) and navigating these challenges is "not a box that is checked, but a needle that is threaded." She asked webinar participants to not be silent in their space and "to use their voice" on behalf of students and education. As president of CASEL, she is committed that students, parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders will see themselves reflected in CASEL's work and policies. For more information, on the webinar, click [here](#).