



Florida School Boards Association FEDERAL NEWS & INFORMATION

March 21, 2022

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

Capitol Hill is hosting an increasing number of in-person meetings these days. While groups are limited in size and must be escorted to and from any meetings, plans from Hill security offices indicate a desire to open the Capitol to limited tours in June and perhaps the entire complex by Labor Day. While advocates are excited by the prospect of seeing staff and members in person, the plans are just that — plans. They need approval from those in charge of the comings and goings at the Capitol complex, and a resurgence of COVID or any security concerns could easily derail the plans.

As for the budget and appropriations process, advocates are not getting much of a break between the FY 2022 and FY 2023 cycles. President Joe Biden signed the omnibus spending bill that increases funding for education significantly on Tuesday. His FY 2023 budget request is expected this Thursday. It's not clear how detailed that request will be, given the agencies just learned what their FY 2022 spending levels are. Regardless, appropriators are eager to get the FY 2023 process started as they face a legislative calendar limited by mid-term elections as well as the impending retirements of Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Richard Shelby (R-AL), the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

This week will provide more details for how advocates will be spending their time in coming weeks and months.

FutureEd DISCUSSES SPENDING COVID RELIEF AID

On Tuesday, March 15, FutureEd at Georgetown University hosted the webinar, "Local Perspectives on COVID-Relief Aid." Curtis Jones, superintendent of Bibb County (GA) School District; Phyllis Jordan, associate director of FutureEd; Julie Roche, co-founder of Burbio; and Nick Simmons, senior advisor to the secretary of education, participated on the panel. The webinar centered around the flexibility granted schools and school districts in spending COVID relief funds. For example, Jordan highlighted the differences between rural districts and urban districts and how they might invest these dollars. Rural school districts are spending their COVID aid on infrastructure, while urban districts are investing in social and emotional learning. Jones took an interesting approach by asking each school in his district how they would spend \$1 million dollars. Then each school got that money. Some of the schools wanted to invest in more field trips for students while others wanted to spend it on more technology. From a Department of Education perspective, they want to provide the right balance of oversight while empowering school districts to do what is best for their students. A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#). A spending tracker of ESSER funds from Burbio can be found [here](#).

THE HUNT INSTITUTE ON ALIGNING EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE NEEDS

On Thursday, March 17, the Hunt Institute hosted a webinar titled, Human Capital for the 21st Century: Aligning Education with Future Workforce Needs. Participants included Rashid Ferrod Davis, founding principal, P-TECH; Joy Hofmeister, state superintendent of public instruction, Oklahoma State Department of Education; and Mary LeFebvre, director of workforce policy, ACT. The webinar is the latest segment in the Homeroom with Education Leaders series. Erica Vevurka asked Superintendent Joy Hofmeister to tell the audience more about Oklahoma's goals and strategies to commit to students' postsecondary success. Hofmeister noted that many jobs in Oklahoma require a college degree. She discussed Individual Career Academic Plans (ICAP), which individualize education and training. She also discussed improvement in building Oklahoma's school counselor crops. She noted that lowering the student-to-counselor ratio increases graduation rates and improves SAT scores. The conversation continued with Mary LeFebvre discussing WorkKeys. She shared that ACT believes all students deserve to know their level of readiness for college and careers.



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They want to expand the readiness for students outside of career and technical education. LeFebvre said they have had great partnerships with states where they can see outcomes for individuals and an aggregate. The Hunt Institute Report states, “By 2025, the top five most important skills will more specifically include analytical and innovative thinking, active learning, complex problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity and initiative.” It also notes that growth in the job market in STEM, healthcare and transportation will “require a greater mix of skills and experiences.” To read the report, click [here](#).

SURVEY OF THE STATES ON FINANCIAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

On Thursday, March 17, the Council for Economic Education (CEE) hosted a webinar to highlight the release of their new report, *“Survey of the States: Economic and Personal Finance Education in Our Nation’s Schools.”* Nan Morrison, president, Council for Economic Education, began by noting that despite advances in ensuring access to personal finance classes in K-12 schools, there’s troubling stagnation in equally important economics education. “America is failing our children when we don’t provide them with opportunities to study critical economic and personal finance concepts before they leave high school for college, for jobs and for their futures. While we’re encouraged by some progress in our latest survey, all young people across the country need more and deserve better.” The survey found that only 25 states require students to take a course in economics to graduate high school, a standstill from 2020’s Survey and an increase of only three states in the last decade. And several states, including Georgia and South Carolina, are considering removing economics from graduation requirements. Parallel requirements for personal finance are on an encouraging upward path. States mandating that for graduation grew to 23, up by two – Nebraska and New Mexico – since 2020. Ohio and Mississippi updated their requirements to a standalone personal finance course. And the Florida legislature just this month unanimously sent to Governor Ron DeSantis a bill that would make it the most populous state to require personal finance for graduation. Data from the survey prompted CEE, with support from Visa, to launch [FinEd50](#), a coalition of private, public and nonprofit leaders that will promote guaranteed access everywhere to financial education courses. “The state of financial education offered to students in the U.S. varies significantly. Where students live should not impact whether they have access to knowledge that will help them learn how to make informed financial decisions in their lives,” said Worku Gachou, head of North America, inclusive impact and sustainability, at Visa. To read the report, click [here](#).

THE HILL HOSTS TALK ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

On Thursday, March 17, The Hill hosted “The Future of Education” webinar to discuss how schools have been using federal relief funds to advance education and combat learning loss, prioritizing equity, and how to ensure every child has access to quality education today and tomorrow. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona kicked-off the event, stating that the department has focused heavily on COVID-19 these past two years and in the next two years, will be focused on combatting complacency and ensuring student success remains front and center of the department’s recovery focus. Secretary Cardona states the importance of utilizing the passion and urgency that has been created in order to broaden the discussion surrounding education and highlight the data on inequities that currently exist within the field. Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, underscored that children with dyslexia are highly underserved and called for education leaders to democratize access to intervention programs and pathways for students with dyslexia that “can make all the difference in their success.” He emphasized that this focus aligns with his view that, in education, the individual should have the power and is why he supports a bipartisan effort seeking greater transparency in higher education through a database, which tracks likelihood of graduation in four years from a given institution for a specific field of study, as well as estimated loan amounts. Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT),



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member of the House Education and Labor Committee, emphasized the importance of supporting the emotional well-being and needs of teachers in the classroom, from a financial and administrative level. She recognized that is difficult to recruit and retain professionals in all areas because they can always find more money in the private sector, and underscored that teaching is not mission work and leaders cannot expect educators to stay in the classroom on their love for teaching alone. Hayes encouraged proposals to support the most highly qualified educators to work in the most challenging school districts and making the financial investments necessary to support educators and students. For more information, click [here](#).