



Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Team

November 13, 2020

NSBA Weekly Update

Congressional Update

President-elect Joe Biden

On Saturday, November 7, Former Vice President Joe Biden was formally [declared](#) the winner of the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. President-elect Biden is due to be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on January 20, 2021. During the Presidential campaign, Biden proposed a number of education-related policies including tripling the amount of funding for Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), providing full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and providing universal pre-k education. These ambitious proposals will require the approval of Congress. Although Democrats are going to maintain control of the House of Representatives, there are still [15 outstanding races](#) that have yet to be decided and Republicans have flipped a number of seats reducing the Democrats' majority in the lower legislative chamber. Control of the Senate will be determined by two runoff races in Georgia set to take place in early January 2021.

Congressional Leadership Races

Although there are a number of Congressional races left to be determined in the current election cycle, both Democrats and Republicans in the Senate held leadership elections earlier this week for the upcoming 117th Congress—set to convene in January 2021. Current Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) were each re-elected to lead their respective caucuses. The outcomes of the Georgia runoff elections will determine which one will be the majority leader.

Congress Wrestles with Pandemic and Looming Funding Deadline

On Tuesday, October 10, the Senate Appropriations Committee released [all 12 fiscal year \(FY\) 2021 appropriations bills](#)—legislation necessary to fund the federal government for the current fiscal year. The House of Representatives passed all 12 of these bills over the summer on a party line vote. Although the House cleared comparable funding legislation through the entire lower chamber, the appropriations bills released by the Senate this week are not expected to be marked-up, but rather are merely being used as a starting point for wider negotiations for how to fund the federal government past December 11—when current funding is set to run out. The Senate proposes to increase funding for the U.S. Department of Education (USED) by \$433 million—a 0.9% increase compared to FY 2020. Title I of ESSA, IDEA, Impact Aid, Title IV-A of ESSA, and the career and technical education programs would all receive slight increases under the proposal. The bill text can be found [here](#); committee report [here](#); and a summary can be found [here](#). Negotiations are now underway between lawmakers over how best to resolve the differences between the House and Senate proposals before the December 11 deadline.

As these efforts get underway, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is escalating dramatically across the country, creating new pressure on lawmakers to pass a relief package in response. Although Senate

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) expressed openness to an additional round of relief legislation last week, he has maintained his previous position that any legislation be capped at \$500 billion. Congressional Democrats on the other hand have been proposing a package costing at least \$2 trillion in order to effectively respond to the emergency needs brought on by the virus. While both sides favor significant aid for K-12 schools, there remain a number of areas of disagreement (other than the overall price tag) including support for state and local governments—an issue that also has enormous implications for school budgets in every community. With control of the Senate still uncertain, negotiations remain stalled. Nevertheless, lawmakers remain publicly hopeful that they can couple regular appropriations and pandemic aid in a larger deal later this year.

Administration Update

Biden Administration Begins Transition

The incoming Biden administration has formally started Presidential Administration transition efforts even though the current President has yet to formally concede the election. On Tuesday, November 10, the incoming Biden administration released a slate of [agency review teams](#) who will be responsible for ensuring a smooth transfer of power and preparing the President-elect and his cabinet for the responsibilities of managing the federal government. Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute and President of the California State Board of Education, is leading the incoming administration's education transition efforts. Dr. Darling-Hammond was the opening guest speaker during the recent NSBA Public School Transformation Now! [webinar](#). Another speaker from the webinar, Roberto Rodriguez, CEO of Teach Plus and a former senior education advisor to President Obama, has also been named to the education transition team.

Bills

- [H.R.8294](#) National Apprenticeship Act of 2020 **Sponsor:** [Rep. Davis, Susan A. \[D-CA-53\]](#)

NSBA Update

Post-Election 2020 Webinar: Last night NSBA hosted a webinar in partnership with The Hunt Institute, AASA, NAESP, NASBE, and NASSP on what the election results may mean for education. Former U.S. Secretaries of Education Margaret Spellings and Arne Duncan, New York City Department of Education Chancellor Richard Carranza, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho discussed a wide range of topics, including the current state of education, how state leaders can support districts, supporting students where they are, where investments should be made, and characteristics the next Secretary of Education needs to have to succeed in this challenging environment. We encourage you to watch the webinar and share it with your members. You can find the full recording [here](#).