

CCSESA Federal Advocacy Report

(written December 1; Dec 7 comments will reflect additional/new information)

- Overview of federal action: Congress returns to Washington this week for two or three weeks in which a COVID-19 relief bill, a \$1.4 trillion spending package, the massive National Defense Authorization Act, and a slate of Trump judicial nominees are all on the docket. Lawmakers face a Dec. 11 deadline to fund the government and avoid a shutdown. Meanwhile, President-elect Joe Biden continues to reveal members of his Cabinet.
- COVID 5: A bipartisan group of senators is holding discussions on a coronavirus relief package amid a months-long stalemate between congressional leadership and the White House. The group includes Senators Mitt Romney (R-UT), Rob Portman (R-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME), as well as Senators Chris Coons (D-DE), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Mark Warner (D-VA), Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Dick Durbin (D-IL). Senators involved in the talks are considering an eventual government funding deal as a vehicle for coronavirus relief. Before Thanksgiving, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) said it's possible Congress will pass a smaller and "targeted" COVID-relief bill in the lame duck session and return in January to work on a larger bill to present to President Biden after he takes office.
- FY21: Top appropriators reportedly have reached the outlines of a bipartisan, bicameral agreement for FY2021 spending allocations, but the deal isn't done yet. The agreement signals that appropriators are moving in the right direction to avoid a government shutdown when the current continuing resolutions runs out on December 11th. However, it still could be a challenging two weeks to draft the legislation and address remaining disagreements such as the dispute related to border funding. A key issue given that it is a priority for President Trump, who will be the one signing any omnibus legislation. This week also may shed some light on the scope of a potential COVID-19 relief bill. Before the congress broke for Thanksgiving, some Democrats expressed a willingness to come down from the price tag of a House-passed \$2.4 trillion relief package.
- Additional Resources:
 - GAO Report: In November, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released their report, [Distance Learning: Challenges Providing Services to K-12 English Learners and Students with Disabilities during COVID-19](#). Specifically, this report overviews a review of relevant online learning plans, synchronous and asynchronous teaching policies (i.e., live and non-live teaching sessions), individualized education plans (IEP), and semi-structured interviews with administrators from 15 geographically diverse school districts with high proportions of English language learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD) populations to highlight the logistical and instructional challenges of providing federally mandated services to these students in the context of the current pandemic.
 - Policy Analysis: Biden Administration and Education: In preparation for the anticipated Biden administration, AASA advocacy director Sasha Pudelski penned a series of blog posts exploring what a Biden Administration could mean for education. I've linked to the posts here:
 - The Biden Administration: [Undoing the Title IX Regulations](#)
 - The Biden Administration: [Civil Rights Guidance and Enforcement](#)
 - The Biden Administration: [What Can They Accomplish Via Executive Order?](#)

- Ten Ways to Make Online Learning Work: The governors' association partnered with the state chief's association and the council of great city schools on a resource aimed at improving education in the time of COVID 19. Access the [document here](#).

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