

### Federal Update

- USED Releases Maintenance of Equity Guidance: Last week USED released its [Maintenance of Equity guidance](#), a document that will help SEAs and LEAs comply with the new provision passed as part of the ARP package. The provision will be in effect for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school year.
  - US News and World Report [write up](#)
- IDEA Full Funding FY22 Appropriations Letter: The IDEA Full Funding Coalition – which AASA chairs – submitted a letter with its funding request for the FY22 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriation levels to Congress. Specifically, the 33 allied organizations of the coalition called for \$15.5B to be allocated to IDEA Part B. The full letter is available [here](#).
- Two Ways For States To Support More Thoughtful School District Recovery Plans: [This blog post](#) is reposted with permission of EducationCounsel. AASA was pleased to partner with our Large Countywide and Suburban District Consortium (facilitated by EducationCounsel) on a joint letter to USED regarding two concerns with the ARP LEA recovery plan timeline and approach to continuous improvement.
- USDA Responds To AASA's Request To Expand Direct Certification With Medicaid Demonstration Project: On June 11, 2021, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) submitted a response to AASA's allied coalition letter requesting that the department extend and expand opportunities for states to participate in the Direct Certification with Medicaid (DC-M) Demonstration Project, which currently enables 19 states to use Medicaid data to directly certify students for free or reduced-price school meals, under the authority provided in Sections 9(b)(15) and 18(c) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. Specifically, U.S. Secretary of Vilsack stated that "USDA is actively working to identify possible options for building upon our existing DC-M demonstrations, and we look forward to offering expanded opportunities in the near future." You can check out AASA's initial letter [here](#). Access the USDA's response by clicking [here](#).
- USED Seeking Public Comment on Discipline and School Climate: On June 4, USED announced plans to solicit public comments on and explore types of policy guidance, technical assistance, and resources needed by schools and districts to reduce inequities in discipline practices. The formal notice is scheduled to be released for public comment on June 8, after which feedback will be collected for 45 days. (The notice is available [here](#); EdWeek coverage is [here](#).)
- COVID School Data Hub: The COVID 19 School Dashboard completed its final data collection at the end of May. The COVID School Data Hub—which launched this week-- is an effort with the goal of collecting data on school learning models across the US over the 2020-2021 school year. You can see the announcement landing page [here](#). They're

seeking data on school opening modes (traditional in person, hybrid or virtual) by school or district over the 2020-2021 school year. They can process data at any time period or level. Their goal is to produce a comprehensive dataset, as consistent as possible over the school year, across as much of the US as possible. They can work with states to help them better understand and use the data they have, as well as use the cross state data to contribute to conversations about school policy in the fall and beyond. In next week's newsletter, I'll include a template letter/email you can use to reach out to your state agency to encourage them to support/cooperate.

- USED Releases On-Site Vaccination Clinic Toolkit: The Administration announced a [Month of Action](#) to mobilize an all-of-America effort to connect individuals with COVID-19 vaccination opportunities and encourage vaccination. To make it easier to get vaccinated and to meet communities where they are, they provided a toolkit to support agencies, agency partners, stakeholders, and local communities in working with local vaccine providers to set up on-site vaccination clinics.
- AASA Letter on ARP LEA Recovery Timeline: AASA and their Large county Consortium jointly [submitted a letter](#) to USED regarding two concerns with the ARP LEA recovery plan timeline and approach to continuous improvement. We are pleased to let you know we received good news. In an "office hours" USED held on 5/27 the Department made both of the clarifications we requested. In their response to the letter, they shared a [link to the slides](#) they presented that day.
  - On slide 21, they confirmed that despite their references to a timeline that "should" not be more than 90 days, the ultimate decision is "left to each SEA."
  - On slide 22, they confirmed that LEA recovery plans should be continuously improved over time and that SEAs can establish the amendment process (which presumably they can make not-too-onerous).
- Biden FY22 Budget Released, Includes \$103 Billion for USED: On May 28, President Joe Biden released his full fiscal year (FY) 2022 budget request and outlined his vision for nearly \$6 trillion in federal spending. The budget request includes both significant increases to existing programs and creation of new initiatives for early childhood, K-12, and higher education. Most notably, it would fund universal preschool for all 3- and 4-year olds; provide \$20 billion for a new Title I Equity Grant program aimed primarily at incentivizing equitable allocation of resources to high-poverty school districts; increase IDEA state grants by more than 20%; and expand funding for CTE state grants, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, and school-based health professionals, among other existing school-based programs. The president's full FY22 budget request is [here](#); a fact sheet from the White House is [here](#); the USED and HHS budget briefs are [here](#) and [here](#).
- USED Releases Additional FAQs on ESSER and GEER Funds: In late May USED released a new set of FAQs related to ESSER and GEER funds from the last three rounds of federal emergency relief funding. The guidance confirms that SEAs must award ESSER I and II funds to LEAs within one year of receiving the award, and ARP ESSER funds to LEAs within

60 days of receiving the award. The Department also clarifies several permitted uses of funds, including confirmation that state agencies and school districts may use funding to provide “premium pay” or bonuses to school staff; offer vaccinations to eligible students and staff; support early childhood education and child care, including for school staff; and any “evidence-based” practice or intervention that complies with the definition of “evidence-based” in ESSA. (EdWeek coverage is [here](#); the full FAQ document is [here](#).)

- Senate Republicans Release Counter Infrastructure Package: In late May a group of Senate Republicans released a \$928 billion infrastructure proposal to counter President Biden’s \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan. The proposal includes \$506 billion for roads and bridges, \$48 billion for water infrastructure, \$25 billion for airports, \$65 billion for broadband, and \$22 billion for freight and passenger rail. The counter offer includes no money for [K-12 initiatives](#) including school construction, electrifying school buses, or eliminating lead pipes (nor any funds for elder or child care).
- NCES Released Condition of Education 2021: In late May National Center for Education statistics released “[The Condition of Education 2021](#),” a report on education in America today. The report presents 86 indicators in five areas -- pre-primary, elementary, and secondary education; postsecondary education; population characteristics and economic outcomes; international comparisons; and school crime and safety -- and two spotlighted indicators that use experimental data to examine preliminary educational impacts of the pandemic at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels ([blog post](#)).

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