



The Education Report

JUNE 30, 2017

Della Cronin, Editor
dcronin@wpllc.net

Hannah Allen, Deputy Editor
hallen@wpllc.net

The Education Report, a weekly publication of WPLLc, provides an executive summary of public policy issues affecting American education. **Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:**

1. [Budget and Appropriations](#)
2. [In Brief](#)
3. [New Publications](#)
4. [In the News](#)
5. [About WPLLc](#)

1. Budget and Appropriations

This week, House Budget Committee Chair Diane Black (R-TN) tried her best to get a budget resolution in front of the panel she leads. She was not successful. As the July 4th recess approached, it became clear that in the absence of a resolution (for now), leadership is proceeding with a topline number for nondefense discretionary (or, NDD) spending that is \$5 billion below the spending cap for the year mandated by the Budget Control Act. That is \$8 billion below the FY 2017 enacted amount. Given how difficult it is to find the funds to invest in domestic spending programs these days, that number is concerning.

The concerns might play out pretty soon, too. There are rumors that the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee could mark up its FY 2018 bill as soon as the week of July 10, although nothing has been officially announced. The allocation that Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) is dealing with could be as much as \$5 billion less than last year's, but advocates likely won't know until the markup itself. That math means that the LHHS-Education panel will be tasked with cutting 60% of the \$8 billion in cuts. That's a lot.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, Democratic leadership, including Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), wrote to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran (R-MS) asking for bipartisan, bicameral negotiations to raise the NDD and defense spending caps for FY 2018. In the letter they expressed continued support for the principle of parity between defense and non-defense spending and in providing "equal relief for both defense and non-defense programs that power our local economies." Of course, their request to have such a meeting to work out a bipartisan healthcare reform proposal wasn't successful, so they shouldn't hold their collective breaths.

As has been widely reported, Congress will leave town today, returning July 10th, without the Senate vote on the healthcare bill that Republicans and the White House want. That means that the three weeks between next week and the August recess are sure to be frenetic ones. Many assume that if the big-ticket items Republicans want don't get done before the end of July, they won't get done anytime soon.

[Back to top.](#)

2. In Brief

AYPF EVENT NOTES BENEFITS OF DIVERSE COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

On Monday, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), in association with Jobs for the Future (JFF), hosted an event titled “Aligning Systems & Policies to Support Multiple Postsecondary Pathways.” In today’s workforce there is a large demand for high skilled workers with post-secondary degrees or credentials. While 86% of high school graduates enroll in post-secondary school, many do not end up completing that planned education. Evidence suggests that creating direct pathways for students working toward post-secondary degrees or credentials better ensures completion of their programs. Michael Collins, vice president at JFF, explained that pathways stem from behavioral economics and can influence performance by helping to shape the choices young people make, meaning young people are better equipped for post-secondary school when they can see an educational path from start to finish. Marcia Ballinger, president at Lorain County Community College in Elyria, OH, modeled Ohio’s MyUniversity as a successful pathway program. MyUniversity lays out opportunities for students as early as 9th grade. Through MyUniversity, there are students that have been able to complete their bachelor’s degrees by the age of 20 at 80% less cost than a typical university. Collins also mentioned Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs as ideal pathways to connect students to the labor market. Nathaniel Easley, executive director at Denver Scholarship Foundation, says today CTE programs are “not your father’s vocational education.” Credentials and the workforce for CTE have drastically changed; numerous businesses are lacking those types of skilled workers and CTE degrees can give people the chance to significantly advance in their careers. For more information, please go [here](#).

ADMINISTRATION’S EDUCATION BUDGET CUTS STRONGLY OPPOSED

On Monday, Hart Research Associates released the results from a national poll conducted on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) regarding the national mood on education policy and politics. The poll was based off interviews with a cross section of 2016 election cycle voters spanning both political parties conducted online from June 3 to June 5, 2017. Interestingly, the findings revealed generally strong opposition to K-12 education budget cuts and investments in vouchers over public education, as well as somewhat negative views towards both President Trump and Secretary DeVos’ policy priorities, even amongst Trump voters. However, the survey also revealed that many Americans are not engaged deeply on policy and don’t actually have an opinion of Secretary DeVos’ job approval. Sixty-two percent of participants believe that, as it is, the federal government does not spend enough on public education and participants strongly oppose the proposal to cut education spending by 13.5 percent. Other statistics of note include that 76 percent of participants said it was unacceptable for the budget to take away funding from public schools that serve poor children while increasing the funding for vouchers or charters; at least 66 percent of participants find cuts for programs such as career and technical education, reductions in class sizes, services for students with disabilities, supports for homeless children, and teacher professional development unacceptable. However, Democrats in Congress are only slightly more trusted on education than

Republicans, as 63 percent of participants said they would be less likely to reelect their Senator or Representative if they support these budget cuts. For more information, please go [here](#).

GIRL SCOUTS AND API DISCUSS WOMEN AND GIRLS IN STEM FIELDS

On Tuesday, the American Petroleum Institute and the Girl Scouts of the USA held a briefing, “Empowering Girls to Succeed in STEM Careers.” Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) gave opening remarks and said that STEM studies drive the “jobs of tomorrow” and will be crucial to pulling West Virginia out of its economic downturn. Senator Moore Capito discussed her Girls Rise Up initiative in her home state, which is designed to promote leadership and confidence in young girls, and she also discussed the need for high speed internet and broadband access, particularly in rural areas of West Virginia where connectivity is often sparse at best. Following the senator’s remarks, Tara Anderson, director of external mobilization at the American Petroleum Institute (API), presented findings from a comprehensive study that surveyed women’s attitudes on opportunities and careers in the oil and gas industry. The study revealed that there is a low understanding among women of the opportunities available to individuals of all skill sets and levels of education in the oil and gas industry, and Anderson praised the work of Girl Scouts and other initiatives as avenues to spark interest and broaden women and girls’ perceptions regarding what is obtainable in their careers. STEM strategy lead at Girl Scouts of the USA, Suzanne Harper shared the focus of Girl Scout programming on STEM, the outdoors, life skills and entrepreneurship, and commented that often girls becoming interested in STEM fields when “they see how they can help others and better their world.” Through partnerships with the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and Code.org, Girl Scouts is able to offer activities surrounding engineering, computer science, and has plans to offer cyber security and robotics badges in the near future, enabling young women to explore these fields from a young age. For more information, go [here](#).

ACOSTA IS QUIZZED ON JOB TRAINING AND OTHER LABOR BUDGET CUTS

On Tuesday, the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies had the Department of Labor Secretary Alex Acosta defend his agency’s proposed FY2018 budget proposal. Republican and Democrat Senators quizzed Mr. Acosta about some of the confusing budget cuts and messaging coming from the Trump Administration. “This year the department has submitted a budget that so significantly cuts programs or eliminates them altogether that it’s really tough for us to figure out your priorities,” said Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), chairman of the subcommittee. Senator Blunt was particularly concerned about cuts to workforce training and the mixed messaging on apprenticeships, which despite being touted by the President himself, saw a small reduction too. Senator Murray was more explicit with her concerns, stating that the cuts to WIOA programs would undermine other key programs like the registered apprenticeship grants (flat funded at \$89.9M) and would be hard for Governors to absorb. She was perplexed as to why they were trying to streamline programs that were already tightened up during the bipartisan *Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) negotiations. Noting they believe in Mr. Acosta’s competence, some of the Senators openly wondered if he had been forced to accept these budget cuts just to meet the budget caps. Other issues brought up included: the impacts on employer based healthcare (Murphy); the inclusion of military spouses in “Feds Hire Vets” work (Blunt); raising the salary threshold on the H1B Visa program (Durbin); the exclusion of construction industry from the recent Executive Order on apprenticeships (Kennedy, Alexander and Graham); innovation and reforming paid leave (Rubio and Murray); and ensuring miners have priority in the dislocated worker program (Capito). To watch the hearing or read more, go [here](#).

EXPERTS AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS DEFEND SUMMER LEARNING

Summer isn't a vacation for everyone. Every year, low-income students from underperforming schools find themselves experiencing loss of knowledge obtained during the school year. To discuss this troubling issue, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), in conjunction with the Afterschool Alliance, hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to bring awareness to the importance of summer learning programs and to make the case for continued federal support of these programs. A panel of experts, program providers, and advocates agreed that many of the resources available to programs and youth during the school year disappear during the summer months, creating a funding issue for vital programs across the country. The gap between school time and summertime resources becomes more extreme in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. To combat the lack of resources, many organizations and school districts have formed collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations to ensure every child gets the support they need. The briefing featured speakers representing school districts and non-profit organizations who shared information about successful partnerships to address summer learning loss, strengthen employability skills and combat food insecurity. The largest federal funding stream supporting summer learning and enrichment programs is the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program. This program also supports before school and afterschool programs. Speakers unanimously opposed President Trump's FY 2018 budget proposal to eliminate the 21st CCLC program, noting the loss of funds for the program would affect every state and would result in closing thousands of summer learning and out-of-school time programs that serve millions of children across America. Learn more [here](#).

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMINES STUDENT DATA PRIVACY AND RESEARCH

On Wednesday, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education convened a hearing entitled, "Exploring Opportunities to Strengthen Education Research While Protecting Student Privacy." The hearing focused on striking the right balance between leveraging educational research to improve outcomes for students while also keeping student personal information safe and secure. Much of the discussion highlighted the work done at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the need to update pieces of federal legislation including the *Education Sciences Reform Act* (ESRA) and the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) so that they reflect the current needs of educators, practitioners, and researchers. Subcommittee Chairman Todd Rokita (R-IN) noted that ESRA was enacted to help inform schools of the most up-to-date research, but "the law may not be working as well as Congress wanted or intended. In fact, a 2013 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found weaknesses in the law, specifically significant delays in the distribution of research available to educators." He also discussed the need to update FERPA, saying that when Congress passed the law in 1974 to protect student privacy, "the Internet didn't exist." Subcommittee Ranking Member Jared Polis (D-CO) acknowledged that both education research and protecting student data privacy are issues that have consistently had bipartisan support. He mentioned the fact that the committee has had a good track record of introducing legislation to update ESRA and FERPA, but has not yet voted on these matters. He talked about the introduction of the *Success in Education Through Research Act* (SETRA) as a means to update education research laws and then also talked about the bill he introduced last Congress with Congressman Luke Messer (R-IN) called the *Student Digital Privacy and Parental Rights Act*, which would create new privacy protections for students by prohibiting ed-tech vendors from selling student data or using it for commercial gain. The witnesses on hand spoke about the value of education research and the steps taken to de-identify, disaggregate, and secure the data collected on students and all of the panelists agreed that data privacy and security is of the

utmost importance. The differences came in the belief of whether statewide longitudinal data systems and federal repositories of student data should be encouraged while the risk of safety, cyberattacks, and possible breaches of that data are so high. Members of Congress agreed on multiple occasions that the laws governing both education research and data security are long overdue for an update. For more information about the hearing, including written testimony and an archived webcast, please go [here](#).

SENATE CJS SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON FY2018 NASA BUDGET

On Thursday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies held a hearing to review the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 spending bill for NASA. NASA's Acting Administrator Robert Lightfoot served as the witness before the subcommittee, and Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) noted that the Administration's proposed FY2018 budget of \$19.1 billion for NASA is a reduction of 2.9 percent from the current year level, reflecting a cut of \$561 million. Chairman Shelby noted the challenging fiscal environment, but said that the cut would "disrupt ongoing missions and delay future exploration..." Proposals to cut "science missions and to eliminate the entire education directorate using the rationale that NASA could do without these programs," will make it impossible for NASA to "meet its own management plans and launch schedules." Chairman Shelby emphasized "NASA's innovative ideas often involve significant risk and also require significant investment," calling on the Subcommittee to work to achieve an "appropriate balance for NASA's missions." For more information and to view an archived version of the hearing, go [here](#).

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ACTS ON FY2018 CJS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

On Thursday, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) marked up their Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 spending bill. The [measure](#) includes \$54 billion in total discretionary funding, a \$2.6 billion decrease from FY 2017 but \$4.8 billion more than the President's request. Highlights of the bill include funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) at \$7.3 billion, a \$133 million decrease from FY 2017. Research and Related Activities, which includes STEM education, would be level funded at \$6 billion. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) would get a \$226 million bump from FY 2017 to \$19.9 billion. Within NASA, there would be \$5.9 billion reserved for the NASA Science programs, a \$94 million increase that would target research for planetary science and astrophysics while reducing funding for "lower-priority research," which includes the Earth Science program. During the collegial markup, Members on both sides of the aisle applauded the Subcommittee for its work to put together a bill that continued to support priorities despite limited funds. Subcommittee Chairman John Culberson (R-TX) said the bill "balances my two top priorities: being frugal with my constituents' hard-earned tax dollars, while supporting federal law enforcement and scientific agencies with the resources they need to do their job." Ranking Member Jose Serrano (D-NY) thanked the Chairman for always being "fair to our side" and finding common ground within the CJS portfolio. Serrano praised the bill for rejecting the President's proposed cuts to NSF and NASA, but expressed concerns about cuts to climate research programs and NASA's Earth Science program. Full Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) stressed that it is irresponsible to pursue individual spending bills without a budget in place. She said that failure impacts all bills within the Appropriations Committee. Culberson noted that he would seek to "backfill some holes if additional funds become available." No amendments were offered and the bill was approved by a voice vote. The next step for this measure is approval by the full Appropriations Committee, which is expected after the Fourth of July Recess. For more information or to view the markup, go [here](#).

[Back to top.](#)

3. New Publications

6 Keys to Engaging Families in ESSA

National PTA (June 2017)

Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement

Learning Policy Institute and the National Education Policy Center (June 2017)

How Progressive is School Funding in the United States?

Brookings Institution (June 2017)

What Teens Want From Their Schools

Thomas B. Fordham Institute (June 2017)

[Back to top.](#)

4. In the News

Why Do We Need State-Level Education Assessments? Here's Why

The Hill (Jun. 29, 2017)

How Silicon Valley Pushed Coding Into American Classrooms

The New York Times (Jun. 27, 2017)

Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Has Died of Cancer

Boston Globe (Jun. 27, 2017)

Rep. Virginia Foxx on Better Career and Technical Education, "An Idea Whose Time Has Come"

The 74 (Jun. 25, 2017)

[Back to top.](#)

5. About WPLLC

Washington Partners, LLC is a full service government affairs and public relations consulting firm that has built a reputation for producing results. We partner with clients committed to excellence in education and other social services to achieve policy and advocacy success by:

- leveraging our expertise and passion;
- strategizing intelligent solutions; and,
- creating meaningful impact.

Our team includes long-term insiders in education policy from PreK through higher education, innovative thinkers and savvy strategists that provide a comprehensive array of customized client services. We have the knowledge, skills, and relationships that are necessary for successful advocacy at all levels. From grassroots to grassroots and everything in between, our broad-based legislative practice approaches every project with the same degree of determination and professionalism.

WPLLC provides expertise in a variety of services:

- Government Relations
- Research and Analysis
- Advocacy Training
- Association Management
- Strategic Communications
- Policy Events

For more information, please call us at 202.289.3900 or visit our website at wpllc.net.

•••

This publication contains links to Internet sites for the convenience of World Wide Web users. Washington Partners, LLC is not responsible for the availability or content of these external sites, nor does Washington Partners, LLC endorse, warrant or guarantee the information, services, or products described or offered at these other Internet sites.