



January 30, 2015

Dear Member,

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### **AESA Legislative Committee Met in Washington D.C. Last Week**

Representatives of ESAs from around the country were together last week to work on next year's legislative platform and to hear from various legislative staff about the work that is going on in education on the Hill. For the first time in awhile, movement appears to be happening on the Reauthorization of ESEA. AESA's legislative person, Noelle Ellerson, has shared some details that can be found at the end of this issue.

In an interesting comment, Noelle talked about the impact that ESAs have on the legislative process. Recently, when there was work being done on expanding the amount of money available for E-rate funds, ESAs were asked to provide input on the impact of these funds in their regions. Noelle said that ESAs were a critical element in getting the additional funding approved. Your response and input made the difference! Now an additional \$1.5 billion dollars will be flowing to schools and libraries. There is proof that when we all come together around an issue, we can make an impact! Thanks for your time and energy to make this happen.

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### **Legislative Blog Update from Noelle Ellerson**

**ESEA:** The House and Senate were very serious when they said they would hit the ground running when it came to ESEA reauthorization in the 114th Congress.

- **Senate:** Chairman Lamar Alexander introduced his ESEA discussion draft earlier this month. He is moving on an expedited timeline, with a Feb 2 deadline for submitting comments. His bill is almost unchanged from the bill he introduced last Congress.
- **House:** The House is slated to move even quicker than the Senate and in a more partisan manner. They are scheduled to introduce their bill (as passed out of the full House in the summer of 2013) the first week in

February, with committee mark up shortly after and a full floor vote the last week in February.

- **Administration:** In a refreshing move, Secretary Duncan [gave remarks](#) highlighting the need to revise and repeal NCLB. It is good to hear the administration give deliberate attention to ESEA reauthorization, given their continued hyperfocus on ESEA waivers. Even with this renewed attention to ESEA, we have to remember that the Dept will continue to move forward with the latest round of waivers, under which some states will get four year waivers, lasting far beyond the administration itself.

**Student Data and Privacy:** The issues of student data and privacy-which have by and large played out at the state level-are making their way to federal policy discussions. Last Congress, there were some initial legislative proposals aimed at bolstering student privacy. While the bills did not go anywhere, they did prime the pump for further discussions this year, and Congress is expected to move forward with an effort to reauthorize FERPA. In the meantime, President Obama laid down the administration's position earlier this month, announcing a wide-sweeping set of proposals related to consumer and student privacy. The announcement was met with mixed reviews. (Read the White House [press release](#).) Student data groups are heralding the approach for its efforts to bolster student data privacy, while the education vendor side is more tempered in their response, trying to ascertain how the administration's proposal may limit the ability of vendors to continue to operate in this space. Seeing as this will be a legislative conversation moving forward, it was inserted into AESA's 2015 legislative agenda. Given the relatively broad parameters framing the conversation right now, AESA's positions are equally flexible:

- Provide coherent and easy-to-understand guidance for parents and educators regarding FERPA, PPRA, and COPPA and their protections of the privacy and security of student data.
- Update definitions to address the realities of the digital age, making it possible to protect data while ensuring appropriate use of student data for legitimate educational needs and reforms.

**SRS/Forest Counties:** At the end of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, they failed to provide funding for the Secure Rural Communities and Schools Act. The Forest Counties coalition received an update earlier this week with two items:

- The Forest Service Chiefs office wants us to remind anyone with excess Title III funds **not** to send them back as it will be lost to the treasury. So hang on to those Title III funds.
- On the SRS reauthorization front we have a number of champions working in both the Senate and the House to get it done. Please reach

out to your Representatives and Senators. Remind them of the importance of SRS. Remember the first dollars to pay SRS come from actual shared receipts.

More succinctly, we are still waiting to see some meaningful action commensurate with assurances that this would move in the first quarter of 2015. We remain optimistic, and urge all impacted members to weigh in with their full Congressional delegation, urging them to support SRS funding.

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### **2015 Annual Conference Planning Committee**

The planning committee for the 2015 Annual Conference in New Orleans has been hard at work on their preparations for this event on December 2-5, 2015. Speakers are being lined up and you can expect a call for breakout proposals coming this Spring - watch for it!

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