

JUNE 2018 PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

Administration

Trump Names Pick for OCTAE's Assistant Secretary

(Courtesy of Career Education Review)

The White House announced today that Scott Stump is Trump's pick to be Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education at the department.



Stump previously worked as assistant provost for career and technical education at the Colorado Community College System. In 2014, he served as president of the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education consortium, now called Advance CTE. Stump currently works for a private, Nebraska-based consulting firm, Vivayic, Inc. The pick comes as the Trump administration has called for big changes to career and technical education, including redirecting more federal funding for career and technical programs toward high schools.

Education Secretary DeVos Testified Before House Committee on Education and the Workforce

(Courtesy of CSPAN)

Betsy DeVos testified before the House Education and the Workforce Committee on the agency's priorities. Secretary DeVos was asked about a wide range of topics, including school choice programs, charter schools, voucher programs, fraud allegations against for-profit colleges, and discrimination in schools. She was also asked about school safety following a string of school shootings. Secretary DeVos said that she hopes the school safety commission, which she chairs, would release a list of best practices and findings by the end of 2018. Watch the testimony [here](#).



Democrats Are Asking Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to Explain Changes to the Way Her Agency's Civil Rights Office Investigates Discrimination in the Nation's Schools

(Courtesy of Caitlin Emma, Politico, May 23, 2018)

Lawmakers in both the Senate and House in a [new letter](#) led by Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) are targeting recent updates to the Office for Civil Rights' Case Processing Manual. That manual, [posted](#) to the Education Department's website earlier this year, scraps all mentions of "systemic" investigations as part of the Trump administration's effort to narrow the scope of civil rights probes.

The changes have also led federal civil rights investigators to dismiss bulk complaints to deal more efficiently with so-called mass filers, who file the same type of complaint against many schools. Many of the complaints that have been dismissed deal with website inaccessibility.

The changes to the case processing manual are geared toward improving "efficiency, effectiveness and clarity," Education Department spokeswoman Liz Hill said in March. And earlier this month, the agency said it will offer webinars to help schools make their websites more accessible.

But in their letter, Democrats argue that federal civil rights investigators can't dismiss bulk complaints simply because there are a lot of them.

"If there is evidence that a civil rights law has been violated, OCR is obligated to open a case," they write.

The lawmakers want to hear from Education Department officials on several issues, including how changes to the Case Processing Manual were developed and how federal officials will ensure that cases with merit aren't dismissed without an investigation.

ESSA Update

(Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education)

The Secretary recently announced the approval of several consolidated state plans under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). [Alaska](#) and [Iowa](#) ([press release](#)) were among the states to request more time to finalize their plans. "I am pleased to approve these plans which comply with the requirements of the law," she stated. "I encourage states to use their plans as a starting point, rather than a finish line, to improve outcomes for all students."

To date, the Secretary has approved plans for 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. All remaining states have received [feedback](#) and are working on revisions.

Meanwhile, the Department will host webinars on new flexibility for school districts to create equitable, student-centered funding systems under a pilot program authorized by ESSA. The two webinars--on June 20, 2-3:30 p.m. ET and June 21, 12-1:30 p.m. ET- will detail the requirements of the program and address lessons learned during the spring 2018 submission cycle. All these webinars will be recorded, and the recordings, as well as the slides, will be posted on the [program web page](#). (Note: Applications are due by July 15 for districts intending to use the flexibility during the 2019-20 school year.)

OCTAE Announces New Grant Focused on STEM Apprenticeship

(Courtesy of Advance CTE)

On May 18, a notice in the Federal Register announced a new grant program to be administered by OCTAE, "Pathways to STEM Apprenticeships for High School CTE Students." The notice notes that the grants "will fund State-level efforts that support local or regional approaches to establishing Apprenticeship programs for high school CTE Students or that support efforts to implement or expand coordinated Apprenticeship programming for high school CTE Students."

Link to Federal Register Notice: <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2018-10671>

Application Deadline: Tuesday, July 17, 2018

Pre-Application Webinar: Tuesday, June 5, 2018, at 2 p.m. ET

Registration is required for the event. Register here. Sound and video may be accessed through your computer, but if you have technical difficulties, you can also access the audio using the following dial-in information:

- Dial-in: 1-888-946-2710

- Event number/access code: 3039571

The webinar will be broadcast via WebEx and requires you to download the WebEx plug-in. Please note that the plug-in will not install if your browser has high-security settings or you do not have administrative rights. For your reference, the full WebEx system requirements are available at <https://help.webex.com/docs/DOC-4748>.

Eligible Applicants

The following Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act state grant program eligible entities may apply under this competition:

- A state board designated or created consistent with state law as the sole state agency responsible for the administration of CTE in the state or for the supervision of the administration of CTE in the state
- A consortium of the above state entities.

Funding

Up to \$3 million will be awarded for one 36-month project period. OCTAE expects to make approximately five awards in amounts ranging from \$500,000 to \$750,000 for one 36-month project period. The estimated average size of the awards is \$600,000.

Congress

Alexander Faults Democrats for Stalled Talks on Higher Education Bill

(Courtesy of Michael Stratford with Politico - May 31, 2018)

Sen. Lamar Alexander, the Republican chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, said today that Democrats are to blame for stalled bipartisan negotiations in the Senate over overhauling higher education policy.

The Senate will not reauthorize the Higher Education Act this year because "the Democrats won't do it," Alexander said during remarks at The New York Times' Higher Ed Leaders Forum.

"We've given to the Democrats four months ago — after four years of hearings — our complete proposal about what to do and haven't gotten a response," Alexander said. "They want to wait until next year to see if they're in better shape politically."

Alexander said that he's told his Democratic colleagues: "I can take notes, and do to you what you did to me even if I'm in the minority" next year. Earlier this year, Alexander predicted that his committee would mark up a higher education bill during the spring.

Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state, the top Democrat on the committee, has "made it clear that she wants to reauthorize the Higher Education Act as soon as possible," spokeswoman Mairead Lynn said in a statement. Murray is "at the table and ready to keep working, and hopefully Republican leaders haven't added this to the list of other bipartisan work they have given up on for the year," she said.

Bipartisan Talks Begin on Stalled Technical Education Bill

(Courtesy of Emily Wilkins, Bloomberg Exclusives, Congress, May 11, 2018)

Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) have re-started negotiations on a stalled career and technical education bill being pushed by the White House and the business community.

Alexander and Murray, the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, confirmed to Bloomberg Government that they were working on reauthorizing the vocational skills law, formally known as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which gives states grants to fund educational programs focusing on teaching skills for a specific job.

Sens. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) and Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) are also part of the negotiations on the bill. “We had a good meeting yesterday but we have to have another meeting next week,” Casey told Bloomberg Government on Wednesday.

This isn’t the first time Murray and Alexander have tried to update the career and technical education act (Pub. L. 109-270). Past efforts to produce a bipartisan bill, including one last fall, foundered over how much authority the Education secretary should have in overseeing the program.

Executive Influence

The talks come as an update of the law has appeared to move higher on the White House’s priority list. President Donald Trump included updating the career and technical education act as a part of his recent infrastructure plan.



Ivanka Trump, the president’s daughter and adviser, has been at the forefront of the push. In March, she stressed the need to “refine and reauthorize” the program in an op-ed on Fox News’ web site. In April, she met with Alexander and Enzi to discuss the issue.

She also met with Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) to discuss workforce issues on Tuesday, according to a White House official.

Updating the bill has strong bipartisan support among lawmakers, one of the reasons the White House might be interested in getting legislation passed said Kermit Kaleba, federal policy director with the National Skills Coalition, a group of employers, unions and educators.

The House passed a bill (H.R. 2353) to update the program on a voice vote in June 2017. An October 2017 letter encouraging Alexander and Murray to produce a bipartisan bill was signed by 59 senators.

“There’s the perception that this is something that ought to be doable given the strong bipartisan support,” he said, adding the bill can easily be classified as legislation to help create jobs.

“You can see this being feel-good story if you get to the point of reauthorization,” he said.

Role of the Education Secretary

Past talks between Alexander and Murray have hit a stalemate over how much authority the Education secretary should have in overseeing the career and technical education program. The pair limited the secretary’s oversight when they reauthorized the national K-12 education law (Pub. L. 114-95) in 2015. Alexander said he wants to see similar restrictions in the technical education bill.

“In the past, secretaries of both political parties have not felt restrained,” Alexander told Bloomberg Government. “We just want to have the same kinds of language in the Perkins bill that 85 senators voted for in the Elementary and Secondary Education act.”

Data Privacy Hearing Set to Collide with Democrats' Civil Rights Agenda

(Courtesy of Mel Leonor, with help from Caitlin Emma and Ben Wermund, Politico, May 17, 2018)

May 17 was the 64th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and Democrats on Capitol Hill plan to mark the date by pivoting attention to concerns about civil rights protections at the Education Department during a House hearing on student data privacy.

Members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee convened a panel of four experts to talk about student data privacy during hearing tilted “[Protecting Privacy, Promoting Data Security: Exploring How Schools and States Keep Data Safe](#).” Members will hear from the Future of Privacy Forum’s Amelia Vance, former Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine Lhamon and two K-12 school officials--David Couch of the Kentucky Office of Education Technology and Gary Lilly, superintendent of Bristol Tennessee City Schools. Vance plans to talk about ways in which “states, districts and ed tech companies can work together in ensuring student privacy,” according to a spokeswoman.

Lhamon, however, isn’t planning to spend much time on data or student privacy. She told Morning Education her invitation to testify was to testify on the 64th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which is today, from her civil rights background. She said she plans to “express real concern about the civil rights crisis that we live in this moment in schools and in this country ... I will be highly critical of what I see in this administration.” Democrats on the committee are also expected to center their questions around civil rights issues in education.

Lhamon is planning to criticize the rescission of Obama-era Title IX guidance around campus sexual assault, and the renegotiation of months-old civil rights agreements between the department and school districts previously found to be violating the law. She will also blast the administration’s decision to step back from advocating in favor of transgender students’ rights to access bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender identity. The administration is also exploring the repeal of Obama-era discipline guidance; Lhamon will criticize that, too.

“I urge this Committee to recognize the crisis moment at which the nation now teeters with respect to civil rights in education and to use its oversight authority to examine urgent topics such as the U.S. Department of Education’s satisfaction of the solemn charge Congress has given it to safeguard equity for students,” Lhamon is expected to say, according to prepared remarks shared with Morning Education. “In this administration, the Department of Education repeatedly undermines equity, contrary to its Congressional charge.

The hearing will be followed by an afternoon event about enforcement of the Civil Rights Act in the Trump era hosted by Hill Democrats.

Other News

Apply for the Upcoming Teach to Lead STEAM Summit

The 16th [Teach to Lead Summit](#) will be held in San Jose, California, on September 28-30. The summit will bring together teacher leaders and other stakeholders from across the country to incubate ideas, leverage teacher leadership, and work to improve STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) learning for all students.

Have an innovative idea for change in STEAM? Please submit an application [here](#). The submission deadline is July 9. Space is limited to approximately 20 teams.