Session #3: Prospects for Federal PK12 Facility Funding

Objective: Become knowledgeable about federal facilities policy

Moderator

Rob Olsen, Infrastructure Consultant
at the Iowa Department of Education

Panel

Ally Bernstein-Talcott, Principal, Step Up Advocacy

Kevin Sullivan, Government Relations Advisor, 21st Century School Fund

Stephen Ward, Principal, VHS Strategies
School Infrastructure Legislation Introduced in 116th Congress

RRASA in HR2 (Chairman Scott/Sen. Reed RASA bill in Pelosi’s Moving Forward Infra Package)
- $100 billion in grants, $20 billion over 5 years
- $30 billion in bonds

Economic Justice Act (Schumer’s RJ Bill)
- $35 billion over 3 years as down payment on RASA

Save Education Jobs Act (Education & Labor Committee Chairman Scott)
- $261 billion to states and school districts over 10 years, for educators, paraprofessionals, social workers, school psychologists, nurses, bus drivers, maintenance workers, and more.

COVID-19 Relief Bill
- RRASA + $10 billion for emergency school facilities repairs
Federal Funding: FY21 & COVID-19 Relief

Fiscal Year 21 Funding

- **Deadline:** Dec 11, but 1 week CR extension through Dec 18
- **Omnibus:** Likely to pass new funding levels for most bills, LHHS-Ed might be the “continuing resolution” (CR) part of the CRomnibus

COVID-19 Relief ($10 billion for emergency school facilities)

- Moderate Problem Solvers Caucus introduced $908 billion COVID-19 package that has served as the base for negotiations on COVID-19 relief
- Pelosi/Schumer have backed it, McConnell support still unclear
- $82 billion for education, but no details on K-12, higher-ed, or facilities funding breakdowns
New Administration

- **Biden Campaign Promise**: $100 billion for school infrastructure
  - 2 mentions in recent speeches; supports Community Schools

- **Biden Transition Team** - Dept of Education
  - BASIC letter to Biden transition team on reopening schools and RASA
  - Recommendation to Biden transition team to create a new office in Dept of Education to help reopen schools and implement RASA should it become law
  - Dept of Ed has no real history on school facilities except Riley’s years (1990’s) modernization legislation, NCEF; Design Summit, Later charter facilities program & Green Schools Program

- **New Secretary of Education**
  - Biden promised to appoint a new Secretary with a teacher background during campaign
  - Dr. Jill Biden - community college teacher, NEA member, continuing to teach
117th Congress: U.S. House of Representatives

House: 222 Democrats to 211 Republicans (two races still to be determined).

Leadership of both parties remains the same; even with a slimmer margin, Democrats will still be able to pass most priority legislation.

Key Committee Democrats stay the same; one change among Republicans

- Ed and Labor: Scott (D-VA) / Virginia Foxx (R-VA)
- Ways and Means: Neal (D-MA) / Brady (R-TX)
- Trans and Infrastr.: DeFazio (D-OR) / Graves (R-MO)
48 Democrats and Independents to 50 Republicans; two Jan. 5th runoffs in Georgia will determine Senate control and prospects for Dem priorities

Leadership of both parties remains the same; regardless of who controls, the close margin will require bi-partisan votes for any package

Key Committee Democrats stay the same; all Republicans are new

HELP Murray (D-WA) / Burr (R-NC) or Paul (R-KY)
Finance Wyden (D-OR) / Crapo (R-ID)
EPW Carper (D-DE) / Capito (R-WV)
Federal Advocacy Priorities in the 117th

Priorities 1, 2, 3: Advocate for a major multi-year investment in School Buildings in an Infrastructure bill

- RASA or a comparably scaled investment -- $100 Billion or more

1. New Member Education: Educate new members Congress on the need for a federal investment in public school facilities

2. Build Republican Champions: Strong set of Ds in House & Senate, but not many Rs convinced schools belong in the infrastructure package

3. Become a Trusted Source: Make connections and act as a resource on school facilities with Members of Congress