

AASA Federal Education Policy Update

Thursday, February 16, 2023



Agenda

The Federal Context

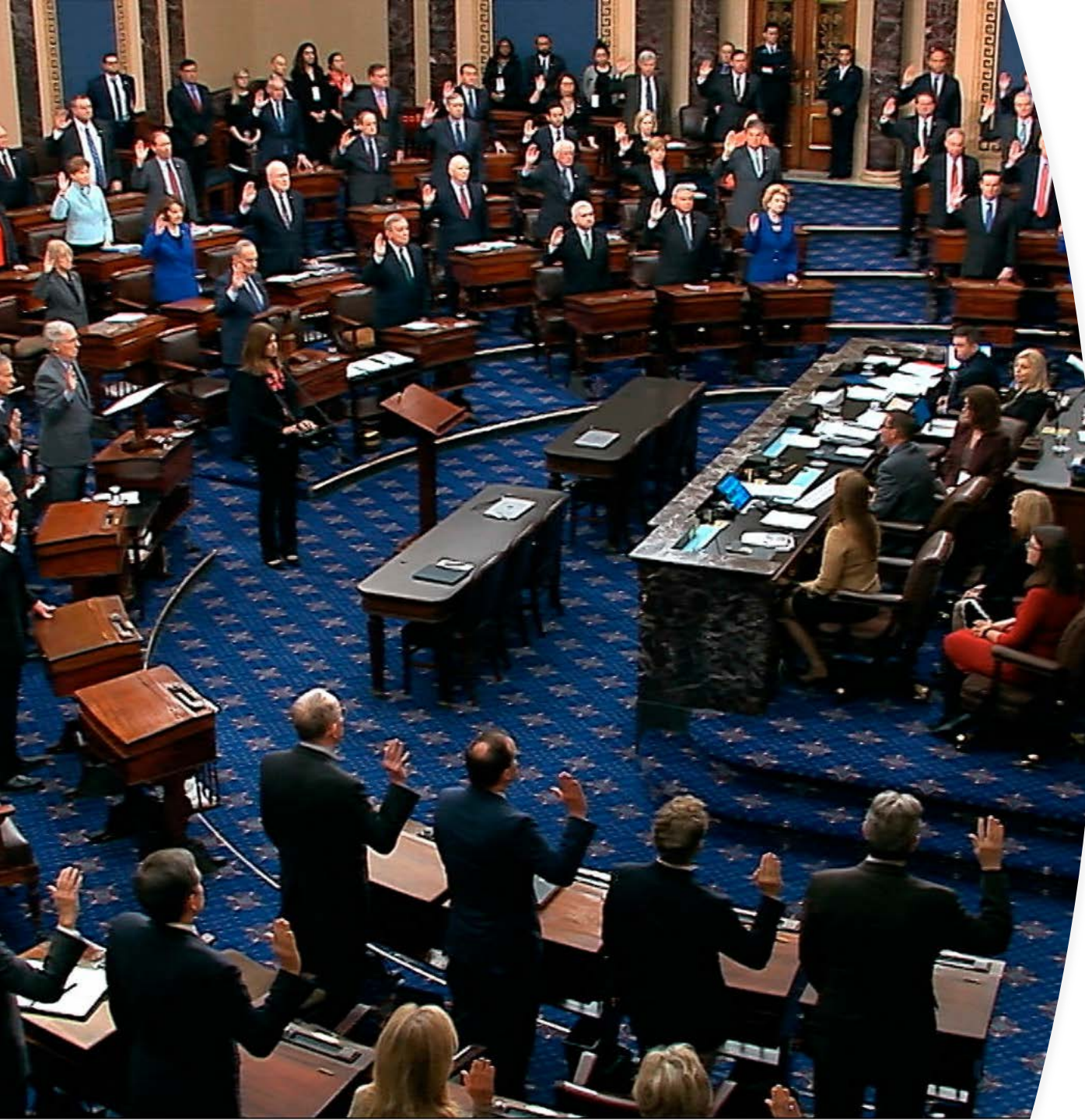
Policy action in '23

FY23 funding

Connectivity

Mental Health grants

School nutrition regs



Context matters

- Congress is off to a “spectacularly slow” start... “welcome to the Seinfeld Congress.”
- 2 more years of Biden left- how fast can they move? What will they do next?
 - Student loan forgiveness has been a legal debacle
 - Scrutiny over how they work with parents
 - What progress can be made re childcare and PreK
 - Immigration reform/DREAM
- Standoff over Debt Ceiling



GOP Agenda in the House

- Parents Bill of Rights
- NSBA-DOJ collusion to investigate parents
- “Unscientific justifications for school closures, mask mandates in school, and COVID vaccine mandates for young children”
- “Department of Education attempt to erase scientific definitions of gender/harm of proposed Title IX regulation”
- Educational Choice for Children Act (\$10b/year for TTC vouchers)

Education & Woke Ideology

Schools should educate not indoctrinate. Unfortunately, the classroom has become a battlefield where competing political ideologies,

Parents Bill of Rights: What Rights Would Parents Have?

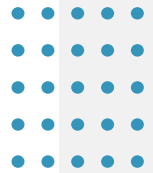
LEAs must give parents the right to:

- attend school board meetings,
- meet with child's teacher 2x/year,
- see a list of all books and reading materials in their school's library,
- be notified of any violent activity,
- be notified if the gifted/talented program is being eliminated
- access a budget for the school year including all revenues by expenditures for each school (including contracts)



LEA responsibilities under PBR

- Post the curriculum for each grade level, and make available to parents a list of all instructional materials, teacher manuals, films, surveys, and books in the schools
- Post their parent engagement plan
- Notify parents of their rights (see previous slide)
- Allow parents the right to opt-out out of any educational technology platform, app, curricular option offered electronically
- Obtain parental consent for any medical exam or screening (except in an emergency) which includes a mental health or substance use disorder screening but not a hearing, vision or scoliosis screening.



Raising Expectations with Child Opportunity Vouchers for Educational Recovery (RECOVER) Act

- Allows States and districts to direct unspent ARP on private school tuition, therapies for special education students and whatever else
- The funds are targeted to low-income families
- “77% of funding for ARP has not been spent yet.”

Leadership Shifts

New HELP Committee Chair/Ranking Members

- Bernie Sanders (D-VT)
- Bill Cassidy (R-LA)

New House Ed & Labor Cmte

- Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
- Bobby Scott will remain the lead D.

New Senate Approps Leads

- Patty Murray (Chair, D-WA)
- Susan Collins (RM, Maine)

Same House Approps Leads

- Kay Granger (R-TX)
- Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

New House Speaker and Minority Leader

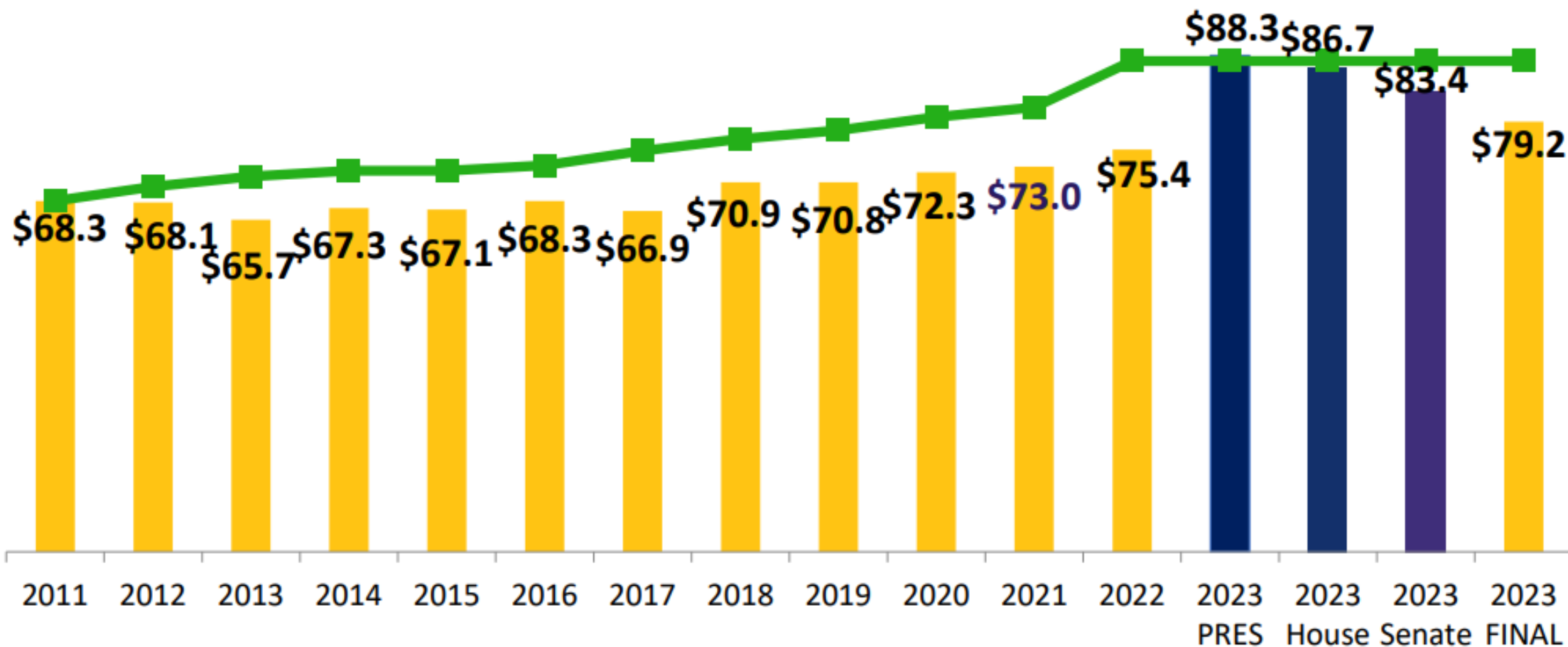
- McCarthy and Jeffries

FY23 OMNIBUS

- On December 23, Congress (finally) passed a full FY23 spending package. The bill included \$79.6 billion for the Department of Education, \$45 billion for K-12 (+2.4 billion from FY22). Highlights:
 - **\$18.4 billion for Title I (+2.4 billion)**
 - **\$14.5 billion for IDEA (+934 million)**
 - **\$2.19 billion for Title II (+20 million)**
 - **\$1.6 billion for Impact Aid (+61 million)**
 - **\$1.3 billion for Title IV (+100 million)**
 - **\$1.43 billion for CTE (+50 million)**
 - **\$215 million for REAP (+20 million)**
 - **\$115 million for IDEA Personnel Prep (+20 million)**
 - **\$70 million for Teacher Quality Partnerships (+11 million)**
 - **\$15 million for Hawkins Center for Excellence (+7 million)**
 - **Community Schools (+120m)**

But Remains Below the 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Level

(Department of Education Discretionary Funding in Billions of Dollars)



Looking Ahead: FY24

- President's Budget Due March 9
- Considerations:
 - Debt Ceiling
 - Push for Spending Caps?
 - House Rule for Defense Appropriations
- Return to FY22 Funding Levels?
 - It would mean a total \$130 b spending cut
 - Possible reduction to ED by \$3.9b
 - \$2 billion reduction for Title I and IDEA
 - \$38 million in teacher retention funding



Connectivity

E-Rate

- NOI leaves room for conversation about use of available E-Rate funding
- Considerations: Fund ECF? Fund WiFi on buses? Update definition of firewall? Expand definition for cyber?
- Political Considerations: Missing a commissioner; raising USF contribution factor

Emergency Connectivity Fund

- \$7 b program under ARP allowed LEAs to give internet enabled devices for staff/students to use at home
- Devices go dark in middle of 2023, Congress has not extended funding



Student & Child Privacy Center

Federal discourse on student and child privacy is both disjointed AND multi-faceted

States are really leading the way here, and we want the federal policy to reflect what has been learned

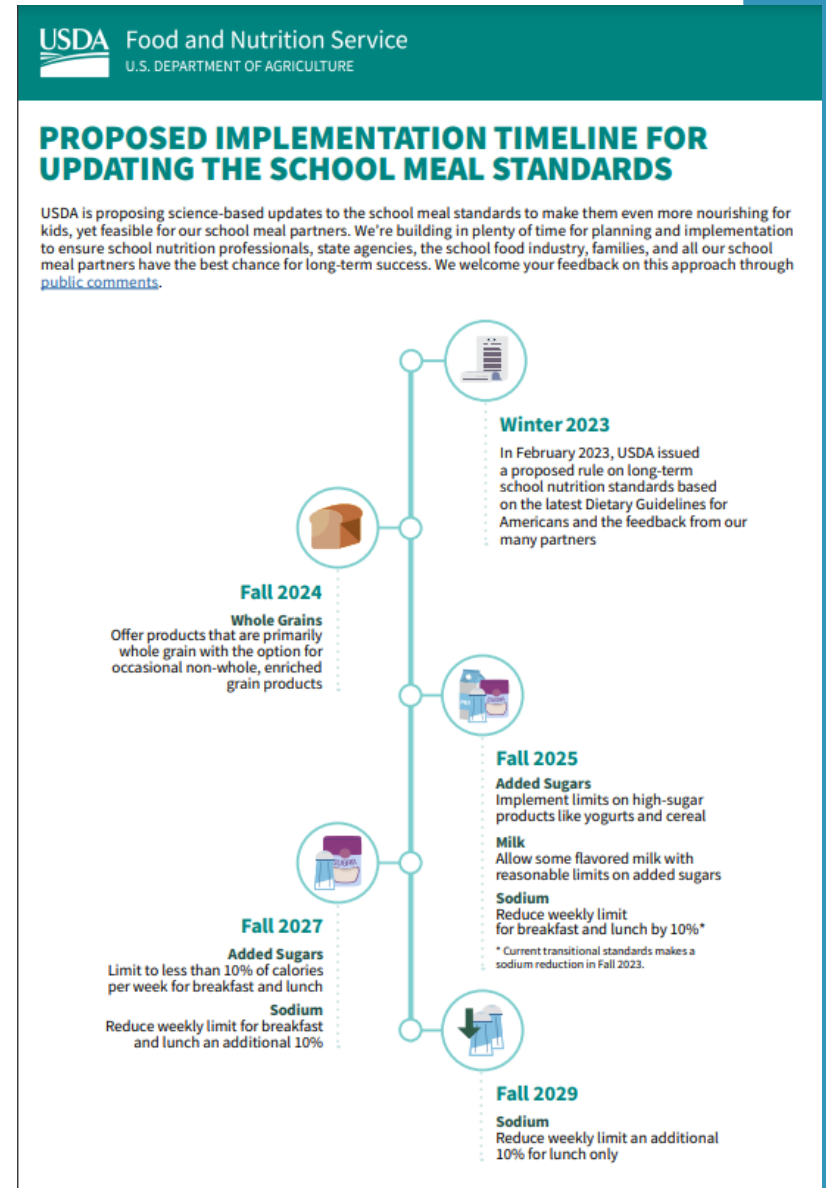
There is an alphabet soup of existing laws that need to be both updated and coordinated.

Student data is in any federal education law, and many more, and there is important work done to ensure consistency of policy that allows function and flexibility, while meeting the needs of students, families, schools, and other 3rd parties



Proposed Updates to Nutrition Standards


- Announced Feb. 3 – Comment period ends on April 10.
- Implementation begins SY24-25 with full implementation by SY29-30.
- For the first time ever, includes limits on added sugars.
- Calls for a phased-in sodium reduction, 10% decrease over 2 years.
- Requests specific feedback on whole grain and milk final rule:
 - 80% weekly grains must be whole-grain v. allowing to serve non whole grains one day per week.
- Maintain current milk rule (allowing flavored milk) v. limited flavored milk to only grades 9-12.



School Nutrition

- The FY23 omnibus included two school nutrition provisions:
 - Permanent and nationwide Summer EBT Program
 - Permanent non-congregate setting for rural areas (awaiting specifics from regulation)
- USDA has announced they intend to put forward regulation to lower the threshold for Community Eligibility Provision, expected July 2023.





Addressing Teacher Shortages

Loan Forgiveness for Educators Act

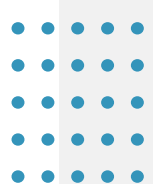
- Expands TLF Program to provide full forgiveness after 5 years of service, apply to ECE and administrators, pays monthly payments during the 5 years of service
- AASA endorsed

RAISE Act

- Provides a refundable tax credit for ECE and K-12 educators, up to \$15,000 annually

Educator Down Payment Assistance Act

- Establishes a new grant program to provide down payment assistance to full-time public-school educators and school staff who are first time homeowners. Up to \$25,000.



Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

Provides full forgiveness on federal student loan debt to individuals employed full-time in public service jobs (including all public-school staff) after 10 years or 120 qualifying payments. Since its inception, the program has been ineffective due to administrative burdens.

The Department of Education announced permanent changes to improve the program will go into effect July 2023.

These changes followed a temporary waiver that expired on Oct. 31 that loosened the requirements on the program. As a result of the waiver, 360,000 borrowers in public service received full forgiveness.

Public Health Emergency Has Ended

Children who were on Medicaid at the start of the pandemic will need to re-verify their eligibility and re-enroll in the program over the next year.

AASA and its partners are working to develop resources for schools to explain how families can re-enroll their children and keep their healthcare coverage via Medicaid.

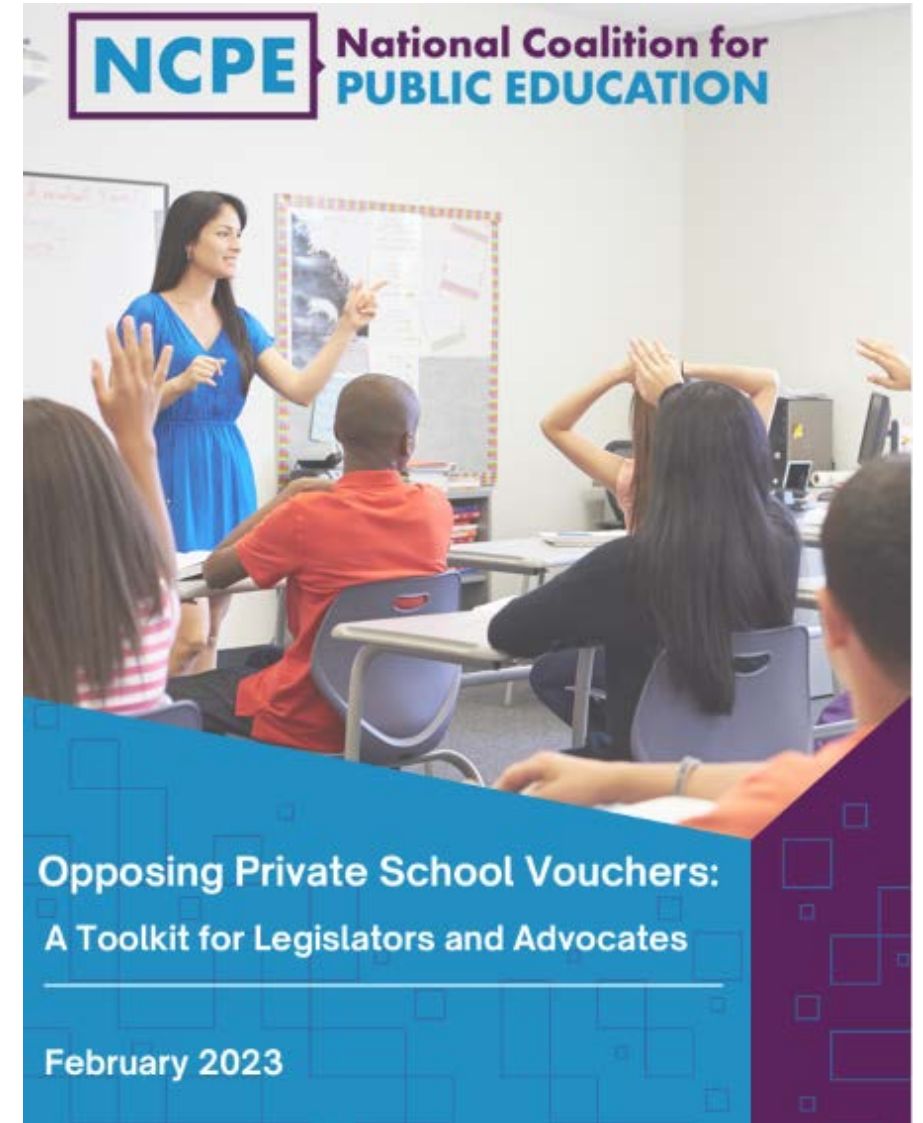


EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements

- Proposal to be released in 2023, set to go into effect on October 16, 2024
- Establishes requirements for water testing and remediation, if necessary
- Concerned with disparate impact on small and rural districts that operate its own water system,
- AASA recommended EPA require States to set-aside funding specifically for these districts to engage in remediation efforts and limit sampling to water that is ingested

2023 NCPE Toolkit For State Legislators and Advocates

- This new and updated toolkit, published in 2023, is designed as a resource to help legislators and pro-public school advocates oppose attempts to create or expand existing private school voucher programs.
- This toolkit focuses on today's coordinated campaigns against public education, and elevates accountability and discrimination as major problems in voucher programs.
- <https://www.ncpecoalition.org/toolkit>



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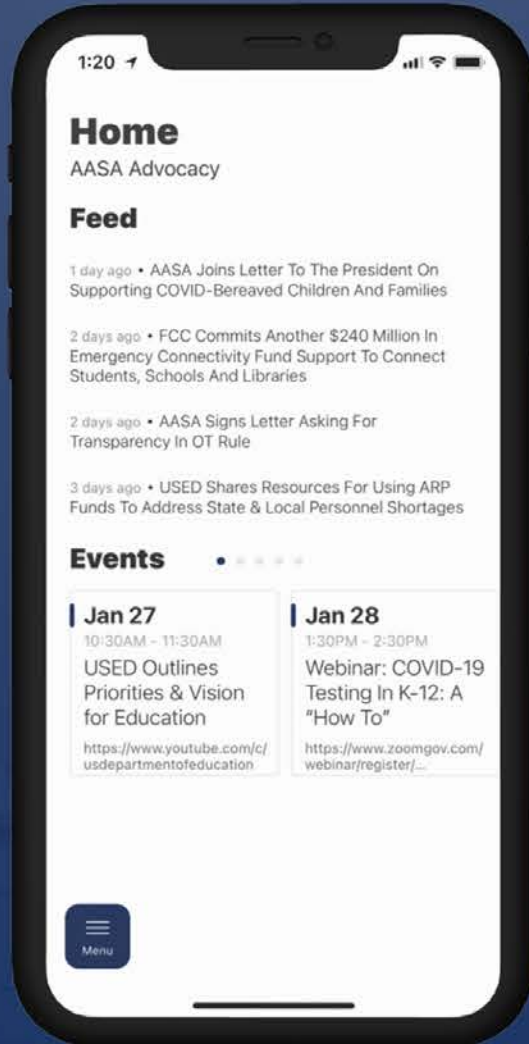


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LEGISLATIVE **ADVOCACY**

CONFERENCE

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July 11 - 13, 2023
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