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SCHOOL SAFETY COMMISSION

Last week (July 11), the [Federal Commission on School Safety](#) held its second meeting at the White House. The meeting was titled “Curating a Healthier and Safer Approach: Issues of Mental Health and Counseling for our Young.” Secretary DeVos (chairwoman), Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar (host), Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen heard from three different panels of experts on behavioral health integration in America’s schools ([media advisory](#) and [video](#)).

Panel 1, on integrating behavioral health services into schools, featured Dr. Sheryl Kataoka, a Professor-in-Residence in the University of California at Los Angeles Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Panel 2, on psychotropic medications for children, featured Dr. Gabrielle Carlson, a Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics and Director of the State University of New York Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Dr. Mark Olfson, a Professor of Psychiatry and Epidemiology, Mental Health Researcher, and Research Psychiatrist at Columbia University and New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Panel 3, on addressing confidentiality issues related to the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act* (HIPAA) and *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), featured Jennifer Mathis, Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, Doris Fuller, a mental illness researcher and advocate, Sonja Trainor, Managing Director of Legal Advocacy with the National School Boards Association, and John Vedri, Vice President of Policy at the Future of Privacy Forum.

Also, on July 9, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Jason Botel testified at a [field hearing](#) of the House Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held in Newark, New Jersey. The hearing was titled “Protecting Our Future: Addressing School Security Challenges in America.” In his [statement](#), Botel shared what the Department of Education has been doing to promote school-based safety and security and what it has learned about what works.

Additionally, on July 12, the U.S. Secret Service’s [National Threat Assessment Center](#) issued an operational guide with actionable steps that schools can take to develop comprehensive targeted violence prevention plans for conducting threat assessments ([guide](#), [brief](#), and [blog post](#)).

DISASTER RELIEF AID

Also last week, Secretary DeVos announced \$94,500 in new federal disaster assistance to [Georgia](#) under the [Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations program](#). This award provides initial funding to eligible state educational agencies (SEAs) to help meet the needs of local educational agencies (LEAs), charter schools, and

private schools in defraying expenses related to restarting school operations and restoring the normal learning environment for students and families impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and the 2017 California wildfires. Notably, the program's multi-phase award process offers subsequent opportunities for additional assistance through future applications.

Earlier, the Department made awards to other SEAs: California, Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands ([1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)).

For more information on all five disaster assistance programs, visit the agency's [Disaster Relief web page](#).

TRAVEL LOG

The Secretary traveled to Ohio this month to observe how the [Penta Career Center](#) is partnering with organizations throughout the local community to prepare students of all ages for success. In Toledo, she toured the Lucas County Correctional Treatment Facility and saw the high school equivalent classes provided by the center. In Perrysburg, she toured the center's headquarters and participated in a roundtable discussion with students, instructors, and business and community stakeholders ([photos](#)).

She also traveled to Erie, Pennsylvania, with U.S. Representative Mike Kelly to see how [Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School](#) is working with community partners to support students throughout the summer and in the school year ([photos](#)).

Furthermore, Senior Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump attended a discussion of education and workforce development programs at the Institute of Technology at Central High School in Syracuse, New York ([photos](#)), and visited the GenCyber Summer Camp at Prince George's Community College in Largo, Maryland ([photo](#)).

ESSA UPDATE

The Secretary recently announced the approval of several consolidated state plans under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). [California](#) and [Utah](#) ([press release](#)) were among the 34 states and Puerto Rico to submit their state plans by the final deadline of September 18, 2017. "I am pleased to approve Utah and California's plans, both of which comply with the requirements of the law," she said. "I look forward to seeing how these states utilize the flexibilities afforded in ESSA to rethink education and to improve outcomes for all students."

All approved ESSA state plans, as well as approval letters and peer review feedback, are available [here](#).

Meanwhile, in a [Dear Colleague Letter](#), the Secretary reminds Chief State School Officers that ESSA specifically prohibits employees, contractors, or agents from recommending an employee who has committed a sexual act with a student or minor. "For too long, and too often, teachers or other school staff who have engaged in sexual misconduct with a student or minor at one school have been able to obtain employment at another school, without the other school ever learning of the prior misconduct," she asserted. "This sometimes occurs because someone from the employee's prior school provides a recommendation that helps the employee obtain new employment. Section 8546 of the ESEA [*Elementary and Secondary Education Act*] seeks to end this abhorrent practice."

SUPPORTING AMERICA'S WORKERS

This week (July 19), President Trump signed an [Executive Order](#) to prioritize and expand workforce development. This order establishes the National Council for the American Worker, composed of senior Administration officials, who will develop a national strategy for training and re-training workers for high-demand industries and launch a nationwide campaign to highlight the growing vocational crisis and promote

careers in skilled trades, technology, and manufacturing. The order also forms an American Workforce Policy Advisory Board, comprising leaders from the private sector, educational institutions, philanthropic organizations, and state governments, who will work with the Administration to implement results-driven job training programs in classrooms and workplaces across the country.

At the signing event, the President also urged companies and trade groups to sign a “Pledge to America’s Workers” -- a commitment to expanding apprenticeships, increasing on-the-job training, and providing Americans from high school to near-retirement with opportunities to obtain skills to secure stable jobs and careers in the modern economy.

Twenty-three companies and associations were the first to sign the pledge at the White House. “By signing the Pledge to America’s Workers, these great companies...are affirming their commitment to train American workers for American jobs,” the President emphasized. “Because America’s strength, America’s heart, and America’s soul is found in our people” ([President’s remarks](#), [article](#), and [news clips](#)).

In advance of the signing event, Ivanka Trump penned an [op-ed](#) published in the *Wall Street Journal*. “Twenty-five years from now, America’s factories, labs, stores, and nearly every sector of our economy will have again been transformed from what we know today,” she declared. “But American workers have always seized change as an opportunity. They built the Model T, put men on the moon, and connected the world via the Internet. If we give American students and workers the training and opportunities that they need, they will continue to be the greatest pioneers of the 21st century.”

Moreover, the White House Council of Economic Advisors released a [report](#) outlining the importance of re-skilling America’s workers for the jobs of the future.

ODDS AND ENDS

- Secretary DeVos [congratulated](#) Scott Stump and James Blew on being confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education and Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, respectively.
- The National Science Foundation (NSF) and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) honored individuals and organizations with [Presidential awards](#) for excellence in teaching and mentoring in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- NSF, in consultation with the Department, NASA, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), announced the appointment of 18 members to an [advisory panel](#) to encourage U.S. scientific and technological innovations in education, as authorized by the *American Innovation and Competitiveness Act*.
- Successive Homeroom blog posts recap the [Cooking Up Change National Finals](#) at the Department; recount a rural school district’s embrace of the [Lean Six Sigma program](#) to advance a student-centered vision; and outline the many roads to becoming a [spelling bee champion](#).
- Don’t miss these new reports from the agency’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): [districts’ revenues and expenditures](#); [postsecondary tuition, fees, and degrees](#); [students working before, during, and after starting at a public, two-year institution](#); [bachelor degree recipients’ employment, education debt, and enrollment outcomes](#); and [sub-baccalaureate occupational education students](#).

QUOTE TO NOTE

“With today’s announcement, President Trump continues to make good on his promise to put America’s students and workers first. This Administration understands that a dynamic and changing economy requires dynamic and changing approaches to education and workforce development. The partnerships announced...involve those who are best-positioned to identify ideas and drive solutions. The President’s new initiative helps engage leaders across diverse sectors, in an effort to open new pathways and opportunities for America’s students who should be free to pursue successful careers and meaningful lives.”

-- Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos (7/19/18), in a [statement](#) on the President's Executive Order supporting America's workers

UPCOMING EVENTS

Registration is now open for the 2018 [Historically Black Colleges and Universities \(HBCU\) Week Conference](#), September 16-18 in Washington, D.C. Presidents and other representatives from HBCUs, federal agencies, corporations, and foundations will participate in discussions on significant issues of interest to the HBCU community.

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