HOUSE AND SENATE
HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION PRIORITIES

On June 24 and 25, the House Education and the Workforce Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, respectively, released summaries of their priorities for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The Senate has also introduced a full HEA reauthorization measure that is based on the priorities highlighted below. The House has indicated that it will consider a series of bills to reauthorize parts of HEA in the coming weeks and months but has not said whether it will introduce a full HEA reauthorization bill this Congress.

The chart below outlines the priority issues that are included in the recently released HEA reauthorization summaries. The House Education and the Workforce Committee's white paper can be found here; the Senate HELP Committee's summary can be found here.

Both Committees have held numerous hearings over the last year specifically on many of the issues listed below. In addition, the Committees also solicited feedback from stakeholders through open comment periods. The House Education and the Workforce Committee collected comments last summer from all stakeholders while the Senate used a process to collect comments on specific topics as they held hearings throughout the past months.

ISSUE	HOUSE PRIORITIES	SENATE PRIORITIES
Transparency for Students and Families	The House proposes to: 1. Enhance financial counseling services to help students better understand the options available to pay for their college education. The summary notes that this counseling should be more inclusive of additional student populations and include consumer-tested financial management information. 2. Update current policies to ensure that they take into account the "non-traditional" or contemporary student that tend to be older and have families or job. 3. Update the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data collection system to	The Senate proposes to: 1. Strengthen entrance and exit loan counseling to ensure more comprehensive information is given to borrowers. 2. Provide notification to middle and high school students of their potential eligibility for federal aid. 3. Provide better up-front information and disclosures to prospective students. 4. Standardize the financial award letter to help students and their families better understand financial aid packages.

	ensure it captures more than just first-time, full-time students. 4. Streamline existing transparency efforts at the federal level to ensure federal agencies coordinate more effectively and avoid duplication. 5. Prevent a federal government rating system, such as the Postsecondary Institution Ratings System (PIRS) that the Department of Education is developing.	
Data, Accountability and Burdensome Regulations	The House proposes to: 1. Strengthen teacher preparation programs and update data reporting requirements to ensure that they yield useful information that measures the effectiveness of the program without adding administrative burden on states and institutions. 2. Eliminate overly burdensome federal regulations such as the gainful employment, state authorization, and credit hour regulations. 3. Rebalance the responsibility for program integrity to ensure that federal policies allow the accreditation process to remain rigorous, transparent and open to new ideas.	The Senate proposes to: 1. Authorize programs to reform and improve teacher and school leader preparation. 2. Provide students and policymakers with more meaningful disclosures and accountability metrics from schools, including loan repayment rates. 3. Establish a risk-sharing commission to explore holding low-performing institutions financially responsible for poor student outcomes. 4. Change the 90-10 rule for for-profit schools to 85-15. 5. Guarantee that federal education dollars are not used on advertising and marketing. 6. Create a student complaint system to better track harmful practices.
Affordability, Access and Completion	The House proposes to: 1. Encourage online learning by updating recent regulations to make it easier for students to take advantage of online education. 2. Encourage a competency-based education demonstration project to allow the Department	The Senate proposes to: 1. Create a State-Federal College Affordability Partnership to increase state investment in public higher education. 2. Support community college and industry partnerships.

	of Education to waive statutory and regulatory impediments to competency-based education. 3. Reform the current college access programs to better serve low-income and first generation students and maintain institutional aid programs.	3. Expand access to dual enrollment and early college high school programs.

Financial Aid and Student Loans	The House proposes to:
	1. Consolidate existing federal aid grant programs into one Pell Grant program and existing loan programs into one Stafford loan.
	2. Create a direct link between the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and the Internal Revenue Service.
	3. Use income data from two years prior to the date of application, also known as prior-prior year.
	4. Continue support for the Federal Work Study program.
	5. Streamline repayment plans into two options:
	    a. Standard 10-year repayment plan or
	    b. Modified income-based repayment plan.
	6. Create the "Flex Pell Grant" to allow students to receive a certain amount of Pell funding to use over six-years that can be drawn down as needed until the funds are exhausted or the student completes his or her academic program.
		The Senate proposes to:
		1. Strengthen the student loan serving standards by creating "common-sense" consumer protections.
		2. Reform the Title IV disbursement process to protect students from unnecessary and high fees.
		3. Streamline repayment plans to create a single income-based repayment option.
		4. Help severely delinquent borrowers avoid default by automatically enrolling them into income-based repayment.
		5. Allow private student loans to be discharged in bankruptcy.
		6. Reform abuses in the collections process and reduce unfair fees that hurt vulnerable borrowers.
		7. Reinstate the year-round Pell Grant.
		8. Eliminate origination fees on federal Direct Loans.