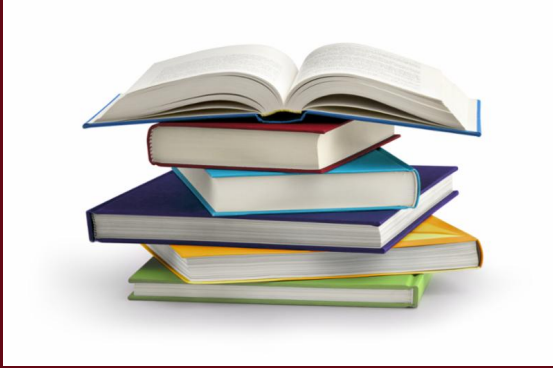


# Eugene & Associates, PC

January 9th, 2022

## January News & Information



### Your source for local & national Educational News!

This month's newsletter features information on Covid-19 Relief Funds, a question in our "Superintendent's Corner", news of our firm's expansion and more!

### What about Education? The Infrastructure Bill's Impact On Schools

There has been endless debate over the infamous Infrastructure Bill and its content. But the main question stays strong in all our minds—what about the educational system?



The Infrastructure Bill was first proposed by President Biden in 2021 and was signed into law on Monday, November 15th. However, education seems to have been bypassed from the bill and schools are relying solely on the Covid-19 relief funds.

#### Here is everything you need to know:

Congress has approved that more than \$190 billion will go to help America's school system through the pandemic. The money is aimed at keeping schools open. The funds will go toward the following:

- Purchasing PPE
- Upgrading ventilation systems
- Increasing summer school opportunities

After spending the money on the aforementioned, reports suggest there continue to be billions more remaining. Multiple school systems have not yet determined how and where to use the new round of funds. Congress gave schools 3 years to make the decision on where funds will be allocated.

#### Keeping Schools Open and Safe

The funds were approved by Congress to keep schools open and safe during the pandemic. Reports suggest remote learning can have devastating consequences to the learning curriculum and ability. Although schools have taken proper precautions to keep kids and school staff safe, many continue to face challenges as Delta has now been taken over by Omicron. Many school districts have gone remote to assess the safety as Omicron rages throughout the U.S. Vaccines have additionally been approved for children under 12 years old in an attempt to combat the new mutation.

#### How Much Money Per School?

The total amount of funds per school varies. Title I funding states the specific ways in which the funds will be distributed per school system. Further, low-income schools that qualify as Title I will receive more funds. However, several poverty-stricken districts will not be receiving any covid relief funding. The good news is they may be eligible for additional funds as per the state's choice i.e., ESSER I, II, and III in Texas.

The CARES Act provided \$13 billion for schools K-12 followed by an extra \$54 billion. Private analyses shared that the American Rescue Plan funded \$128 billion to which a large amount was already spent. The money had been spent on:

- Learning management software to assist with at-home learning
- PPE
- Proper cleaning supplies
- Assistance with wages and salaries

#### How Can Schools Spend the Money?

20% of the funds are to be used toward learning loss from remote learning during the pandemic. This includes tutoring, extended school and summer school programs. Further restrictions beyond mental health services, cleaning supplies, renovations, a one-time bonus for teachers and ventilation options are limited as the funds can be disbursed at the schools' discretion. Public input and school boards are allowed to pitch in ideas where the funds should be utilized. States are also permitted to keep 10% and choose where to disburse those funds.

*Superintendent's Corner*



This month we want to highlight a question from one of our Superintendent's:

***"What's the status of the open meetings act?"***

I am writing to provide an update on whether suspension of certain provisions of the open meetings act, such as the waiver of an in-person quorum, remain in effect. As of September 1, 2021 at 12:01 am *all provisions of the Open Meetings Act will be in effect and any suspended provisions will be reinstated* including the provision found in Tex. Gov't Code § 551.001 (4) (B)(ii) requiring that the "quorum of members of the governmental body is *present*," in order to qualify as a meeting and confer decision-making authority on the body, i.e., voting on agenda items that bind the Board.

However, the Open Meetings Act does authorize a member or employee of a governmental body to participate remotely through video conference with the caveat that a quorum of the Board's members must still be *physically present* at the location provided on the public meeting notice. Put plainly, a school district may conduct meetings "semi-virtually" as long as a quorum of the board is physically present at the posted location.

If you are not aware of the reinstatement of all provisions of the Open Meetings Act, dated September 1, 2021, I would advise placing a ratification resolution on the next board meeting's agenda to validate any items previously consented to from September 1, 2021 until present. A ratification resolution addressing any previous agenda items that required a vote to bind the Board, can be drafted at your convenience.

**If you have a question you'd like to see answered in this column please call us at 512-662-7415 or email us at [pbostic@deugenelaw.com](mailto:pbostic@deugenelaw.com).**

## ***Eugene & Associates Monthly Spotlight***



### **Darrick Eugene Named One Of Top Influential Lawyers In Austin**

#### **2021 Most Influential Lawyers/ Up & Coming Lawyers!**

Presented annually, the TOP 10 Lawyer Award recognizes ten Black professionals in the legal field who have achieved professional excellence and have actively paved the way to success for others.

To read more [click here!](#)

### **Firm Announces Major Expansion**

**Eugene & Associates is expanding with the addition of a new associate attorney, Paige Bostic, & administrative assistant, Celena Harvey.**

Ms. Bostic graduated Summa Cum Laude from Thurgood Marshall School of Law & has an extensive background in education. Ms. Harvey received an associates degree from Texas Southern University in Child and Family Development.

*"With these significant investments in our service infrastructure, Eugene and Associates is ready to make the next big leap," Darrick Eugene said. "And we are committed to ensuring that leap will not only benefit our clients and the members of our firm but the community as well. That's not just what we do; that's who we are."*



**For questions or more info, contact us!**

**[info@deugenelaw.com](mailto:info@deugenelaw.com)**

### **WHY CHOOSE US?**

Eugene & Associates, PC, is a boutique law firm specializing in education law and regulation, public finance, renewable energy and nonprofits. At Eugene & Associates, PC, we strive to bring added value to our client partners through sound legal advice, responsive business practices and a personal touch to achieve successful business outcomes.

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