

Happy Holidays!!! May they be merry and bright! I hope you find time to relax and enjoy each moment. During the holiday season it's easy to forget that sometimes the best gift of all is simply the gift of time. So, that's my wish for each of you, the gift of time. Time to relax and unwind, time with family and friends and time to reflect and look forward to the upcoming year.

I am already looking forward to 2018. Here's what's on the horizon

1. A chance to make changes to CLASS. The Office of Head Start published a request for comment on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Condition of the Designation Renewal System (DRS) in the [Federal Register](#). Comments may be submitted on <https://www.regulations.gov/> and are due by Feb. 6, 2018. To summarize, the Office of Head Start is requesting a "call for comments" about the use of the CLASS tool in the Designation Renewal System (DRS) and is considering the following three changes:

1. Removal of the lowest 10% mandatory re-compete provision,
2. Raising the minimum thresholds for the Classroom Organization and Emotional Support domains to a score of 5,
3. Removal of the minimum threshold for the Instructional Support domain, and instead establishing Secretarial authority to set the Instructional Support domain minimum threshold by August 1st of each fiscal year.

We will be working with NHSA! NHSA has suggested that they write one general set of comments and that we all sign on to their written feedback. They have just released a survey.

"Your input is needed in a survey on CLASS in DRS. The administration released a Request for Information (RFI) about the potential changes last week, and we have until February 6th to submit comments. As you know, NHSA and the Head Start community have long been pushing for changes to the way CLASS is used in the DRS, and this RFI is the first step to making the changes we've long wanted. If we want to be successful, we will need to speak with a strong, united, and proactive voice. That starts with your input into our CLASS in DRS survey. We want to hear all of your feedback and your best ideas so we can come forward together in support of the best changes that have been sourced from across the country".

[That starts with your input into our CLASS in DRS survey. \(http://click.email-nhsa.org/?qs=a08a365e0415637201ce732a72ca2444378b78d13a0953e842b3445b20c22f74e1ca01125868e31a85a3e59522b49f22\)](http://click.email-nhsa.org/?qs=a08a365e0415637201ce732a72ca2444378b78d13a0953e842b3445b20c22f74e1ca01125868e31a85a3e59522b49f22). **Please complete the survey as soon as you can. The survey will close on Friday December 22nd**

In January you'll be able to sign on to the comments that synthesize all these ideas. In case you want more information before you take the survey, NHSA hosted a webinar with more details about the RFI and NHSA's plan for drafting comments - you can still watch the recording. . After you take it, please be sure to forward it to all of your Head Start colleagues for their input too! The more people we hear from, the better our ideas can be.

2. Congress is expected to vote on tax reform legislation, starting on Tuesday (December 19th) in the House of Representatives, and on Wednesday (December 20th) in the Senate. After the tax bill, Congress will turn its attention to funding the government past December 22nd through what is known as a “continuing resolution” (CR). Last Friday, the U.S. House of Representative and Senate conference committee released the final version of tax reform legislation following formal negotiations. The House and Senate will now both vote on passage of this final bill, which cannot be amended or procedurally delayed in either the House or Senate. Senate Republican leaders are confident that they have the necessary 51 votes for final passage.

In addition, Congress must act by the end of the week to pass legislation that will keep the federal government funded and operating. The House is considering a year-long extension of defense funding, with a temporary continuing resolution for non-defense discretionary spending; while the Senate has expressed a desire to move a temporary spending bill for all programs, pending a final omnibus spending bill to be passed in January. It’s likely that the Senate's approach will prevail, but nothing will be certain until Thursday (21st) or Friday (22nd) of this week.

3. Teaching Strategies GOLD – I am looking forward to having all the bugs worked out and a fully functioning system to support each of you. We held our second webinar today with Teaching Strategies. Lots of conversation and an update from Teaching Strategies. Let’s make sure our voices are heard and they continue to make fixes.

4. I am also looking forward the IHSA Annual Conference in February (February 21st – 23rd, 2018) at the Embassy Suites in East Peoria. We have lots of in-depth sessions on key topics and amazing keynote speakers. We even have a Champagne Dinner to raise money for the \$2.00 Per Child Campaign. Loads of fun! Lots of great interesting and entertaining activities too! Our theme this year is “Race for Excellence - Every Second Counts”. I am looking forward to seeing you there!

Have a wonderful holiday! Happy New Year!

Take care,

Lauri