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The Education Report, a weekly publication of WPLLC, provides an executive summary of public policy issues affecting American education. **Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:**

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1. Budget and Appropriations

The quiet hum of staff meetings, catching up and preparing that enveloped Capitol Hill last week was replaced by frenzy, hearings, posturing, reporters and numerous constituent meetings this week. There were lines of people out the doors of the Congressional office buildings and reporters jockeying for photos of representatives of Toyota who appeared before a Congressional panel. Thursday's White House Bipartisan Summit on Health Care contributed to the cacophony as well. The frenzy also spread to education issues as the House Education and Labor Committee held a hearing on charter schools; the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee held another on the Workforce Investment Act; and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan appeared before the House Budget Committee.

The week began with a bang and got the attention of education advocates and policy makers as Secretary Duncan and President Obama visited with the nation's governors at their annual gathering and highlighted the Administration's education priorities. Governors heard what many had read in the FY 2011 education spending request—that the Administration intends to pursue reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The President and Secretary congratulated the governors that are coming together on the Common Core Standards Initiative, and said that changes to current law could include a requirement that states who want certain formula grant funds (such as Title I money) will have to commit to adopting and implementing college- and career-ready standards. While this suggestion did not directly suggest making a long-established, formula-based educational equity program a competitive one, the remarks certainly provoked a reaction in education policy circles.

Secretary Duncan spent over two hours with House Budget Committee on Thursday, and he faced a number of questions about the Department's spending and reform plans. A number of committee members were particularly concerned about the fate of Teach for America—a program well liked on Capitol Hill. The budget request, if adopted, would require the program to compete for funds versus receiving the non-competitive support it enjoys now as an authorized

program. Other areas of concern included the appropriate balance between federal and local policy decisions; how states will deal with the “funding cliff” they will face after all of the stimulus money is disbursed; and whether some of the proposed program consolidations would dilute the intentions of the underlying programs.

Secretary Duncan will be appearing before other Congressional panels in coming weeks to discuss education spending and reform plans. He will appear before the House Education and Labor Committee on March 3, and the Senate and House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees on March 17 and 18, respectively. He will surely face additional questions about the Administration’s plans for reauthorizing ESEA; funding issues states and districts will face after the stimulus funding is spent; and how his vision for K-12 education reform and significant changes to higher education programs will be affected if Congress fails to pass a new version of ESEA or the stalled Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act legislation.

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2. Senate Holds WIA Hearing on Workforce Development

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act isn’t the only major piece of legislation up for reauthorization this year. On Wednesday, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee held a hearing titled, “A Stronger Workforce Investment System for a Stronger Economy”, to examine the future of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) noted that job creation is the number one focus for Congress in 2010, and “developing and maintaining a highly trained, highly educated workforce is paramount for our economic success.” Harkin also emphasized his interest in ensuring that all individuals, especially individuals with disabilities, have access to comprehensive services offered by one-stop centers, noting that 64 percent of individuals with disabilities who want to work are not employed. Ranking Member Mike Enzi (R-WY) agreed that completing action on WIA reauthorization is critical, as is creating jobs and a skilled workforce. Enzi noted that the majority of new jobs created (about 64 percent) as the country continues to recover from the recession will be for individuals with “middle skills”, meaning workers will need a high school diploma and some post secondary experience credential.

Witness Anthony Carnevale, Director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce said that, “the mismatch between job growth and skill is the biggest growing problem in the American economy,” but praised the Obama Administration for beginning to break down the program silos between the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and creating “Workforce Innovation Partnerships.” Joseph Carbone, President and Chief Executive Officer of The WorkPlace, Inc., southwestern Connecticut’s Workforce Investment Board (WIB), opined that “the workforce investment system is fundamentally sound but imperfect,” acting as a neutral broker necessary to bring together diverse partners. Cheryl Feldman, Director of the District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, highlighted the integral connection between WIA Title I job training systems and Title II literacy systems. She stressed that WIA unintentionally has created barriers and that these silos need to be broken down so industry-specific workforce and education programs can more effectively work together in a sector-based approach. Robert Templin, Jr., President of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), was the hearing’s last witness and stressed the need for an integrated workforce development system that offers a “seamless delivery of services to address employment, education and skill needs of workers, job seekers and employers.” Noting that community colleges are the primary “on ramp” for the majority of low-wage and first-generation college goers, and are a public asset

in moving low-skill workers into higher-paying careers, he argued that WIA does not adequately leverage community colleges as full partners in the workforce development system. Highlighting innovative partnerships between NOVA and community-based non-profit job training programs, Templin stressed that WIA funds must be flexible and respond to regional and local needs, assuring the proper mix of education and training to meet the needs of the local business community. For more information on the hearing go to:
<http://help.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=99586896-5056-9502-5d82-cabe2d595170>

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3. In Brief

FLURRY OF ARRA-RELATED ANNOUNCEMENTS EXPECTED

In a town that can see seasons last for years as federal officials predict when certain announcements are made or guidance released, Department of Education (ED) officials are indicating that the first round of winners of Race to the Top awards could be announced in the next few weeks. Staff is warning the forty-one applicants that there will be “very few” winners in this first round of awards. That will leave the would-be losers deciding whether to apply again for the second phase of awards. Related to other America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) programs, the Department of Education today released proposed guidance for the Teacher Incentive Fund program (<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-3963.pdf>), and invited interested parties to comment on the guidance by March 29, 2010. The community is still anxiously awaiting the final guidance and application for the Investing in Innovation (i3) program. Staff indicates its release is imminent. In the meantime, ED has set up the virtual space it said it would allow educators to share innovative ideas. To learn more about the “Innovation Portal”, visit <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/02/new-open-innovation-portal-awaits-ideas/>.

HOUSE EDUCATION AND LABOR COMMITTEE EXAMINES CHARTER SCHOOLS

On Wednesday, the House Education and Labor Committee kicked off its hearings regarding the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by focusing on charter schools. Conceding that charter schools are no “silver bullet” for fixing struggling schools, witnesses at the hearing urged lawmakers to explore ways to expand access to high-performing charter schools as they reauthorize ESEA and argued that high performing charter schools offer many low-income and minority students the opportunity to receive a high quality education. Today more than 1.5 million students, three percent of all schoolchildren, attend nearly 5,000 charter schools in 40 states and the District of Columbia. “High performing charter schools can be laboratories for innovative reforms,” said Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA). “As we work to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we need to be open to bold ideas that will help fix our schools, get us closer to our goal of delivering a world-class education to every student in America and ensure all students have access to these innovative opportunities.” The hearing specifically focused on legislation introduced by Representative Jared Polis (D-CO), the All Students Achieving Through Reform Act (HR 4330), which would help expand access to and improve the quality of charter schools. The bill would allow states and school districts to compete for funds to help replicate and grow successful charter schools. For an archived web cast of the hearing, and witness testimony, visit:
<http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/2010/02/hr-4330-the-all-students-achie.shtml>.

NEW MULTIMEDIA EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TARGETS HISPANIC COMMUNITY

On Tuesday, Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis attended an event at the National Press Club with Melinda French Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Cesar Conde, President of Univision Networks, to announce a new multi-million dollar, three-year national campaign to promote Hispanic academic achievement, and college readiness, access, and completion. The campaign, entitled in Spanish "The Moment is Now," comes as statistics show Hispanic high school and college graduation rates are far below the national average, and that the Hispanic unemployment rate is among the nation's highest at 12.6 percent. With Hispanics making up about a fifth of the nation's kindergarten through 12th graders, that's a major concern for the Nation as a whole, said Conde. The campaign will focus on fostering a strong culture of academic achievement and college aspiration among the U.S. Hispanic community. Univision will use its television and radio networks, and its mobile and Internet platforms to reach out to Hispanic students, parents and caretakers and the broader community. Univision worked with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on the development of the campaign, and the Foundation will help evaluate and make adjustments to its work over time. According to Gates, "This partnership with Univision will not only inspire Hispanic students and their parents and community to aspire to a college education, it will give them access to the information and tools they need to make their dream a reality." Secretary Duncan added, "President Obama and I believe that reducing dropout rates and boosting student achievement among Hispanic students is absolutely essential to the future of our economy and the future of our nation." The government will help connect Univision with experts, such as federal officials, educators and grass-roots groups, which can provide examples of best practices the company can highlight. For more information, visit www.univision.net.

HOUSE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE HOSTS OSTP DIRECTOR HOLDREN

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Science and Technology held a hearing to discuss the Administration's FY 2011 budget request with the president's top science advisor, Dr. John P. Holdren, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). "Recognizing that we are in a time of constrained budgets and some very tough choices had to be made, I was very happy to see strong increases for research and development in the president's budget," said Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN). "It is during these difficult economic times that we have both an imperative and an opportunity to invest in science, technology and STEM education, which lay the foundation for future discoveries and transformative technologies and-through them-sustained economic growth." The hearing focused on the Administration's proposed FY 2011 funding for federal research, development, demonstration, and commercial application programs, in particular at agencies within the jurisdiction of the Committee. Members and Dr. Holdren discussed the status of programs authorized in the 2007 America COMPETES Act, as reflected in the Administration's budget request, in preparation for reauthorization. The FY 2011 request would keep the three science agencies authorized in COMPETES-the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science-on the doubling path which was enacted in 2007 and initiated through appropriations in 2009. This was the first in a series of hearings the Committee will be holding in the coming weeks to examine the Administration's budget request. For more information, visit: <http://science.house.gov/press/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=2750>.

FIRST FOCUS HOLDS BRIEFING ON FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN CHILDREN

Today, First Focus held a briefing to discuss how federal programs that improve the lives of America's children's are faring in comparison to all other programs in the federal budget. The briefing included a presentation of *Kids' Share: An Analysis of Federal Expenditures on*

Children Through 2008, the organization's third annual examination of federal spending trends and tax policies that support and impact children and families. The report presents findings on expenditures in 2008 on children, historic trends across the budget, historic trends within children's expenditures and projections through 2019. Julia Isaacs, a co-author of the report and Child & Family Policy Fellow at the Brookings Institution, noted that less than one-tenth of the federal budget was spent on children in 2008—\$295 billion out of a total of \$2.983 trillion in outlays. In addition, since 1960, the children's share of the federal budget has diminished by a quarter, while spending on the non-child portions of entitlement programs has more than doubled. Isaacs also observed that federal outlays on children were up in 2008 and will rise further in 2009 and 2010, but then will fall back below 2 percent of GDP over the next decade, after the expiration of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). With regard to federal funding for children in the immediate future, First Focus also provided at the briefing a "first look" of how children would fare under the President's FY 2011 Budget request. First Focus asserts that children would receive a raw increase of \$20.55 billion over last year's levels and total spending on children is up 9.86 percent over FY 2010 levels. To access the *Kids' Share: An Analysis of Federal Expenditures on Children Through 2008*, visit <http://www.firstfocus.net/pages/3654>.

FEA HOLDS BRIEFING ON PROVIDING EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

On Monday, the Forum on Educational Accountability (FEA) held a briefing titled, "All Children Deserve an Equitable Opportunity to Learn," to examine certain opportunity gaps and how to close them as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is reauthorized. Molly Hunter, Director of Education Justice at the Education Law Center, stated that while many states have been pushed to create higher standards, too many states have not, nor have they received the required financial support to ensure students have access to resources needed to meet them. Referring to the availability of curricula and instruction needed to meet state standards as "Opportunities to Learn" (OTL), the FEA has developed specific policy recommendations. They include funding for equitable, school-based resources and a federally funded, biannual state-by-state report system that includes data on equitable funding goals and efforts to reach them. Dr. Patricia Gándara, Professor at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Co-Director of the Civil Rights Project at UCLA spoke about the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). According to Gándara, more than 10.5 million US students are ELLs with different needs with regards to OTL. She recommended ESEA be amended to provide ELLs with bilingual instructors and appropriate learning materials. Dr. John Jackson, President of the Schott Foundation for Public Education, took issue with the approach taken in the Race to the Top program as authorized in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Jackson argued that it is inappropriate to limit funding via a competition that identifies "winner and losers" if President Obama views education as a civil right. He expressed support for common state guidelines that take into account both outputs (academic achievement) and resources available for necessary inputs (teacher quality, college preparatory curriculum, primary education, etc.). Bethany Little, Chief Education Counsel on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, responded to the presenters and emphasized the need to explain OTL in ways that help people understand the collective benefit of improving education. Little said Congress is a reflection of the people, and if the public lacks the will to improve education, Congress will continue to respond with inaction. For more information, visit: <http://www.edaccountability.org/>.

CCSSO AND NGA EXAMINE ASSESSMENTS TO SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING

On Monday, the Council of Chief State School Officers, in conjunction with the National Governors Association, held a briefing titled, “Performance Counts: Assessment Systems that Support High Quality Learning,” to release a paper authored by Lind Darling-Hammond, a Professor of Education and Co-Director of the School Redesign Network at Stanford University. The paper describes what a student assessment system could look like if built from the principles and best practices of current educational research and educational systems. Specifically, the paper outlines three areas: 1) lessons learned from best practices in the United States and from other countries; 2) potential responsibilities for different actors in the system; and, 3) possible steps for consortia of states to create a new system. Linda Darling-Hammond outlined her view of a comprehensive assessment system that includes summative and formative tests aimed at measuring critical thinking and higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for the 21st century marketplace. A panel of experts then spoke on the development and implementation of new student assessment systems grounded in high quality learning. The panelists recognized that the work of 48 states on common standards is essential to reform of the education system, but the effort must include improved assessments, new curriculum, and better teacher preparation and professional development. Robert Linn of the University of Colorado noted that in designing new assessments, they should be fused with standards and curriculum to ensure that what is being tested is a true reflection of critical skills and knowledge that is needed to succeed beyond the classroom. Roberto Rodriguez, Senior Education Advisor to the White House, also a panelist at the event, urged states to use \$350 million in funding set aside as part of Race to the Top initiative to build transformative assessment systems. To read the full paper, visit <http://www.ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=381>.

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4. New Publications

“Responding to the Needs of Young Latino Children: State Efforts to Build Comprehensive Early Learning Systems” (February 2010)

<http://www.nclr.org/content/publications/detail/61855/>.

“MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Collaborating for Student Success” (February 2010)

<http://www.metlife.com/about/corporate-profile/citizenship/metlife-foundation/metlife-survey-of-the-american-teacher.html>.

“The Importance of Literacy for Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System” (February 2010)

http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/docs/literacy_brief_20100120.pdf.

“Performance Counts: Assessment Systems that Support High-Quality Learning” (February 2010) <http://www.ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=381>.

“America’s Private Public Schools” (February 2010)

http://edexcellence.net/doc/201002_PrivatePublicSchool_final.pdf.

“Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better” (February 2010)

www.edsource.org/middle-grades-study.html.

“Broadband Adoption and Use in America” (February 2010)

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-296442A1.pdf.

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5. In the News

“Business Principles Won’t Work for School Reform, Former Supporter Ravitch Says” (2/26/10)
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/25/AR2010022505543.html>

“Online Courses Can Reduce the Costly Sting of College (2/26/10)
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/25/AR2010022506012.html?hpid=sec-education>

“All Teachers Fired at RI School. Will That Happen Elsewhere?” (2/25/10)
<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2010/0225/All-teachers-fired-at-R.I.-school.-Will-that-happen-elsewhere>

“Tracking the Stimulus: Some Jobs Cost More to Create” USA Today (2/25/10)
http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-02-24-stim-jobs_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip.

“Duncan Questioned on Move to Cut Funding for Teach for America” (2/25/10)
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/25/AR2010022503842.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

“As US Aid Grows, Oversight is Urged for Charter Schools” (2/24/10)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/25/education/25educ.html>

“Obama Pitches Education Proposal to Governors” (2/22/10)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/23/education/23educ.html>

“Obama Wants Education Benchmarks to Meet Higher Standard” (2/22/10)
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/21/AR2010022103691_pf.html

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6. About WPLLC

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