

MAY 29, 2009Krista Heckler, Editor
kheckler@wpllc.net

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 Congress left town last Friday for a week-long recess just after passing a supplemental spending bill to support US wars overseas for FY 2009. When they return, appropriators will have to conference that bill while they also turn their attention to FY 2010 spending measures. Next week, Secretary Duncan will be on Capitol Hill to testify before the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees. This marks the real beginning of the appropriations process for education. House Appropriations leaders are set to begin markups in the various subcommittees next week as well. House leaders have said repeatedly that they would like to pass all 12 FY 2010 spending bills before the start of the August recess. That's eight short weeks away. And there are other major bills moving in that chamber—health care reform and climate change legislation top authorizing priorities. As a result, Democratic leadership has told the rank and file members to expect full weeks and votes late on Fridays in the coming months.

The education community has spent the last few weeks trying to devise a strategy for the FY 2010 budget cycle. While appreciative of the funding provided to education programs in the stimulus bill, there is not much in the FY 2010 proposed budget to embrace. The overall investment in education is larger, but the increases mostly go to new programs that give the Secretary much discretion—discretion that makes beneficiaries of long-standing programs somewhat nervous. And the proposed cut to Title I spending still stings. The next few weeks will force the community to find their footing in the appropriations debate.

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2. EPI Hosts Event to Examine Pay for Performance in Teaching

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) hosted an event this week to discuss a new study that arguably reveals significant downsides of what it calls “reward-punishment systems based on

quantitative outcomes”. The study examines the implementation of various compensation schemes in the public and private sectors and points to what it considers a faulty premise for embracing pay for performance for teachers as a solution to what so-called “ineffective teaching”.

The study suggests that pay for performance systems base their support on two assumptions: first, that merit pay is long-established and widespread in the private sector, and second, that students’ test scores reliably gauge how well teachers are doing their jobs. Both assumptions, according to the study, *Teachers, Performance Pay, and Accountability: What Education Should Learn from Other Sectors*, are faulty. The authors of the study examine the evidence that underlies these assumptions, concluding that the use of merit pay systems based on quantitative measures is fraught with “perverse” consequences that adversely affect the larger goal of improving the quality of services and outcomes and that such systems are not widespread among private sector professionals.

During a panel discussion, Janet Hansen from the Committee on Economic Development, joined the authors of the study, and pointed to the work of teachers and teacher unions in Denver, Colorado as an example of how pay for performance for teachers might work well. She shared a rubric used in Denver that rewards teachers for many behaviors and outcomes, and compared it to familiar teacher salary schedules that, in her opinion, do not adequately consider behavior that betters classroom instruction. She also argued that the benefit of teacher experience for students levels out after five to six years, and that often teachers pursue programs of study while teaching that do not necessarily benefit students, yet they are rewarded monetarily for that pursuit.

The question and answer discussion that completed the event made it evident that there are no clear answers in this debate. There are strong advocates for implementing these pay structures in teaching, but others believe that the socioeconomic factors that influence performance of public education warrant far more attention.

This study is the first in a planned series. For more information on the study and the series, visit [http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/books-teachers performance pay and accountability/](http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/books-teachers-performance-pay-and-accountability/).

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3. In Brief

SECRETARY DUNCAN CONTINUES LISTENING TOUR

As part of his “Listening and Learning” tour, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan traveled to Billings, MT this week to meet with students, community leaders and elected officials to hear their ideas for education reform and how the federal government can help advance reforms in their community and throughout the state. In Montana, Secretary Duncan visited with Native American youth, who said that achievement expectations for them were very low; they asked that the bar be raised. Officials and tribal leaders also raised concerns about parental involvement, saying it needs significant improvement, and cited examples of low attendance at the school's parent meetings. Last week Secretary Duncan visited Vermont and learned about unique partnerships between schools and local farmers that provide healthy lunches, made with locally grown ingredients. Duncan then held a discussion on the topic of quality

nutrition and quality learning. Duncan intends to visit at least 15 states in the coming months as part of the listening tour. Other states targeted for potential events include Michigan, California, Wyoming, New Jersey, Tennessee, North Carolina, Washington D.C., Ohio, Indiana, Florida, Utah, and Alaska. Additional states and events may be added during the course of the tour. Duncan wants to insure that he visits a mix of rural, urban, suburban and ethnically diverse districts and hears from a broad range of stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, administrators and community and business leaders. For more information visit: <http://www.edgoblogs.org/duncan/topic/listening-tour/>

ED AWARDING SFS FUNDING TO STATES

Since passage of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*, the Department of Education has been awarding the State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) Funds made available by ARRA to eligible states that have completed Part 1 of the State Stabilization Application. This week, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that that \$434 million of ARRA funds has been made available for Puerto Rico. These funds will help reform education and protect the jobs of teachers. Puerto Rico will be eligible to apply for another \$214 million this fall. Also receiving ARRA funds this week for completing Part 1 of the State Stabilization Application were: Washington with \$672 million, Massachusetts with \$666 million, Idaho with \$165 million, and Virginia with \$806 million. Last week, over \$1 billion in SFS Funds was made available for North Carolina. So far the Department of Education has awarded over \$18 billion of SFS Funds to 22 states. Secretary Duncan explained that the awarding of SFS Funds “is part of the single largest boost in education funding in recent history.” For more information on states that have submitted applications for SFS Funds, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/statestabilization/resources.html>. To view information on what states are doing with the funds visit: <http://www.edgoblogs.org/duncan/2009/04/state-stabilization-fund-update/>.

MIDDLE-CLASS TASK FORCE ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP TO FOSTER JOB GROWTH AND GREEN ECONOMY

During Tuesday’s meeting of the Middle-Class Task Force in Denver, CO, Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced the Department's participation in a new interagency partnership to foster job growth for a new green economy. Along with the Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Shaun Donovan, and Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, the Department of Education has committed to developing new policies, proposals and ideas to help the middle class. The Department of Labor and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are partnering to bring training and employment to public housing residents. Additionally, Secretaries Duncan, Chu and Solis announced a collaboration to make it a major priority to “institutionalize cross-agency communication about private sector jobs created.” According to the Departments, the jobs created will be connected to training programs and career pathways that can provide transitions for adults between employment and for students from high school to postsecondary education and into careers. Through this partnership, the Department of Energy will identify ways to notify the Department of Labor as funding commitments are made and jobs are created. The Department of Labor will, in turn, provide the information to local One Stop Employment Centers that will connect unemployed workers with jobs, training and education opportunities. The Department of Education will help identify the educational resources for training to ensure that educational opportunities linked to job creation are comprehensive. For more information visit: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/05/05272009.html>

TREASURY DISCUSSES FINANCIAL LITERACY AND EDUCATION

On Wednesday, the Treasury Department's Financial Literacy and Education Commission held their first meeting of 2009. Commission members and the public gathered to hear updates from various subcommittees on steps that federal agencies and private organizations are taking to improve financial and economic literacy education in the U.S. Jeanne Hogarth, representing the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve explained that they are developing financial literacy ads to raise public awareness. The Federal Reserve website also provides a wide variety of financial literacy tools, including a credit card repayment calculator and a series of tips for avoiding foreclosure scams. Hogarth explained that the Federal Reserve is very interested in partnering with other federal agencies as well as actors in the education, business, and military communities. Carolyn Warren explained that the Department of Education has been working with the Council for Economic Education (formerly the National Council for Economic Education) on implementing the Excellence in Economic Education (EEE) grant program. Through this program the Council provides grants to state and local educational agencies to implement financial and economic literacy education programs in K-12 institutions. Michael Barr, Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions at the Treasury, also announced during the meeting that Michelle Greene will be the new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Education at the Treasury. Greene was previously the Designated Federal Officer for the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board. For more information on the Financial Literacy and Education Commission, visit: <http://www.mymoney.gov/agency.shtml>.

NCES RELEASES CONDITION OF EDUCATION 2009 REPORT

On Thursday, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) held a briefing on its annual Congressionally-mandated report, the *Condition of Education 2009*. This year's report details over 100 indicators of important developments and trends in U.S. education, including participation in education, learner outcomes, and student effort and educational progress. The report predicts that enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools will increase to 54 million in 2018, with the largest increases projected in the South. Not surprisingly, it found that the percentage of Caucasian students has decreased since 1972, largely due to growth in the number of Hispanic students. Data from the long-term trends National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) suggests that the average reading and mathematics scores for 9- and 13-year olds were higher in 2008 than in the early 1970's, but the scores for 17-year-olds remained stagnant. The report found that in 2006, approximately three-quarters of the 2002-03 freshman class graduated from high school on time. It also found that college enrollment immediately upon high school graduation increased from 49 percent in 1972 to 67 percent in 1997, and has since hovered between 62 and 69 percent. These findings, among others, are available online at: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>.

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4. New Publications

“The Condition of Education” National Center for Education Statistics (May 2009).

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009029>

“Getting More Students Learning Time Online” Center for American Progress (May 2009).

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/05/distance_learning.html

“Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle Together: How Systemic Vocabulary Instruction and Expanded Learning Time Can Address the Literacy Gap” Center for American Progress (May 2009).

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/05/elt_language_development.html

“Teachers, Performance Pay, and Accountability: What Education Should Learn from Other Sectors” Economic Policy Institute (May 2009).

http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/books-teachers_performance_pay_and_accountability/.

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5. In the News

“New Push Seeks to End Need for Pre-College Remedial Classes” New York Times (5/28/09).

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/education/index.html>

“More College Grads Join Teach for America” Boston Globe (5/28/09).

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2009/05/28/more_college_grads_join_teach_for_america/

“Teachers Resist a Charge of Corporal Punishment” New York Times (5/27/09).

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/nyregion/28corporal.html?_r=1&ref=education

“Legal Rulings May Hold Some Lessons” USA Today (5/27/09).

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-05-27-study-abroad-legal_N.htm

“Community Colleges Try New Formula for Remedial Classes” USA Today (5/27/09).

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-05-26-comcol-main_N.htm

“At Risk Need a Mix of Good Teachers, Social Services Help” Washington Post (5/25/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/24/AR2009052401976.html>

“The New Math: Teachers Share Recession’s Plan” New York Times (5/23/09).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/24/education/24teachers.html?ref=education>

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6. About WPLLC

For over 30 years, the principals and staff at WPLLC have specialized in the field of education, making sure the voices of associations and nonprofit organizations are heard—on Capitol Hill and in the media. As a full service government affairs and public relations firm, we work in strong partnership with our clients to position them for the greatest success now and in the future. Working as a team, relationships are structured to maximize the strengths of each client; the client’s mission is our driving force as we help them clarify needs, set goals and craft and implement successful strategies. WPLLC provides expertise in a variety of services:

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- Policy Research and Analysis
- Strategic Planning
- Grassroots Activities

- Association Management
- Meeting and Conference Planning

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Readers are encouraged to send comments about this publication to Krista Heckler at kheckler@wpllc.net or call 202.289.3900.