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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:**

1. [Budget and Appropriations](#)
2. [Education Week Releases Diplomas Count 2009](#)
3. [In Brief](#)
4. [New Publications](#)
5. [In the News](#)
6. [About WPLLC](#)

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## 1. Budget and Appropriations

Congress took a major step forward in the year-long budget and appropriations process this week by determining the 302(b) allocations for each Subcommittee – at least on one side of the Capitol. The 302(b) allocations are the numbers that signal to Subcommittee Chairs just how much money they can spend for the federal agencies. For the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) the allocation for those agencies for FY 2010 is \$160.65 billion, which is a \$7.5 billion increase over FY 2009 or approximately five percent more money. That closely approximates the funding that was recommended by President Obama in his budget plan. The Senate Subcommittee has not yet released its allocation, but hopefully it will be close to the House threshold.

The House LHHS Subcommittee also announced plans to mark-up their FY 2010 bill on July 8, with the intention of a quick full Committee mark-up and floor action to follow. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) announced that he hopes to see two of the 12 appropriations measures move off the Senate floor prior to the July 4 recess. The fact that conferees on the emergency war supplemental bill came to agreement on a conference report last night, increases the likelihood that the Senate will reach Majority Leader Reid's more modest goal.

Lack of action on the appropriations front does not mean there hasn't been action elsewhere on the Hill. Of particular interest to education advocates, longtime Ranking Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee, Howard "Buck" McKeon (CA), stepped down from his position to become Ranking Member on the Armed Services Committee. The race is on for a replacement and since the four most senior Republicans on the Committee have declined the spot, the remaining contestants are Congressman John Kline (R-MN), Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC), Congresswoman Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Congresswoman

Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA). The Republican Steering Committee will meet next week to decide.

Other Committees are working around the clock to develop energy and healthcare reform bills that the White House and the leadership would also like to see adopted this summer. It is an ambitious agenda and as the details go from the discussion phase to actual legislation, the difficulty of the task before them comes into sharp, partisan focus. Add to that the upcoming confirmation hearing for President Obama's first Supreme Court nominee and you have the makings for a long, hot summer.

[Back to top.](#)

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## **2. Education Week Releases Diplomas Count 2009**

On Wednesday, *Education Week* and the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center released a new national report, "Diplomas Count 2009: Broader Horizons: The challenge of College Readiness for All Students", on high school graduation trends over the last decade.

The report finds some good news in that there has been an increase in the national graduation rate between 1996 and 2006, the most recent year for which federal data is available. The national graduation rate is 69.2 percent for the class of 2006, an overall increase of nearly three percentage points since 1996 which "does offer some reason to be cautiously optimistic," said Christopher B. Swanson, EPE Research Center Director. Nonetheless, three out of every 10 students in the U.S. public schools fail to graduate, which amounts to 1.3 million students lost from the graduation pipeline each year, or almost 7,200 students lost each day. In addition, there was a dip in the overall graduation rate of 1.5 percent between 2005 and 2006, which shows up across demographic groups in about half the states. This dip will be watched closely in future years to see if it's a "blip" or the start of a new trend. Also, for males in racial and ethnic minorities who live in large, urban communities, the news is even worse. A graduation gap of as much as 26 percentage points divides these historically underserved minorities from their white classmates.

The report also indicates that there is "no firm consensus among states, schools and policymakers on what it means to be ready for postsecondary education or how to measure college readiness." The EPE Research Center also conducted a special analysis to identify school systems that "exceed expectations" for current graduation rates or improvement over the past decade. The report identifies "stellar performance" in some of the nation's most at-risk communities, recognizing 50 "overachieving" big-city schools systems from across the country. Interestingly, however, Swanson stated he could not categorically answer why these 50 schools have been so successful in improving their graduation rates and that we need to look at the "real work" taking place in these settings.

For more information on the report go to: [www.edweek.org/go/dc09](http://www.edweek.org/go/dc09).

[Back to top.](#)

### 3. In Brief

#### **MORE SFS FUNDING BEING AWARDED**

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. As the weeks continue, more states are being added to ED's list of states approved to receive funding. So far the Department has awarded over \$24 billion to 31 states. Over the past two weeks Maryland has been approved to receive \$589 million of ARRA funds, Iowa was approved for \$316 million, \$301 million was approved for Kansas, Arizona was approved for \$681 million, Colorado was approved for \$509 million, Connecticut was approved for \$363 million, \$1 billion was approved for Michigan, and \$1 billion for Ohio. These funds will help reform education and protect the jobs of teachers. For more information on states that have submitted applications for SFS Funds, including the approved applications, visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/statestabilization/resources.html>. To view information on what states are doing with the funds visit:

<http://www.edgovblogs.org/duncan/2009/04/state-stabilization-fund-update/>.

#### **DUNCAN HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR STRONG DATA SYSTEMS AT IES CONFERENCE**

During the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) annual Research Conference, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told the audience that supporting states' efforts to build warehouses of data on student achievement is one of his top priorities. He stated, "Education reform is not about sweeping mandates or grand gestures. It's about systematically examining and learning, building on what we've done right, and scrapping what hasn't worked for kids."

Duncan told the researchers that the data systems should inform education policies that will improve practices. He urged them to work on improving accountability models based on the growth of student test scores and developing fair models of compensating teachers and other school staff based on the achievement of their students. Duncan's speech is the first in a series over the next four weeks in which he plans to detail the Department of Education's policies on each of the four required assurances under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*.

For more information visit: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06082009.html>

#### **DUNCAN DISCUSSES CHARTER SCHOOLS AND RACE TO THE TOP FUND**

During a conference call on Monday, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told reporters that states must be "open to charter schools as a way of reforming America's lowest performing schools". He stated, "Too much is at stake for states financially and for students academically to restrict choice and innovation. States that do not have public charter laws or put artificial caps on the growth of charter schools will jeopardize their applications under the Race to the Top Fund. To be clear, this administration is not looking to open unregulated and unaccountable schools. We want real autonomy for charters combined with a rigorous authorization process and high performance standards." Duncan noted that the Department of Education will begin accepting state applications for the Race to the Top Fund and the School Improvement funds this summer and by the end of the year will be distributing grants, although other conversations around town suggest that timeline is slipping. "I am advocating for using whatever models work for students, and particularly where improvements have stagnated for years," Duncan said. "We cannot continue to do the same thing and expect different results. We cannot let another generation of children be deprived of their civil right

to a quality education." For more information visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06082009a.html>

### **NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION HOLDS BRIEFING ON TEACHER EQUITY**

On Monday, the New America Foundation held a briefing to release their new report, "Equitable Resources in Low Income Schools: Teacher Equity and the Federal Title I Comparability Requirement." The report found that teacher salary disparity is the primary cause of intra-district spending inequality. Because experience is tied to salary in most districts, this disparity in teacher salary is indicative of the unequal distribution of high-quality teachers amongst schools in a district. MaryEllen McGuire, Director of the Education Policy Program at the New America Foundation discussed the Title I "comparability" requirement and its failure in preventing such an unfair distribution. The report's proposed solutions include budget transparency from school districts, legislative action to encourage the enforcement of comparability, and a reduction of the allowed disparity in spending between schools from 10 percent to five percent. She emphasized that legislative action should not require forcibly relocating teachers to low-income schools. The question and answer period was punctuated by a comment about the importance of closing the comparability loophole—not because it will fix the problems of teacher distribution, but because it will make sure money and resources (including teachers) can be equally distributed. All of the panelists agreed. To view the full report visit:

[http://www.newamerica.net/programs/education\\_policy/](http://www.newamerica.net/programs/education_policy/)

### **SENATE LHHS SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON HHS FY2010 BUDGET**

On Tuesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education held a hearing at which Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, discussed the agency's FY2010 budget request. Sebelius spoke extensively about health care reform, expressing her belief that investments in prevention and wellness are central to the reform. She emphasized the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's* (ARRA) role in improving patient centered research, providing better health coverage to minorities, and preparing the country in case of a flu pandemic.. Notably, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) pushed Sebelius on health care reform, asking whether the President's emphasis on finding offsets for spending (PAYGO) would apply to healthcare.. Sebelius said she believed so, but couldn't say for sure because the Congressional Budget Office doesn't score the financial consequences of prevention. Alexander asked Sebelius about whether President Obama supports Senator Edward Kennedy's (D-MA) recently unveiled draft legislation on healthcare reform and whether it was necessary to read and analyze the costs of the program before voting. Sebelius said she wasn't sure, but that she did know the President supported a publicly financed option. To view a webcast of the hearing visit:

<http://appropriations.senate.gov/labor.cfm>

### **WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON HOME VISITATION**

On Tuesday, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support held a hearing to review proposals to provide grants to States to support early childhood home visitation programs. President Obama included an initiative to create a mandatory home visiting program in his FY 2010 budget proposal. In his opening statement, Committee Chairman Jim McDermott (D-W) noted the home visiting bill he recently introduced with Representatives Danny Davis (D-IL) and Todd Platts (R-PA), HR 2667, would allow states to make grants to evidence-based programs that address wellness and

mental health and school readiness needs of children in high-risk families. Enactment of this legislation would provide mandatory, dedicated funding for these purposes. McDermott said the Committee is currently considering including this bill, or some version of a home visiting model, as part of healthcare reform legislation. Ranking Member John Linder (R-GA), though he expressed support for home visiting as an effective intervention and prevention tool for high-risk families, disputed the need for “one more multi-billion dollar entitlement program”. The various witnesses provided support for home visiting. To read full witness testimony visit: <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=682>

## **CARNEGIE CORPORATION RELEASES REPORT ON MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION**

On Wednesday, the Carnegie Corporation held an event to release a new report titled, “The Opportunity Equation: Transforming Mathematics and Science Education for Citizenship and the Global Economy”. The report differs from other similar efforts in that it dwells on concrete actions that entities from labor unions to businesses to government can take to reform public education, rather than focusing on why the current system is in a state of collapse. Gregorian stated that the report identifies where change is necessary to transform math and science education and highlights examples of successful innovation. The report calls for the following: 1) Establishing new common standards in math and science that are fewer, clearer and higher, coupled with quality assessments; 2) Improving teaching and professional learning—supported by better school and system management; 3) Redesigning schools and school systems to deliver excellent, equitable math and science learning more effectively, and; 4) Initiating a national mobilization that includes public awareness campaigns, increased public understanding about the links between effective math and science learning and the job market, and a focus on improving outcomes among historically underperforming groups through new benchmarking strategies. Education Secretary Arne Duncan praised the Carnegie Corporation for their investment and believes that as a nation we need to “educate our way to a better economy”. To read the full report visit:

<http://www.opportunityequation.org/>

## **WWC HOLDS BRIEFING ON RTI**

On Wednesday, the Institute of Science’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) held a briefing to introduce two of their latest Practice Guides that highlight effective methods of instructing struggling students in math and reading. These Practice Guides are part of the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to identify K-12 students who are struggling to learn in math and reading, and intervene with practices that have proven to be effective in instructing these students. The first Practice Guide discussed at the briefing, “Assisting Students Struggling with Reading”, provides a list of recommendations for intervening and helping struggling students in the primary grades. The Guide recommends screening students early to identify potential reading problems; providing differentiated reading instructions based on students’ reading levels; and dividing the struggling readers into separate groups based on their abilities and providing intensive, targeted instruction accordingly. The second Practice Guide, “Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics”, provides similar recommendations for intervening and instructing struggling elementary and middle school math students. Mark Dynarski, Vice President of Mathematica Policy Research and Director of WWC, explained that “the WWC is working to provide as complete a view as possible in order to recommend the best practices to teachers.” He also stated that these Practice Guides have proven helpful and shown success for educators in other areas like dropout prevention and solving student

behavioral problems. For more information visit:

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/www/publications/practiceguides/>

#### **FIRST FIVE YEARS FUND HOLDS BRIEFING ON EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTIONS**

On Thursday, the First Five Years Fund held a briefing on the impact of early childhood interventions on reducing the need for special education services. Panelists included: Alexa Posny, Kansas Commissioner of Education; Kathleen Hebbler, Manager of Community Services and Strategies Program and Kathy Augustine, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for Atlanta Public Schools. The panelists overwhelmingly agreed that young children who receive high-quality early education from infancy to age five do better in school academically, are less likely to need special education services, and are more likely to stay in school longer and graduate. Hebbler noted that early interventions for children with special education needs are a critical strategy for improving later outcomes. She stated that research shows that children with disabilities who are identified early and receive the appropriate early intervention services before kindergarten have a greater chance of meeting their social and educational potential than those who do not. The panelists all urged Congress to increase the federal investment in early intervention programs and to create policies that ensure all children have access to high quality early intervention programs with high quality teachers, assessments and data systems. For more information on the First Five Years Fund visit:

<http://ffvf.org/who-we-are>

[\*Back to top.\*](#)

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#### **4. New Publications**

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

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>

“Diplomas Count 2009: Broader Horizons” Education Week (June 2009).

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2009/06/11/index.html>

“Preschool Adequacy and Efficiency in California: Issues, Policy Options, and Recommendations” RAND Corporation (June 2009).

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG889/>

“Analyzing Performance by Hispanic High School Students on the Massachusetts State Assessment” Institute of Education Sciences (June 2009).

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=114>

“Evaluation of the Social Skills of Full-Time, Online Public School Students” Interactive Educational Designs (June 2009).

[http://k12.com/educators/research\\_results/reports\\_white\\_papers/socialization-study/](http://k12.com/educators/research_results/reports_white_papers/socialization-study/)

“The Opportunity Equation: Transforming Mathematics and Science Education for Citizenship and the Global Economy” Carnegie Corporation (June 2009).

<http://www.opportunityequation.org/>

“Late High School Dropouts: Characteristics, Experiences, and Changes Across Cohorts” National Center for Education Statistics (June 2009).

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## 5. In the News

“Kids Reap Benefits of Long School Year” USA Today (6/9/09).

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-09-charter-schools-longer\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-09-charter-schools-longer_N.htm)

“Colleges in Need Closes a Door to Needy Students” New York Times (6/9/09).

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/10/business/economy/10reed.html?\\_r=1&ref=education](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/10/business/economy/10reed.html?_r=1&ref=education)

“Economy Forces 2009 Grads to Dump Dream Colleges” USA Today (6/8/09).

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-09-college-economy\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-09-college-economy_N.htm)

“Alternative Testing on the Rise” Washington Post (6/8/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/07/AR2009060702227.html>

“The Push for Preschool” Washington Post (6/8/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/07/AR2009060702116.html>

“Is AP for All a Formula for Failure” Washington Post (6/8/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/07/AR2009060702117.html>

“As Beauty School Grows, Chemistry Joins Curlers” New York Times (6/7/09).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/07/jobs/07beauty.html?ref=education>

[Back to top.](#)

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## 6. About WPLLC

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- Grassroots Activities
- Association Management
- Meeting and Conference Planning

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