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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 continuing instability on Wall Street has prompted the Congress to work on more and better solutions to the world economic crisis. This week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) came out with new plans for an even bigger second economic recovery package—no longer called either a bailout or a stimulus. You will recall that an earlier vehicle—one costing \$61 billion as opposed to estimates of between \$150-\$300 billion—passed easily in the House on a partisan vote but failed to be taken up in the Senate just prior to adjournment. This new plan is about domestic spending—on extended unemployment benefits and retraining for dislocated workers; a jobs bill focusing on bridge and road construction; direct aid to states facing significant revenue shortfalls that by law must balance their budgets; and other assorted emergency spending plans. It comes on the heels of a summit on Monday, hosted by Speaker Pelosi and attended by well-regarded economists who insist such a plan is vital to the economic health of the nation.

The Senate has a lame duck session scheduled for November 17-19. The House has no such session on its calendar, but their adjournment is subject to “the call of the Chair” and it is assumed that Speaker Pelosi will be calling. Regardless, the new Congress will be in town that week for organizational meetings. The possible lame duck agenda would be the proposal being discussed or a similar emergency economic recovery bill. The size and scope will ultimately depend on the election outcomes on November 4, tempered in part by the developments in the marketplace and the advice of experts. The House Democrats are not interested in presenting a plan that would be vetoed by President Bush or rejected by Senate Republicans. The announcement this week that the federal budget deficit is approaching \$700 billion appeared to have little effect on ideas about additional spending and if a recovery plan is not taken up in November it is sure to be considered in the New Year.

At the third and final presidential debate, observers were critical of the limited focus and attention given to the severe economic crisis facing the nation. Pundits bemoaned the lack of new ideas from either candidate. Education advocates, on the other hand, were glad to hear moderator Bob Schieffer raise education as the topic of the final question to Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Barack Obama (D-IL) on Wednesday night. Their answers were rambling and not terribly specific, but they did give hints about priorities. Senator Obama was clear that he feels education is the most important answer to the current economic crisis and called for more reform, a greater investment and emphasized the importance of early childhood education, college access and parental responsibility. Senator McCain, while equally supportive of the importance of education to the future security of the nation, talked about choice, competition, charter schools, rewarding teachers for student performance and the fact that, in his opinion, the country does not need more money for education, but need to spend it more wisely.

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## **2. Century Foundation Holds Briefing on Suggestions for NCLB**

On Wednesday, the Century Foundation hosted a briefing titled, “Getting Education Reform Back on Track,” to discuss their new book, *Improving On No Child Left Behind*. This book is designed to bring the major flaws of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to the political forefront in order to encourage the Act’s reform and reauthorization. In *Improving On No Child Left Behind*, several authorities on education policy and reform criticize three different aspects of NCLB: the “under-funding” of NCLB; the provisions for standards, testing, and accountability; and the problems students and parents face regarding school choice.

Providing an overview of the book’s chapter on under-funding NCLB, John Yinger, one of the chapter’s authors, explained that in order to achieve the goals established by NCLB, federal funding for NCLB programs must increase exponentially, although states’ needs vary in efforts to reach the law’s proficiency goals. For example, according to their research, the authors believe that while Kansas will need an increase in annual funding for Title I aid of about 18 percent in order to achieve 100 percent proficiency by 2014, Missouri will require an increase of approximately 1,077 percent.

The book’s chapter on standards, testing, and accountability criticizes states’ development of rigorous content standards and high quality student assessments. Lauren Resnick, of the University of Pittsburgh, discussed the chapter on standards, opining that clear, rigorous content standards, and assessments linked to these standards, should be developed on a national level.

In summarizing the final chapter of the book, Amy Stuart Wells, of Columbia University, criticized NCLB for not providing low-income students attending failing schools with the opportunity to attend a higher-performing school. The authors of this chapter strongly encourage inter-district school choice programs, urging the reauthorization of NCLB to provide higher-performing schools with funding to encourage the acceptance of low-income transfer students from low-performing schools.

For more information on *Improving On No Child Left Behind*, visit:  
<http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=EV&pubid=237>. \

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### 3. In Brief

#### **FINANCIAL LITERACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE HOLDS FIFTH MEETING**

On Tuesday, the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy held their fifth public meeting at the U.S. Department of the Treasury to discuss the recommendations of the Council's five committees for the first annual report on financial literacy. Among the committees' recommendations was a proposal to create a public financial literacy self-assessment test; increased federal funding for state and local financial literacy education programs; mandated K-12 financial literacy education programs; and a "National Financial Literacy Challenge" in all high schools. Additionally, the Council's Workplace Committee recommended that a "Financial Education Honor Roll" program be implemented that would reward employers who provide financial literacy education programs in the workplace. Council Chairman Charles Schwab also noted that the committees' recommendations will be compiled into a draft report in November. The final version will be available after the Council's meeting on December 4, 2008. For more information on the Council, visit: <http://treasury.gov/offices/domestic-finance/financial-institution/fin-education/council/index.shtml>.

#### **ENGINEERS DISCUSS INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN STEM**

This week, the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Advisory Committee of the Directorate for Engineering held their second meeting of 2008. During the two-day meeting the Committee discussed methods for increasing participation in and NSF funding for engineering programs, specifically by collaborating with other NSF directorates. Dr. Wanda Ward, Assistant Director for the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR), presented the Committee with information on measures being taken to increase student participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs at all levels of education. Ward highlighted EHR's Math Science Partnership program, the Advanced Technological Education program, and the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation program, as efforts of EHR that have successfully improved student participation in the STEM fields. Ward also presented EHR's new Innovation through Institutional Integration (I<sup>3</sup>), a program that "links broadening participation of underrepresented minorities in STEM, critical education junctures, integrating research and education, and creating a more globally engaged workforce." For more information on the Engineering Advisory Committee meeting, visit: [http://nsf.gov/events/event\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=112411&org=ENG](http://nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=112411&org=ENG).

For more information on I<sup>3</sup> visit: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2008/nsf08027/nsf08027.jsp>

#### **AEI HOSTS CONFERENCE ON JUDICIAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION**

On Wednesday, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) held a conference on the rise in judicial supervision of education over the last fifty years. *From Brown to 'Bong Hits': Assessing a Half-Century of Judicial Involvement in Education* featured a panel discussion on testing, school finance, and No Child Left Behind. Martha Derthick of the University of Virginia detailed NCLB-related litigation, which she said is surprisingly small in volume considering the controversy surrounding the law. "By and large, the

fight over NCLB have been carried on in legislative, executive, and even electoral forums” rather than in the courts. John Dinan of Wake Forest University discussed how legal suits against school finance systems have peaked in recent years. Dinan argued that while school finance courtroom battles have not been easy, many have led to state legislative reforms. Michael Heise of Cornell Law School said that high-stakes testing, like the annual tests under NCLB, attract legal intervention by generating disgruntled plaintiffs. Robert Gordon of the Center for American Progress responded to the panelists saying “The bottom line is there may be less here than we thought.” He said that several decades of conservative court rulings have made it hard for plaintiffs to win these types of cases. For more information, visit [www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org).

## **BROOKINGS INSTITUTION SPONSORS PAPER ON INNOVATIVE EDUCATION REFORM**

On Thursday, the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program hosted a briefing to discuss a new report, *Changing the Game: The Federal Role in Supporting 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Innovation*. The report, authored by Sara Mead of the New America Foundation and Andrew Rotherham of the Education Sector, suggests that efforts to resolve disparities in educational achievement in the country, as well as to ensure American competitiveness, require reformers to “change the game” in education. The report suggests that the establishment of a new federal Office of Educational Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Department of Education would expand the boundaries of public education by scaling up successful educational entrepreneurs, seeding transformative educational innovations, and building a stronger culture to support these activities throughout the public sector. While the ideas and recommendations are arguably familiar, the event provided an opportunity to hear a number of experienced educators talk about education reform efforts and the practical and policy-related challenges they face. For more information on the event, visit: [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/1016\\_education\\_mead\\_rotherham.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/1016_education_mead_rotherham.aspx).

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## **4. New Publications**

“More Equity and Less Red Tape: Rethinking the Comparability and Compliance Provisions in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act” Center for American Progress (October 2008).

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/titleone\\_report.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/titleone_report.html)

“Getting Past Generic ‘Choice’: Rethinking Supply and Demand in Schooling’s Social Market” American Enterprise Institute (October 2008).

[http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28766,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28766,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)

“Good Teachers in Bad Times” American Enterprise Institute (October 2008).

[http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28769,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28769,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)

“Bayer Facts of Science Education Survey XIII: Fortune 1000 Executives: New President Must Fix Education Gap” Bayer (October 2008).

[http://www.bayerus.com/MSMS/Survey/survey\\_13.aspx](http://www.bayerus.com/MSMS/Survey/survey_13.aspx)

“No Change in Weight Based Testing When School Based Obesity Policies Are Implemented” Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine (October 2008).  
<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/162/10/936>

“Changing the Game: The Federal Role in Supporting 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Innovation” Brookings Institution (October 2008).  
[http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/1016\\_education\\_mead\\_rotherham.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/1016_education_mead_rotherham.aspx).

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## 5. In the News

“In Downturn, Families Strain to Pay Tuition” New York Times (10/17/08).  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/17/business/17student.html>

“If Elected...Rivals’ Visions Differ on Unleashing Innovation” New York Times (10/17/08).  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/17/us/politics/17innovate.html>

“Experts Question Benefit of School Time-Out Rooms” New York Times (10/17/08).  
<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/us/AP-Time-out-Rooms.html? r=1&oref=slogin>

“Financial Sector’s Loss Could Spell Gain for Teaching” USA Today (10/17/08).  
[http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-10-15-meltdown-teachers\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-10-15-meltdown-teachers_N.htm)

“Candidates Touch on D.C. Schools” Washington Post (10/16/08).  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/16/AR2008101600083.html>

“The Anti-Schoolers” New York Times (10/16/08).  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/16/garden/16unschool.html? r=1&ref=education &oref=slogin>

“Schools’ Wind Turbines Power Learning” USA Today (10/15/08).  
[http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-10-14-schoolsinside\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-10-14-schoolsinside_N.htm)

“Enrollment at State Public Universities, Colleges Rises 4%” Boston Globe (10/15/08).  
[http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2008/10/15/enrollment\\_at\\_state\\_public\\_universities\\_colleges\\_rises\\_4/](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2008/10/15/enrollment_at_state_public_universities_colleges_rises_4/)

“Where They Stand: McCain, Obama Split on Education” USA Today (10/14/08).  
[http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-10-13-obama-mccain-policy\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-10-13-obama-mccain-policy_N.htm)

“Is College Worth It?” Chicago Tribune (10/14/08).  
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/content/education/chi-college-costs-14-oct14,0,1864072.story>

“School Attendance Law Gone Awry” Washington Post (10/14/08).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/13/AR2008101302863.html>

“Under ‘No Child’ Law, Even Solid Schools Falter” New York Times (10/13/08).

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/13/education/13child.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/13/education/13child.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

“Bringing Special-Needs Schools Closer to Home” New York Times (10/13/08).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/13/education/13autism.html>

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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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