

MAY 15, 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:**

1. [Budget and Appropriations](#)
2. [Secretary Duncan Addresses Innovation Funding at Brookings Institution](#)
3. [Education and Labor Committee Holds Hearing on High School Reform](#)
4. [In Brief](#)
5. [New Publications](#)
6. [In the News](#)
7. [About WPLLC](#)

1. Budget and Appropriations

The dust has settled, the charts have been reviewed, and the education community has started to respond to the Obama Administration's FY 2010 detailed budget proposal. The initial muted response has evolved into audible criticism. While overall funding for education and other domestic priorities would increase by approximately seven percent under the Obama proposal, the freeze on funding for longtime education investments and the shifting of dollars from formula to competitive grant status has caused angst and concern in school districts around the country. Whether or not a Democratically-controlled Congress will heed these complaints or approve the spending plan the new President has requested remains to be seen.

There is plenty of good news in this budget proposal that has not been ignored. The President promised attention to early childhood education, troubled middle and high schools, failing elementary schools, teacher incentive programs and college access and persistence. He was true to his word. The budget provides funding for a new Title I early childhood program that would funnel resources to Pre-K as well as funding for Early Childhood Challenge Grants to support collaborative state efforts. The Teacher Incentive Fund would grow to \$500 million, a five-fold increase over FY 2009. A new \$50 million grant program coupled with a doubling of Striving Readers funding provides welcome new support for struggling middle and high schools. College access concerns are addressed by additional Pell Grant funding and attention to program completion through a new \$500 competitive grant fund. The Title I School Improvement fund also receives a generous \$1.5 billion increase, and an added emphasis on middle and high schools.

Turning to the "concern" side of the equation, some argue that funding for the School Improvement Fund is taken directly out of the Title I formula. Advocates for Afterschool programs and Career and Technical Education had anticipated new investments and were

disappointed to see funding held at the FY 2009 level. The budget does include \$370 million for reading support, welcome news to literacy advocates, but a far cry from the \$1 billion that was lost with the elimination of the Reading First Program. And IDEA, a program that has enjoyed steady growth over the past several years, is also frozen at the FY 2009 level, disappointing disability advocates. STEM education advocates were also surprised to see funding for the Math Science Partnership program frozen in light of the President's strongly worded support for science, technology, engineering and math education.

Perhaps some of this angst can be attributed to a growing awareness that the generous \$100 billion windfall for education that was included in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* was just that—a windfall, rather than sustained new investments that will grow over time. And disappointing to some also is the knowledge that in this economic climate, and with this President who believes education to be a key to economic recovery, there will always be winners and losers. Let the games begin. Again.

[Back to top.](#)

2. Secretary Duncan Addresses Innovation Funding at Brookings Institution

On Monday, the Brookings Institution hosted a discussion with Education Secretary Arne Duncan about his vision for the distribution and use of innovation funding made available through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA). Duncan's remarks were consistent with previous discussions outlining the goals he shares with President Obama and how he hopes awards made from the Race to the Top and What Works and Innovation Funds will help states and others implement this vision.

Duncan noted that the current economic crisis will force many governors to direct State Stabilization funding from the Department of Education to prevent teacher job loss and offset crippling budget deficits. He is hopeful, however, that at least a portion of the \$100 billion in ARRA education dollars will support innovation and the dissemination of successful practices that reward teacher and student achievement, help districts build quality data collection, elevate standards and assessment systems and invest in the low-performing schools. It is through the \$5 billion in competitive awards—the \$4.3 billion Race to the Top funds for states and the \$650 million What Works Innovation Fund for states and non-profit entities—that generates the most excitement for Duncan. The Obama budget released last week would provide an additional \$100 million for the What Works and Innovation Fund, making it one of the few ARRA-created initiatives that could be sustained in future budget requests from the Administration.

Responding to audience questions, panelists addressed issues related to how ARRA funding will support extending the school day, the expansion of Title I, early education and Pre-K programs, improving teacher quality, and the value of technology in promoting and enabling school reform. Alan Berube, Senior Fellow and Research Director at the Brookings Institution, expressed concern that because ARRA essentially provides additional funding for existing formula and competitive grant programs, the money will “go down the same pipes” and will not be used for restructuring and reform. Isabel Sawhill, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, concurred, saying education's problems are difficult. Two years of

additional resources can get things started, but it is unrealistic to expect measurable outcomes in such a short period of time, according to Sawhill.

Echoing the hopes of Secretary Duncan, Mike Smith, Senior Advisor at the Department of Education, acknowledged the difficulty states face, but urged states to use funding to improve “teaching” and not just “teachers”. This can be accomplished, according to Smith, through better preparation, and initiatives to improve school climate and supports, such as better curriculum and technology. Mike Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of Great City Schools, voiced concern that states would reduce their investment in education, instead relying on federal assistance—a shortsighted solution that would cause further harm to “cash-strapped” city schools. Unfortunately, according to Casserly, many districts have already determined that stimulus funding won’t make it from state capitols to urban areas.

For more information visit: <http://www.brookings.edu/>

[Back to top.](#)

3. Education and Labor Committee Holds Hearing on High School Reform

On Tuesday, the House Education and Labor Committee held a full committee hearing titled, “America’s Competitiveness through High School Reform” to examine how addressing the high school dropout crisis and improving graduation rates can strengthen America’s economic competitiveness.

This hearing was the first on this topic in the 111th Congress, and a bipartisan panel of four Members of Congress, as well as a panel of six experts on the topic, testified. Representatives Chaka Fattah (D-PA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Mike Castle (R-DE), and Phil Roe (R-TN) all agreed that the nation faces a dropout crisis during a time when students need higher levels of education and workforce training to succeed in an increasingly global economy. Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA) added that startling statistics make it “increasingly clear that addressing this dropout crisis is one of the most important things we can do to turn our economy around for good.” Specifically, only 70 percent of students graduate from high school with a regular high school diploma; for minority students, the statistics are even worse. Approximately 10 percent of high schools in this country produce close to half of these dropouts, and these so-called “dropout factories” disproportionately impact minority students, producing 69 percent of all African-American and 63 percent of all Hispanic students who dropout. In addition, business leaders complain that those who do graduate from high school are not ready for the workplace, and colleges say high school graduates are unprepared for the rigors of college.

Additional testimony was heard from Bob Balfanz, Ph.D from The Johns Hopkins University; Michael Wotorson, Executive Director of the Campaign for High School Equity; Marguerite Kondracke, President and CEO of America’s Promise; Scott Gordon, CEO of the Mastery Charter Schools in Philadelphia, PA; Vicki Phillips, Director of Education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and Bob Wise, President of the Alliance for Excellent Education. All agreed that current federal investment in our nation’s secondary schools is minimal, and that a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) must include measures to drive high school reform, including greater accountability so “we know where the problems are and how to drive resources and supports to these schools.” In addition, high, common standards that are tied to college- and work-readiness and are internationally benchmarked, and consistent graduation rate calculations with meaningful growth targets and

goals are critical for reform. Federal investment in innovative programs and models that can be brought to scale, along with supporting states' and districts' efforts in creating systems of improvement and capacity are also necessary. Finally, it was noted that the needs of middle school students cannot be forgotten as “we know that the high school students who are unprepared to succeed in high school come from somewhere.”

For more information on the hearing, visit

<http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/2009/05/americas-competitiveness-throu.shtml>

[Back to top.](#)

4. In Brief

ED MEETS WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON EETT ARRA SPENDING

As the education community continues to discern how the Department of Education (ED) plans to distribute the funds meant for education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), ED staff are meeting with stakeholders to hear concerns and advice. Recently, ED officials met with stakeholders to discuss the expected distribution of \$650 million in Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) funds allocated by ARRA. To date, guidance from ED has suggested that these funds would be part of the ARRA funds distributed “in the fall”—after the first disbursements of stabilization funds were sent to states and ED staff could turn to more detailed guidance on these and other planned program-specific disbursements. However, after listening to stakeholders, ED has reportedly decided to issue guidance for these funds shortly and award them to states in July, so states might, in turn, award the funds locally in time for the new school year. The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) has been working with ED on facilitating conversations with state leaders. In addition, they plan to compile and issue a report on the disbursement of these funds 6-9 months later—early in 2011—to inform further grant making activities around ARRA EETT disbursements. State directors are also working among themselves to share grant applications and other practices.

SEE FORUMS HOLDS BRIEFING ON NEW RESEARCH ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MATH CURRICULA

On Tuesday, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), in collaboration with the Department of Education, hosted a panel discussion and briefing titled, “Building a Foundation for the Future: A Discussion on the Latest Research on Elementary School Math Curricula.” The briefing focused on new research regarding the effectiveness of four selected elementary grade curriculums, including Investigations in Number, Data and Space; Math Expressions; Saxon Math; and Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley Math. Dr. Rebecca Herman, Director of the Scientific Evidence in Education (SEE) Forum and Managing Research Analyst for AIR, described the current information about U. S. student performance in math on international tests. She stated that only seven percent of 4th graders in the U.S. demonstrate proficiency in math, compared to 38 percent of 4th graders in Singapore. Moreover, as U.S. students move up through the grades, their performance declines compared to students around the globe. Recent reports have indicated that U.S. students need to focus more on whole numbers, conceptual fluency, word problems and fractions. In response to these findings, Mathematica Policy Research undertook a study to compare student achievement in the early grades over several years, using four curricular models. Roberto Agodini, Senior Economist at

Agodini, Senior Economist at Mathematica, stated that the results showed students in classrooms using Math Expression and Saxon Math scored significantly higher on the post test than those using the other two curriculums—scoring in the 59th rather than the 50th percentile. Kati Haycock from the Education Trust suggested that the researchers thoroughly examine whether student performance varied because of differences in curriculum content or pedagogy. The students using the Saxon Math curriculum received an additional hour of math instruction per week. Haycock asked if that was a significant factor in their performance. Questions from the audience made it clear that the findings are of great interest and the need for further examination is critical if schools are to be successful bridging the achievement gap that plagues low-income, low performing elementary schools. For more information visit: <http://www.seeforums.org/>

NSBA AND CPE HOLD BRIEFING ON GROWTH MODELS

On Wednesday, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the Center for Public Education (CPE) held a briefing on the use of growth models and whether schools should be given credit under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) for students who take longer than four years to graduate high school. Jim Hull from CPE stated that currently under NCLB schools are given credit for the percentage of students achieving the state's "proficient" level, regardless of how far students progressed to get to that level. He believes that policymakers are beginning to recognize that some students start from way behind, and thus, have much farther to go, to reach proficiency. This has led policymakers to look at ways to measure academic growth via growth models. A growth model measures students' academic progress between two points in time. Reggie Felton from the NSBA stated that students are tested on material described by state standards and schools are held accountable for whether or not students meet those standards. Felton and Hull both argued that the use of growth models will shift accountability to include measures for how much progress students make, not *just* whether they meet state standards. Hull noted that some basic features should be in place to design and implement a valid and reliable measure of student growth. These features include: a statement of policy intent with a specific purpose; properly designed annual tests; data systems to collect, store and analyze the data; statistical expertise; professional development; transparency and communication; and funding. Hull also discussed "late graduates", those students who take more than four years to graduate from high school. He stated that under the accountability provisions in NCLB, students who don't graduate in four years count against schools' graduation rates. Many educators have complained that such an approach punishes schools that go the extra mile to keep students from dropping out or to lure back those who have left school. Hull explained that through research at CPE, they found that late graduates do markedly better than GED recipients and dropouts. And, when the data is controlled to compare students of equivalent socioeconomic status and achievement level, late graduates come close to on-time graduates' achievement. Hull and Felton urged Congress to revise NCLB to encourage schools to keep all students in school until they graduate—regardless of whether or not it takes longer than the standard four years. For more information visit: www.centerforpubliceducation.org

NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD HOLDS MEETING ON BUDGET

On Wednesday and Thursday, the National Science Board (NSB), the governing and oversight division of the National Science Foundation (NSF), held their second meeting for 2009. Presentations were made by various NSF directorates discussing the status of current programs that they sponsor, as well as how funds provided by the *American Recovery and Reinvestment*

Reinvestment Act (ARRA) are being utilized. In addition, NSF Director Arden Bement presented the President's FY 2010 NSF budget request to the NSB. Dr. Bement explained that the President's budget request of \$7.045 billion for the Foundation would be an 8.5 percent increase over the planned expenditures of FY 2009. According to Dr. Bement, this budget was created to "enhance opportunities for potentially transformative research; support new faculty and young investigators; generate opportunities for workforce development; and triple the number of Graduate Research Fellowships." The Education and Human Resources Directorate of NSF received a 1.5 percent increase in the budget request, making its request \$857.76 million for FY 2010. Dr. Bement noted that the detailed budget request would be released by NSF on Monday, May 18. For more information on the NSB meeting, visit: <http://nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2009/0513/index.jsp>.

BROOKINGS HOSTS DISCUSSION OF HIGH SCHOOLS' ROLE IN ENCOURAGING POSTSECONDARY STUDY

This week, the Future of Children—a joint Brookings' Institution-Princeton University initiative—hosted an event to examine the role of high schools in preparing disadvantaged students for college. The event featured the release of a policy brief discussing the steps high schools should take to help low-income students prepare for postsecondary education. The policy brief is a companion to the Spring 2009 issue of the efforts journal, titled, "America's High Schools". The event featured remarks from Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), who recently came to the Senate from his position as Superintendent of the Denver school system and brought with him his reputation as an education reformer. In addition, an impressive panel discussed high school reform strategies that should be examined locally and by federal lawmakers. The newly heightened policy prominence of high school reform, especially the challenges facing low-performing schools, has amplified debate about the role of high schools. Many of the speakers agreed that reform efforts should commit to investing in innovative interventions, that national minimum graduation requirements should be developed, that the goals of a high school education should be reexamined, and that rigorous research on reform efforts is crucial. For more information, visit: <http://www.futureofchildren.org/>.

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

On Thursday, the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee held a hearing titled "Improving Child Nutrition Programs to Reduce Childhood Obesity." Chairwoman Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) pointed to the rise in childhood obesity, diabetes, and heart disease across the country. "The School Breakfast and Lunch programs can make a great impact because they may provide more than 50 percent of a student's food and nutrient intake on school days," she said. The Committee heard testimony from fellow Education and Labor Committee members Representatives Mike Castle (R-DE) and Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), as well as a number of people who have employed innovative strategies to combat the obesity epidemic in schools. For more information, visit www.edlabor.house.gov.

HOUSE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON FY 2010 BUDGET

On Thursday, the House Committee on Science and Technology held a hearing on the role of science in the new Administration, reviewing the Administration's proposed FY 2010 budget for federal research and development. Dr. John Holdren, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and Advisor to the President, provided testimony on the FY 2010

2010 budget request, which he explained allocates \$147.6 billion for research and development in federal agencies. The \$147.6 billion included in the budget request is intended to support basic science research and development programs at the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy's Office of Science, as well as clean energy, biomedical and health, and safety and security research and development. Committee Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN) commended Dr. Holdren for taking a leadership role in developing new and aggressive policies supportive of research and development within federal agencies. He also reminded those present "that the burden is not entirely on OSTP. These enormous tasks we confront, such as strengthening STEM education and improving management of our water resources, require leadership and willingness to coordinate, cooperate and share information on the part of many federal agencies." For more information on the hearing, visit:

http://science.house.gov/publications/hearings_markups_details.aspx?NewsID=2454.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SELECTS SUPREET ANAND FOR ELL POST

This week, the Obama Administration announced that Supreet Anand has been selected to serve as Supervisory Education Program specialist in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education. Anand will be in charge of Title III programs for the Department, which is the main source of funding for English-language-acquisition programs under the No Child Left Behind Act. Anand currently directs ELL programs for the Maryland Department of Education. Previously she supervised ELL programs for Prince George's County schools in Maryland. She also served as an English-as-a-second-language teacher at Northwestern High School in Hyattsville, MD.

[Back to top.](#)

5. New Publications

"An Evaluation of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) in Chicago: Year One Impact Report" Mathematica (May 2009).

http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/education/TAP_rpt.pdf

"High School Discharges Revisited: Trends in New York City's Discharge Rates, 2000-2007" Columbia University (May 2009).

http://pubadvocate.nyc.gov/new_news/documents/DischargesRevisited.pdf

"Web 2.0 in Schools: Policy and Leadership" Consortium for School Networking (May 2009).

<http://www.cosn.org/Portals/7/docs/Web%202.0/CoSN%20Report%20042809Final%20w-cover.pdf>

"An Evaluation of Bias in the 2007 National Households Education Surveys Program: Results From a Special Data Collection Effort" National Center for Education Statistics (May 2009).

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

"Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How" National Academies (May 2009).

http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12446

“The Future of Children” Princeton-Brookings (May 2009).
http://www.futureofchildren.org/pubs-info2825/pubs-info_show.htm?doc_id=875895

[Back to top.](#)

6. In the News

“With Critics Quiet, Hearing Praises DC School Voucher Program” Washington Post (5/14/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/13/AR2009051303381.html>

“Education Secretary: Detroit Schools ‘Ground Zero’” Boston Globe (5/4/09).

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2009/05/13/education_secretary_detroit_schools_ground_zero/

“Website Estimates Education’s Effect on Health, Crime, Income” USA Today (5/13/09).

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-05-13-income-crime-united_N.htm

“Obama Seeks to Keep Vouchers, For Now” USA Today (5/12/09).

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-05-06-obamaduncan_N.htm

“State Senate Approves Software as Alternative to Textbooks” Los Angeles Times (5/12/09).

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-school-books12-2009may12,0,3863262.story>

“A Hit in Schools, Maggots and All” New York Times (5/12/09).

<http://www.nytimes.com/glogin?URI=http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/12/science/12angi.html&OQ=rQ3D2Q26refQ3Deducation&OP=718a6171Q2FQ2BQ5EMQ22Q2BtxQ7CQ24HxxNQ2FQ2BQ2FXXSQ2BXGQ2BvQ2FQ2BQ24Q7CpMQ3CQ7CMQ2BvQ2FQ3AQ3ChpmNQ238>

“A \$100 Billion Question, How to Fix Schools” Washington Post (5/12/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/10/AR2009051001946.html>

“For Many Teachers, A Famously Fertile Market Dries Up Overnight” New York Times (5/11/09).

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/11/nyregion/11teachers.html?_r=1&ref=education

“Performance Pay Considered for County Teachers” Washington Post (5/11/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/08/AR2009050804108.html>

“School Violence Declining, but Bullying, Theft Persist” Washington Post (5/11/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/10/AR2009051001947.html>

“The Golden Boy and the Blob” The Economist (5/7/09).

[Back to top.](#)

7. 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:

- Government Relations
- Public Relations & Communications
- Policy Research and Analysis
- Strategic Planning
- Grassroots Activities
- Association Management
- Meeting and Conference Planning

For more information, please call us at 202.289.3900 or visit our website at wpllc.net.

• • •

This publication contains links to Internet sites for the convenience of World Wide Web users. Washington Partners, LLC is not responsible for the availability or content of these external sites, nor does Washington Partners, LLC endorse, warrant or guarantee the information, services, or products described or offered at these other Internet sites.

Copyright 2008. Washington Partners, LLC. Redistribution of this memorandum or its content outside the immediate organization of the intended recipient without the express prior permission of Washington Partners, LLC is prohibited.

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