



The Education Report

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The Education Report, a weekly publication of WPLL, 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

It was a quiet week on Capitol Hill. There was silence on the House floor and in Senate Committee hearing rooms where loud debates on appropriations and climate change bills had been the order of the day. The schedule that awaits Members of Congress when they return from their week-long July 4th Recess includes the passage of all remaining appropriations bills; countless healthcare reform hearings; the confirmation of a Supreme Court Justice and many other key appointments in the Obama Administration; and consideration of climate change legislation in the Senate. Let's hope this week has been restful.

Though the halls of Congress were still, other events and announcements will have repercussions in the weeks ahead. Al Franken (D) was finally named as the junior senator from the state of Minnesota, bringing the number of Democratic Senators to the long-anticipated 60 count. Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) left the hospital after a 6-week stay, raising hopes that he would be returning to the Senate. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan gave an important speech at the National Education Association summer meeting in San Diego, laying out his vision for improving teacher effectiveness. And, the new Ranking Member on the House Education and Labor Committee, John Kline (R-MN), announced the appointment of new Ranking Members of several key subcommittees.

On July 10, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) will unveil their proposed budget for the federal agencies it oversees, including the Department of Education. The full Appropriations Committee is set to take up the measure on July 14, followed by quick floor action. In the Senate, a firm date has not been announced for action, but the LHHS Subcommittee will likely meet during the week of July 20 to reveal their spending plan.

The quiet of the week will end abruptly as the nation celebrates the 4th of July with fireworks displays large and small in communities across the country. A display that may set the tone for weeks to come on Capitol Hill.

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2. In Brief

KLINE ANNOUNCES NEW EDUCATION AND LABOR SUBCOMMITTEE RANKING MEMBERS

This week, the newly-appointed House Education and Labor Committee Ranking Member, Rep. John Kline (R-MN), announced new Republican leaders for two of the panel's five subcommittees. Rep. Tom Price (R-GA) has been named the ranking Republican on the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) has been named Ranking Republican on the Workforce Protections Subcommittee. Reps. Price and McMorris Rodgers join three other subcommittee ranking Republican members: Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE), of the Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee; Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA), of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee; and Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY), of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee. "We have an excellent team that I'm honored to lead," Kline said. "Together, Republicans will continue to provide solutions to strengthen our nation's schools and support our workforce." To read a full press release visit:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/>

NCTM ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This week, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) announced that Kichoon Yang has been named its Executive Director. "Dr. Yang brings to the Council a strong background in mathematics and education, and an interest in policy," said NCTM President Henry S. Kepner, Jr. "He also brings to the position a combination of educational leadership, mathematics knowledge, and administrative experience, giving him a perspective that will enrich the Council's work." Most recently, Yang was provost and professor at Northwest Missouri State University, posts he has held since 2005. Under his leadership the university was recognized as one of only 12 in the country to significantly increase retention and graduation rates of freshmen. Before going to Northwest Missouri State, he was dean of the College of Natural Sciences and professor of mathematics at the University of Northern Iowa from 2001 through 2004. He was also a program director in the Division of Mathematical Sciences at the National Science Foundation for 3 years. Earlier in his career he served for 12 years on the mathematics faculty at Arkansas State University. Yang takes the helm from Jim Rubillo, who announced his intentions to retire last year. For more information visit: <http://www.nctm.org/>

AYPF HOLDS BRIEFING ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On Friday, June 26, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) held an event on innovative approaches to professional development, featuring leaders from two elementary school districts with unique programs. At the event, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) released its report, *A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad*. René Islas presented NSDC's report and emphasized that professional development is key to improving student performance. He believes that a major achievement in improving

education quality would be to minimize variation from classroom to classroom, and that “professional learning” is the way to do that. Superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District, Christopher Steinhauser described his district’s professional development program. It requires two years of required professional development, and access to a “teaching coach” who visits new teachers twice a month to check in on their progress. He opined that professional learning should include teachers, be content based, and that partnerships are a great way to build and sustain effective professional development programs, versus “one-shot” conferences. Michael Whitmore, Director of the Teacher Residency Program at the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), presented the lessons the AUSL has learned through its experiences turning around chronically failing schools in Chicago. He emphasized that AUSL is successful because of its “Teacher-Centric” model of bringing together a teacher residency program with a model for turning around low achieving schools. By combining these two techniques, AUSL can develop high-quality teachers and bring them to the schools where they are most needed. For more information or to read NSDC’s report, visit <http://www.avpf.org/forumbriefs/2009/fb062609.htm>

ED AWARDING THE LAST OF PHASE I SFS FUNDING

The Department of Education (ED) has been awarding the final Phase I State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) Funds made available by the passage of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*. ED has been awarding SFS Funds to eligible states that have completed Part 1 of the State Stabilization Application. July 1 was the deadline for states to apply for funding, and, so far, 47 states have been approved to receive over \$26 billion in SFS Funds. Over the past week, \$178.5 million was approved for West Virginia, \$625 million was approved for South Carolina, \$297 million was approved for Arkansas, Hawaii was approved for \$129 million, and \$656 million was approved for Alabama. These funds will help reform education and protect the jobs of teachers. In the coming days, ED will continue to award the first phase of SFS funding to states that have applied. According to ED, guidance will be issued in the near future on the specific requirements a state must meet to receive funding in the second phase of SFS awards. This funding will be issued on a rolling basis. 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/>.

NEW REPORT ON IMPROVING ONLINE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

On Tuesday, June 30, Project Tomorrow and Blackboard Inc. released their new report, *Learning in the 21st Century: 2009 Trends Update*. The report found that online or virtual schools have been established in 29 states. However, despite this new level of awareness and state-level commitment, online classes are primarily offered to teachers (58 percent) versus students (31 percent). According to the report, almost half of middle and high students are interested in taking classes online, and more than 40 percent believe online classes should be part of school. However, only 10 percent have taken an online class through their school. Rather than being offered widely, online learning is available only as a supplement to classroom learning in K-12 education. The report recommends that for online learning to become a prominent feature in most schools, teachers need to be prepared to teach online, not just have experienced online learning during their professional development. The report also found that schools offering online classes provide courses primarily focused on remediation services and credit recovery, by offering scheduling alternatives and keeping students

engaged in school. Also, online classes are most frequently taught with some face-to-face component. Funding and teacher preparation for online classes remains the largest barrier to widespread adoption of new technology. To understand and engage intrinsically-motivated students, teachers and principals need to not only study online, but they must also learn how to effectively use the internet in a way that allows students to have more control of the learning process. For more information on *Learning in the 21st Century*, visit: http://www.blackboard.com/resources/k12/Bb_K12_09_TrendsUpdate.pdf.

CEP FORUM DISCUSSES FEDERAL ROLE IN HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

On Wednesday, the Center for Education Policy held a forum to discuss Dr. Russell Rumberger's paper on the federal role in improving high schools. This is the sixth such forum to discuss papers commissioned by the Center as part of their project to rethink the federal role in elementary and secondary education. Highlighting his report's findings, Rumberger said that any attempts at high school reform would logically involve reforming the lower school system and that community-based programs are a key element of any high school reform strategy. Rumberger also noted that it is necessary to identify the purposes and goals of high school, because parents and teachers alike believe high school is for more than academic education. He explained that there are a number of different approaches to high school reform (targeted, comprehensive, collaborative, systemic), and current research does not reveal any particular style to be more successful than the others, and any strategy for improving high schools "will not be successful until critical aspects of capacity and context are improved." Rumberger described capacity as not only quantity of resources, but quality of resources and the desire to use resources efficiently. He recommends that the federal government expand the type of data collected by the National Assessment of Education Progress; that it assist states in deciding what type of reform will work best given the capacity of the schools there; that it work to align state and federal policy initiatives, and that it develop better data systems which measure not just outcomes, but also capacity. During the question and answer portion of the forum, Rumberger explained that to measure capacity, teacher surveys could be used to identify indicators, namely whether the teachers feel supported and engaged at their schools. Rumberger also noted that assessment is part of the solution, but not the whole solution. This report is still being finalized. For more information on this forum, visit: <http://www.cep-dc.org/>.

ED ANNOUNCES NEW ARRA GUIDANCE FOR IDEA

On Wednesday, the Department of Education released new guidance for Part B of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*, which provides guidance on utilizing ARRA funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This new guidance will add a new Section H to Part B of IDEA, discussing the use of stabilization funds to meet the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements of Part B of IDEA. The MOE requirements state that states are eligible to receive ARRA Part B funds as long as the state does not reduce the amount of financial support provided to special education and disability programs. According to the new Section H, State and Local Educational Agencies (SEAs and LEAs) are permitted to use education stabilization funds provided by ARRA to fund special education programs in order to meet the MOE requirement of IDEA Part B. To view the specific guidance provided by the Department, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/idea-guidance-070109.pdf>.

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3. New Publications

“Keeping the Middle Grades Students on the Path to High School” Southern Regional Education Board (June 2009).

http://www.sreb.org/publications/2009/09E04_Keeping_Middle_Grades.pdf

“Learning in the 21st Century: 2009 Trends Update” Project Tomorrow (June 2009).

http://www.tomorrow.org/Speakup/learning21Report_2009_Update.html

“CTE’s Role in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math” Association for Career and Technical Education (June 2009).

http://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Online_Media/files/STEM_Issue_Brief.pdf

“Characteristics of Public School Districts in the United States: Results from the 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey” National Center for Education Statistics (June 2009).

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009320>

“Characteristics of Public, Private, and Bureau of Indian Education Elementary and Secondary Schools in the United States: Results from the 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey” National Center for Education Statistics (June 2009).

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009321>

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4. In the News

“L.A. Group In Talks to Run D.C. High School” Washington Post (7/2/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/01/AR2009070104057.html?sub=AR>

“Community Colleges See Demand Spike, Funding Slip” Washington Post (7/1/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/30/AR2009063003786.html>

“Schools Out, But Factoids Are In.” Boston Globe (7/1/09).

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2009/07/01/schools_out_and_factoids_are_in_for_teachers/

“In Uncertain Times, Valedictorians Look Ahead” New York Times (6/30/09).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/28/nyregion/28valedictorians.html?ref=education>

“Note to Union: Don’t Mess With Success at This High-Achieving Charter Middle School” Washington Post (6/29/09).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/28/AR2009062802327.html>

“New Plan Ties Reduced College Loan Payments to Income” New York Times (6/29/09).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/30/education/30college.html? r=1&hpw>

“Chief Justice Roberts: High Court Not Setting School Rules” USA Today (6/29/09).
<http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-29-supreme-court-schools N.htm>

“In High Drop-Out Camden, Big Picture Kids Prep for College” USA Today (6/29/09).
<http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-29-big-picture-camden N.htm>

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