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Krista 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 uttered a collective sigh of relief on Friday afternoon as the *Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008* (HR 1424) squeaked by on the House floor and Members could at last depart from Washington, DC and return to the campaign trail. The week began with a stunning defeat of very similar legislation by the very same House Members—a vote that sent the stock market into a tailspin. At that time angry calls from constituents were clogging the Capitol switchboard at an alarming rate and the \$700 billion Economic Recovery Package—previously given the unfortunate moniker the “Bush Bailout”—failed to garner more than 65 Republican votes, despite pleas from the President and the GOP House Leadership. The Democrats found 144 Members willing to walk the plank for the economy, rebuffing the strong public outcry against the measure.

While the House leaders from both sides of the aisle licked their wounds and tried to regroup, the Senate took up the failed proposal and ran with it. Several sweeteners were added, including \$3 billion for the Secure Rural Schools Program and a tax bill that the Congress had been trying to enact for the past nine months without success. It proved to be the right formula. The bill passed with just 25 Senators casting dissenting votes. That set the stage for showdown number two on the other side of the Capitol, where the modified bill passed on a vote of 263-171.

Though the Senate was able to get the bailout bill rolling, Republicans successfully blocked an effort to pass a second economic stimulus package that would have put another \$56 billion into the stalled economy. The President was poised to veto the measure at the end of the day so Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) was quick to say “uncle” when Republicans voiced their objections.

All the news about spending was not bad this week. On Tuesday, the President signed into law H.R. 2638, the *FY 2009 Consolidated Security Disaster Assistance and Continuing Appropriations Act*. This \$630 billion measure will keep all government agencies operating through March 6, 2009, allowing time for a new Congress and a new Administration to negotiate an omnibus spending bill sometime in January or February for the remainder of the fiscal year. Though education advocates were disappointed that the education bills drafted by the House and Senate, both of which provide vital increases in spending, were not debated, they remain optimistic that the omnibus bill will exceed the spending level requested by President Bush last February by \$25 billion.

As Congress departed Washington, DC, Members and the public, education advocates among them, turned their full attention to the campaign trail. November 4 is just 32 days away. Before most Members made it to the airport today, Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) announced dates for a likely lame duck session on November 17-19. Those of us left behind won't even get a chance to miss them.

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2. Senators Clinton and Bond Host Briefing on Pre-K Efforts

On Wednesday, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Senator Kit Bond (R-MO) and Pre-K Now sponsored a congressional briefing highlighting the importance of federal and state partnerships in supporting states' voluntary pre-kindergarten efforts. "America's Pre-K Movement: State Progress on Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and How Congress Can Help" featured a timely discussion among speakers from the federal, state, and local levels of our nation's investments in pre-k education. "Investment in quality pre-k is a win-win – it provides immediate economic relief to families and ensures that children are prepared to thrive and succeed when they start school," said Pre-K Now Executive Director Libby Doggett. Their co-sponsorship of the briefing underscored Senators Clinton's and Bond's commitment to reintroducing the *Ready to Learn Act*, a bill to expand and improve state voluntary pre-k, in the next Congress.

Governor Phil Bredesen (D-TN) emphasized the value of federal partnership in improving and expanding pre-k services in Tennessee. Despite the tough financial climate and strong competition over every state tax dollar, Tennessee has steadily increased its investment in high-quality pre-k. Bredesen urged Congress to establish a matching grant program under which governors could establish high-quality programs. Dr. Ramona Paul, Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction, called her state of Oklahoma the "shining star for pre-k." Oklahoma serves the greatest percentage of 4-year-olds of any state, at 76 percent. Paul cited ongoing research at Georgetown University that suggests pre-k makes a difference for all kids, especially English language learners. Paul said her state has overcome the shortage of qualified teachers and available facilities by certifying childcare and Head Start professionals to teach pre-k in their centers.

Finally, Diane Addison, Director of Early Childhood Education in the Hannibal Public Schools of Missouri attested to the importance of both home visitation and quality

preschool in preparing children for academic success. She encouraged collaboration among programs like Parents As Teachers, Head Start, local childcare providers, and school districts in delivering quality early education.

More information and a video recording of the briefing are available online at www.preknow.org.

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3. NALC Hosts Briefing on Using Technology to Improve Student Performance

On Thursday, the National Adolescent Literacy Coalition (NALC) held a briefing, “Powering Up: Building Capacities of 21st Century Teachers,” which focused on the importance of providing young people the skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century and improving communication and relationships between teachers and students.

Dr. Jabari Mahiri of the University of California, Berkeley, discussed the importance of “21st Century Literacies,” and the pivotal role they play in education. As one of the directors of the Technology Equity and Culture High-schools (TEACH) research initiative, Dr. Mahiri works with urban schools and communities to improve student achievement and educational equity. To this end, he focuses his efforts on improving effective teaching and learning methods by researching the urban youth culture and the importance of digitally mediated learning. Dr. Mahiri explained that in order to properly educate students, teachers must be required to master more than the disciplinary knowledge of a subject. He believes teachers must understand the students’ perspectives of the school environment, the students’ cultures, and the utilities that modern technology can provide for education.

To improve the role that technology and students’ cultural literacy play in instruction, Dr. Mahiri cited the International Society for Technology in Education’s (ISTE) “National Educational Technology Standards for Students” (NETS·S). The NETS·S proposes five standards that are intended to improve how teachers engage their students, the teachers’ professional practice, and student learning and performance including:

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity
2. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments
3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning
4. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility
5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership

Dr. Mahiri explained that by using modern technologies in education and relating education to students on a familiar cultural level, teachers will keep more students in their classrooms, reduce the number of dropouts, and improve overall student performance.

For more information on NALC, visit: <http://www.adolescentliteracy.net/>. For more information on ISTE, visit: <http://www.iste.org/>.

4. In Brief

US CHAMBER HOSTS TALK RADIO FORUM ON EDUCATION

On Friday, October 3, the US Chamber of Commerce hosted an event that showcased a number of Talk Radio personalities and education advocates to discuss education reform efforts and how they are discussed in the media in this presidential election year. The event featured personalities with perspectives from the left to the right, although there was unanimity in the opinion that public education in the United States needs improvement. It was noted that the broadcasters' audiences generally feature two extremes: those who believe that education is a personal and familial responsibility that can largely be remedied with increased parental involvement and effort, and those who believe that more public investments in schools and reform efforts will fix what ails the system. The discussion among the panelists hit points familiar to those invested in education policy, although the US Chamber noted repeatedly that the business industry is the largest consumer of public education, and is currently very "unsatisfied" with the product available. Related to efforts to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, there was a call for strengthening the law in the upcoming reauthorization, and a general sentiment that the accountability provisions might change, but will not, and perhaps should not, be eliminated. Of course, the issue of adequately funding the measure was discussed as well, and there was a general agreement that the current structure of the law's funding formulas set up a system where the poorest states—those unable to contribute "their share" to public education under the law's current formula—are inadvertently punished for their smaller investments. As a result, the richer states get more federal funds, while those who need the funds the most are left struggling. For more information on the Chamber and the efforts of its Institute for a Competitive Workforce, visit <http://www.uschamber.com/icw/default>.

AYPF HOLDS FORUM ON DUAL ENROLLMENT

On Friday, September 26, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) held a forum, "Jumpstart on College and Careers: Dual Enrollment Research, Policies, and Effective Practice." The event highlighted the increasing popularity of dual enrollment as a strategy to support and encourage more students to attend postsecondary institutions. In recent years, dual enrollment programs have been part of the overall strategy to encourage high school students, particularly non-traditional and low-income or minority students, to matriculate in higher education institutions. Many dual enrollment programs provide support to students who would not otherwise consider themselves college-bound. To govern these growing programs, forty states have policies that address local dual enrollment programs. To date, there has been broad participation in dual enrollment programs; for example, during the 2002-2003 school year, students took courses for dual credit at 71 percent of public high schools, and 51 percent of colleges had high school students enrolled in college courses. Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) has introduced legislation on this topic, the *Fast Track to College Act of 2008* (S. 3508). (A similar bill has been introduced in the House, H.R. 6926, sponsored by Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI).) The bill would establish a competitive grant program for high schools that partner with a postsecondary institution to allow low-income students to simultaneously earn a high

school diploma and two years of college credit without having to pay tuition. For more information on dual enrollment research, visit www.postsecondaryresearch.org.

ED AND BOOK PUBLISHERS HOLD BOOK DONATION CAMPAIGN

On Tuesday, First Book, the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and Random House Children's Books launched the "2008 Back to School Book Donation," at Jennie Moore Elementary School in Mt. Pleasant, SC. Through this book drive, Random House will provide over 300,000 new books to schools, libraries, and literacy organizations serving low-income youth, nationwide. The 2008 Back to School Book Donation is the latest effort in a multi-year Book Donation Campaign started by First Book, ED, and several major U.S. book publishing companies. The Campaign is designed to promote literacy and provide books for all students, especially students from low-income families. Since 2006, the Campaign has successfully distributed over 2.9 million children's books across the country. For more information about the Book Donation Campaign, visit: www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/bookcampaign/index.html.

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5. New Publications

"The Impact of Two Professional Development Interventions on Early Reading Instruction and Achievement" US Department of Education (September 2008).
<http://www.air.org/news/documents/20084030%20web%20ready%20full%20report.pdf>

"Set for Success: Improving Reading and Mathematics Achievement in the Early Grades" Southern Regional Education Board (September 2008).
http://www.sreb.org/publications/2008/08E05_Set_for_Success.pdf

"Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008" National Center for Education Statistics (September 2008).
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008084>

"Trends in California Teacher Demand: A County and Regional Perspective" Regional Educational Laboratory West (September 2008).
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2008057ppA-8.pdf

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6. In the News

"State Looks at Ways to Train, Retain More Teachers" Baltimore Sun (10/3/08).
<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/education/bal-md.teachers03oct03,0,111768.story>

"Banned Books, Chapter 2" Washington Post (10/3/08).
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/02/AR2008100203644.html>

“Needy Students Closing Test Gap Under ‘No Child’” Washington Post (10/2/08).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/01/AR2008100103096.html>

“Teachers to Be Measured Based on Students’ Standardized Test Scores” New York Times (10/1/08).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/02/education/02teachers.html? r=1&ref=education&oref=slogin>

“Bank Limits Fund Access by Colleges, Inciting Fears” New York Times (10/1/08).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/02/education/02college.html?ref=education>

“Students’ Incentive Banks Open” Washington Post (9/30/08).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/29/AR2008092903045.html>

“An F School? Depends on How It’s Judged” New York Times (9/29/08).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/28/education/28grades.html? r=1&oref=slogin>

“Study of Standardized Admissions Test is Big Draw at College Conference” New York Times (9/29/08).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/29/education/29admissions.html>

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7. About WPLLC

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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.