

# *The Education Report*

*A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from*

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**March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002**

## **No Child Left Behind?**

Just one month after signing the **H.R. 1** education reform bill pledging to provide funding so that No Child is Left Behind, President Bush has recommended a \$90 million funding cut to these programs. On February 26, 2002, the Senate Budget Committee held a hearing to discuss, among other things, how the President's FY 2003 budget proposal affects the Department of Education. Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) noted his disappointment with the President's proposal, and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) made a statement regarding her concern with the President's treatment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization. She stated her concern that the FY 2003 budget cuts funding for teacher quality and class size reduction activities, freezes funding for afterschool programs and Safe and Drug Free Schools, and does not fully fund the federal share of special education costs. State specific data highlighting the gap in funding promised in the ESEA but missing from the budget can be located at: [www.nea.org/lac/fy03edfunding/](http://www.nea.org/lac/fy03edfunding/).

The education panel, represented by National Education Association (NEA) President Bob Chase recommended a \$12 billion budget increase above the Administration's budget request. This figure, among other things, would provide a \$1 billion increase in FY 2003 Title I funding, guarantee \$2.45 billion increases to IDEA over the next six years and fund the Math-Science Partnership program at its authorized level of \$450 million. Chase further stated that the NEA strongly opposed pitting one education program against another. In this respect, the NEA opposes the Administration's proposal to pay for the needed FY 2002 \$1.3 billion Pell Grant supplemental appropriation by eliminating 20 elementary and secondary education programs.

Unfortunately for Chase and members of the education community, Chairman Conrad stated that current budget restraints would not make the requested \$12 billion increase feasible. No comment was made regarding the Pell Grant supplemental appropriation. Testimony for this hearing can be located at: <http://www.senate.gov/~budget/democratic/hearingstate.html>.

## **OERI Reauthorization Moves Forward**

Congressman Mike Castle (R-DE) made significant progress this week in his effort to reauthorize, and in the process, revamp the Office of Educational Reform and Improvement (OERI) at the Department of Education. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, Castle introduced H.R. 3801, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. In a press release announcing the introduction, Castle stated:

“This bill will improve the quality of federal scientific research in education by requiring that research be based on valid, scientific findings. It is time to bring education science up to the standards of scientific inquiry that has given us the most advanced medical system in the world.”

The bill maintains OERI within the Department of Education, but renames, streamlines and revises the structure and content of the activities of that office. Castle hopes for speedy, bi-partisan consideration of the bill, but as yet the Democrats have not endorsed the legislation.

On Thursday, Assistant Secretary Dr. Grover “Russ” Whitehurst, head of the Office of Education Research at the Department of Education, testified before Castle’s Subcommittee on Education Reform within the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Though he refused to specifically endorse the bill, as the Department had not yet reviewed its recommendations, his comments indicated general support for the approach contained in H.R. 3801. Whitehurst spoke of the need to “reinvigorate” the agency and education researchers generally. He said the 100 or so references to “scientifically based education research” that can be found within the No Child Left Behind Act have intensified the need for valid data about the efficacy of education curriculum, training and instructional practices.

A panel of witnesses followed Whitehurst’s testimony. Jim Horne, Secretary of Education in the State of Florida, urged the Committee to eliminate the strong political influence he felt permeated the current structure of the agency. Dr. Douglas Christianson, Nebraska Education Commissioner, came closest to defending the agency by expressing strong support for the work of the national lab in his region. Both Castle’s bill and the Administration support restricting the scope of work of the labs to providing technical assistance. Research and evaluation functions would fall to new National Centers for both in H.R. 3801. Dr. Ann Bryant, head of the National School Boards Association, said the work funded by OERI should provide “school-based and customer driven technical assistance.” She urged the Committee to support training for local districts that will build their capacity to deliver the highest quality programs to students.

Several Members present indicated strong support for the labs and centers in their districts and wanted assurance that new legislation would offer them an

opportunity to continue to compete for federal support. Though the Senate has indicated interest in moving a reauthorization bill this year, no hearings have been scheduled and no bills have been introduced.

### **Negotiators for Title I Rules Development**

The U.S. Education Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education recently announced the identities of the 21 members of the negotiating committee that will help develop new rules related to standards and assessments under Title I (Part A) of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The negotiators include state and local education administrators, teachers, school board members, as well as parents. The committee will meet in Washington, D.C. on March 11-13 and March 19-20, from 9 am to 5 pm each day, to negotiate draft regulations that the Department already has released.

The meetings will be open to those who wish to observe the process, but a location has not yet been determined. The final proposed rules will be available for public comment when published in the *Federal Register* by May 1, 2002.

For further information, visit: [www.ed.gov/nclb/rulemaking/](http://www.ed.gov/nclb/rulemaking/).

#### **List of Negotiators:**

State administrators and state boards of education:

- Judy Catchpole, superintendent of public instruction, Wyoming Department of Education (DOE)
- Jim Horne, secretary of education, Florida DOE
- Dr. Bob Harmon, assistant state superintendent for special programs, Washington Department of Public Instruction
- Rodney Watson, assistant superintendent, Office of Student and School Standards, Louisiana DOE
- Lou Fabrizio, director, Division of Accountability Services, North Carolina DOE
- Rae Belisle, chief counsel, California State Board of Education

Local administrators and local school boards:

- Charlotte Harris, senior director of program development, Boston Public Schools
- J. Alvin Wilbanks, superintendent, Gwinnett County (GA) Public Schools
- Beverly Carroll, Alachua County, Fla. School Board
- Nelson Smith, charter schools, Washington, D.C.

Principals and teachers:

- Avis Cotton, principal, Dardanelle Middle School, Dardanelle, Ark
- Enedelia Schofield, principal, W.L. Henry Elementary School, Hillsboro, Ore
- Patricia Fischer, Title I teacher, Hooker Public Schools, Okla

Students (including at-risk students, migrant students, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and private school students):

- Minnie Pearce, parent, Detroit.
- Arturo Abarca, teacher, Helitrope Elementary School, Los Angeles Unified School District
- Maria Seidner, director, bilingual education, Texas Education Agency
- Dr. Alexa Pochowski, associate commissioner, Kansas DOE
- Myrna Toney, director of migrant education, Wis. DOE
- John R. Clark, assistant superintendent, DOE, Diocese of Allentown, Penn

Business interests:

- John Stevens, director, Texas Business and Education Coalition

U.S. Department of Education:

- Susan B. Neuman, assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education
- Joseph F. Johnson, director, Compensatory Education Programs

### **Special Education Commission Begins Work**

The 24-member President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education began a series of meetings this week that will culminate with a report recommending reforms for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The site for the first meeting was Houston, TX. The schedule for subsequent meetings around the country is as follows:

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| March 6    | Denver, CO      |
| March 13   | Des Moines, IA  |
| March 20   | San Diego, CA   |
| March 21   | Los Angeles, CA |
| April 9-10 | Miami, FL       |
| April 16   | NYC, NY         |
| April 16   | Nashville, TN   |
| May 30-31  | Washington, DC  |

Activity that will lead to a thorough examination of the law is also underway on Capitol Hill. The U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has scheduled an oversight hearing for March 21<sup>st</sup>. Lead Education Staffer for the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Sally Lovejoy, addressed the disabilities caucus of the Congress on the status of the Committee's plans for IDEA. Lovejoy said it would begin oversight hearings shortly, but would not get ahead of the Commission's timetable. Their full report is due in early summer. Among the issues that will be heatedly debated, according to Lovejoy, are mandatory funding, the use of vouchers for special education services, and over-identification of eligible students. Realistically, though a debate will take place, a new law is not likely to reach the President's desk until next year. For more information, please visit:  
[www.ed.gov/inits/commissionsboards/whspecaleducation/sitemap.html](http://www.ed.gov/inits/commissionsboards/whspecaleducation/sitemap.html)

### **High School Counselor's Handbook Available Online**

The U.S. Department of Education recently released the 2002-2003 High School Counselors' Handbook, which describes the student financial aid programs administered by the Department. The publication was designed to help high school counselors advise students on paying for college and encourage them to consider postsecondary education. The full text of the guide is available online at: <http://ifap.ed.gov/chandbooks/0203HiSchCHB.html>.

### **Senate Passed S. Res. 211 to Designate March 2, 2002 As 'Read Across America Day'**

#### **The text of the resolution follows:**

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success, and a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas Americans must be able to read if the Nation is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress, through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) and the new Reading First, Early Reading First, and Improving Literacy Through School Libraries programs, has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and additional resources for reading assistance; and

Whereas more than 40 national associations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to use March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, to celebrate reading:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate--

- (1) designates March 2, 2002, as "Read Across America Day";
- (2) honors Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading;
- (3) encourages parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of Dr. Seuss and in a celebration of reading; and
- (4) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

### **Education Leaders Council Report Contradicts Claims That New Tests Will Bankrupt States**

A controversial new Education Leaders Council (ELC) study indicates that the new testing required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is, in fact, affordable for states. In a previous analysis by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), researchers concluded that testing requirements would cost states as much as \$7 billion. However, according to the ELC study, that finding was misleading because it claimed NASBE used ambiguous figures that showed exaggerated cost differences between federal resources and state costs for the testing. For more information, the report is available at: [www.educationleaders.org](http://www.educationleaders.org). NASBE stands by the findings in its report.

### **National Institute Tackles Engineering Shortage**

With the decrease in engineers in the country, the Institute of Engineering Education is looking for ways to promote engineering education from kindergarten through postsecondary levels. The Institute focuses on: increasing engineering and technology education in high school classrooms, developing one-year college engineering prep programs, and implementing effective programs that will increase the number of engineering graduates. One example is the Infinity Project. This program teaches high school students mathematics, science and engineering concepts through hands-on activities such as: making cell phones, digital instruments, and movie special effects.

Studies show that there are more than 400,000 unfilled engineering positions in the U.S. economy, yet the United States is only producing 60,000 engineers every year. On the other hand, Europe and Asia are producing 3-5 times as many engineers each year. For more information, visit [www.theinstitute.smu.edu](http://www.theinstitute.smu.edu).

## Rehabilitation Services Administration Announces Public Forum

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) recently announced that it will hold a public forum regarding the Federal Rehabilitation Act, which authorizes the funding of vocational rehabilitation programs serving people with disabilities, independent living programs, projects with industry, client assistant programs, rehabilitation training programs, protection and advocacy, recreation and other demonstration and research programs. If you are interested in providing public testimony or would like more information, please call: 718-933-5650. For those who cannot attend, it is recommended that you provide a written copy of your testimony for the public record. For more information on the act please visit: [www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/Policy](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/Policy).

Date: March 19<sup>th</sup>. 2002  
Time: 1:00 pm-6:00 pm  
Place: Metropolitan Hotel (Ballroom), Lexington Ave & 51<sup>st</sup> Street,  
Featured Guest: Joanne Wilson, Commissioner, RSA

### **107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION**

#### TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>March 25 - April 5</b>     | <b>Senate not in session</b>                 |
| <b>March 29</b>               | <i>Good Friday</i>                           |
| <b>March 31</b>               | <i>Easter</i>                                |
| <b>April 8 (Mon.)</b>         | <b>Senate reconvenes</b>                     |
| <b>May 27 - 31</b>            | <b>Senate not in session</b>                 |
| <b>May 27</b>                 | <i>Memorial Day (observed)</i>               |
| <b>June 3 (Mon.)</b>          | <b>Senate reconvenes</b>                     |
| <b>July 1 - 5</b>             | <b>Senate not in session</b>                 |
| <b>July 4</b>                 | <i>Independence Day</i>                      |
| <b>July 8 (Mon.)</b>          | <b>Senate reconvenes</b>                     |
| <b>August 5 - September 2</b> | <b>Senate not in session (August Recess)</b> |
| <b>September 2</b>            | <i>Labor Day</i>                             |
| <b>September 3 (Tues.)</b>    | <b>Senate reconvenes</b>                     |
| <b>September 16 (Mon.)</b>    | <b>Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)</b>                 |
| <b>October 4</b>              | <b>Target adjournment</b>                    |