

The Education Report

A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from

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Senate HELP Committee Has an IDEA

On Thursday, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee held an oversight hearing on IDEA reauthorization. Committee members voiced their concerns over teacher quality, burdensome paperwork requirements, discipline of disabled students and funding for IDEA. Several panel members expressed that it is time for the federal government to finally fulfill their pledge to fully fund 40 percent of IDEA's costs to states.

"Many of us aren't going to wait another moment, never mind another year, to have [mandatory full funding] happen," said committee member Hillary Clinton (D-NY). "It's not fair to disabled children; it's not fair to all children."

However, according to National Council of Disability (NCD) Board member, Lilliam Rangel-Diaz, the problem is not funding, but implementation. NCD released a report in 2000 showing that all states have experienced problems in implementing IDEA.

According to the Education Department's special education chief, Robert Pasternack, the two main problems with IDEA are accountability and teacher quality. Pasternack suggested that schools be held accountable to ensure that disabled students are learning in the classroom. He suggested a universal test that could be used to assess each student's development.

Pasternack also addressed the problem that many teachers feel that they are being bogged down with paperwork and meetings. They complain that these requirements are getting in the way of doing their job, and in some cases are driving teachers from the profession.

House Committee Passes OERI Overhaul Measure

The House Education and Workforce Committee passed by voice vote the Education Science Reform Act (H.R. 3801), which is designed to reauthorize programs in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) at the U.S. Education Department. However, there is an understanding that fine tuning of this bill will still need to take place prior to it being brought to the House for passage.

The measure would replace the current OERI with what is described as a new, more autonomous Academy of Education Science that would conduct research based on new high quality standards.

For FY 2003, the bill authorizes \$400 million for the Academy of Education Sciences, \$111 million for the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) and the National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP), and \$189 million for regional assistance.

During committee consideration of the legislation, three Democratic amendments were offered by: Congressman David Wu (D-OR), Congressman Robert Andrews (D-NJ), and Congressman Rush Holt (D-NJ). Wu highlighted the value and the importance of the OERI bill in relation to the No Child Left Behind Act, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. He also urged Subcommittee Chairman Michael Castle (R-DE)—the bill's sponsor—and Congressman Dale Kildee (D-MI) to "improve the bill further before the floor and work with the Senate to include in the legislation important education technology provisions regarding education technology, which should include the continuation of the Regional Technology program." Following this discussion, Wu highlighted the importance and positive work of the Regional Labs, Comprehensive Assistance Centers, and the Math and Science Consortia programs.

Andrews also urged that the language of the bill be strengthened for NCES (National Center of Education Statistics) and the Academy to study the relationship between education finance and student achievement gains. Additionally, he offered an amendment that addressed school health issues. Lastly, Holt offered a similar amendment that emphasized restoring the Eisenhower Math and Science Consortia and the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Math and Science.

Overall, the Chairman offered positive remarks regarding the importance of the Math and Science Consortia. More information will be available on Monday, March 25th, 2002 when the legislative text, as passed by the Committee, is expected to be released. For additional information visit:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press107/oeri32002.htm>

Bush Administration Submits FY02 Supplemental Plan

The Bush Administration asked Congress yesterday for Fiscal Year 2002 supplemental appropriations of \$27.1 billion. What comes as a shock to many is that it does not cover the \$1.3 billion Pell Grant shortfall. This could cause problems for other education programs that now may face funding cuts in order for this shortfall to be remedied. Currently the President's budget contains the only language addressing the shortfall, and that proposal would cut funding to several "low-priority" programs to provide the \$1.3 billion for FY 2002. However, this is only a proposal right now.

Representative Lindsey Graham Introduces Bill to Increase Funding for Teaching Professionals

Representative Lindsey Graham (R-SC) introduced a bill that would help high-need public schools attract quality teachers. This bill is called The Class Act (Canceling Loans to Allow School Systems to Attract Classroom Teachers) and would allow up to \$17,500 in student loan forgiveness for math, science and special education teachers that serve in low-income schools for 5 years. The increase in federal support by President Bush last year will help states and local schools train, recruit and retain quality teachers.

With the shortage of Special Education teachers and a large number of teachers that will eventually retire, the loan forgiveness program will help to ensure that high quality professionals teach disadvantaged students.

Ipsos-Reid Poll Shows Public Support for Increased Education Funding

An Ipsos-Reid poll, conducted between March 8 and 10, shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans see education as an essential component in our efforts to strengthen our nation's security. The poll of 1,000 adults, commissioned by the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), reported that 85% view the need for stronger national security as a "good reason" to increase federal education funding. CEF believes that this, and similar Ipsos-Reid polls, will be valuable ammunition in the fight for increased education funding.

House Education and the Workforce Committee Approves “Museum and Libraries Services Act”

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce this week cleared the bill (H.R. 3784) that would reauthorize the Museum and Libraries Services Act (MLSA). This bill was introduced by Chairman Pete Hoekstra (R-MI) and Representative Tim Roemer (D-IN) and is designed to support library and museum services. The bill authorizes \$300 million for libraries in FY 2003, \$50 million for museums in FY 2003, and such sums for libraries and museum for FYs 2004-2008.

The MLSA bill makes several modifications to current law to streamline and strengthen museum and library services. The bill:

- Ensures that library activities are coordinated with activities under the *No Child Left Behind* Act that President Bush signed into law on January 8;
- Eliminates references to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and consolidates its advisory responsibilities under the Museum Services Board, which will expand to include library services. The purpose of this change is to consolidate museum and library board activities under one statute;
- Authorizes the Institute of Museum and Library Services Director to grant a National Award for Library Service and a National Award for Museum Service;
- Ensures that administrative funds are also used to conduct annual analyses to identify needs and trends of services provided under museum and library programs; and
- Increases the minimum state allotment for library programs to \$500,000 (roughly a 46 percent increase from current law).

House Science Subcommittee Members Honor Math and Science Presidential Awardees

On Wednesday, the House Science Subcommittee on Research held a hearing for the 2nd year in a row to honor and praise the President’s 2001 Awardees for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. The hearing focused on teacher perspectives and how the federal government can help improve K-12th grade science and math education. Four teachers representing elementary, middle, and secondary math and science educators testified: Susan Kielb, mathematics and life science teacher, Tappan Middle School, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Jana Rowland, science teacher, Hydro-Eakly Elementary School, Hydro, Oklahoma; Bill Schrandt, mathematics teacher, Valley High School, Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Dr. Frances Hess, science teacher, Cooperstown High School, Cooperstown, New York.

Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) congratulated each of the math and science teachers not only for winning the Presidential Award, but also for doing the incredible work that enabled them to earn it. Chairman Boehlert asked each of the teachers how the federal government could better help them do their jobs.

Panelist Susan Kielb testified that federal monies should be used to pursue top graduates in college mathematics and science fields and to award them grants to spend a semester as an intern with a master teacher. She stressed that it was absolutely necessary for these students to observe what good teaching looks like before placing them in a classroom on their own. She emphasized that “shortcuts in preparing teachers for the classroom will not work.”

The prestigious Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching are the nation’s highest commendation for K-12th grade math and science teachers. Four awards for each state (and four federal jurisdictions) are made each year – one each for elementary math, elementary science, secondary math, and secondary science – for a total of 216 awards. Nominations from each state are reviewed at the state level and a national selection committee of distinguished scientists and teachers selects finalists. Each award includes a grant of \$7,500 from the National Science Foundation to the recipient’s school, as well as a citation signed by the President. The program was established by Congress and signed into law (P.L. 98-377) by former President Reagan in 1983. The law was amended in 1988 to include elementary teachers (P.L. 100-570).

ED Announces Mary Elizabeth Davidson Cohen As Region VII Representative

Mary Elizabeth Davidson Cohen has been appointed as the Secretary's regional representative (SRR) for Region VII of the U.S. Department of Education. With headquarters in Kansas City, Region VII includes the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. The Department of Education maintains 10 regional offices throughout the country to represent department programs and interests.

As the secretary's regional representative, Cohen will serve as the department's liaison to state and local education agencies, public and private schools, colleges and universities and elected representatives of local and state government organizations. Cohen will also help in disseminating information about department programs and initiatives to key constituency groups including parents, members of the business community, and civic leaders.

Cohen previously served as vice president for adult and continuing education and dean of the graduate school at Saint Mary College in Leavenworth, Kan., from 1997 to 1999. She also served as assistant director of the William T. Kemper Foundation from 1993 to 1997, and as assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Kansas Regents Center from 1976 to 1992.

Cohen received a doctorate in education administration from the University of Kansas in 1977, her master of arts in science education for elementary teachers from Columbia University in 1962, and her bachelor of science in education from the University of Missouri at Columbia in 1958

President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education

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 and it held a March 20th meeting in San Diego and a March 21st meeting in Los Angeles. The schedule for subsequent meetings around the country is as follows:

April 9-10 Miami, FL
April 16 NYC, NY
April 16 Nashville, TN
May 30-31 Washington, DC

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-ED Hearing Schedule on Education

Wednesday April 10, 2002

10:15am-12:15pm - Secretary of Education - President's
FY03 Budget

Thursday April 18, 2002

9:45am-12:00pm - Members of Congress

Tuesday April 30, 2002

2:00pm-4:00pm - Public Witnesses

Thursday May 2, 2002

9:45am-12:00pm - Public Witnesses

Tuesday May 7, 2002

2:00pm-4:00pm - Public Witnesses

Thursday May 9, 2002

9:45am-12:00pm - Public Witnesses

Tuesday May 14, 2002

2:00pm-4:00pm - Public Witnesses

107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

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