

# *The Education Report*

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

*Washington Partners, LLC*

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**June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

## **Senate Passes FY02 Supplemental Appropriations Bill**

Early this morning, the Senate passed a \$31.6 billion FY02 Supplemental Appropriations bill (H.R. 4775) by a vote of 71-22. Not included in this bill was a \$150 amendment to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program proposed by Sen. Kennedy (D-MA). The House passed their \$28.8 billion version of the bill on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The White House has stated that it believes that the Senate version provides more money than can be spent this year and has threatened to veto the legislation unless it is substantially modified in conference. House and Senate appropriators will now attempt to settle their differences on the legislation with the hope of sending an acceptable bill to the President before the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess. The President initially requested \$27.1 billion for the bill.

## **Pittsburgh Hosts Department of Education Conference on Faith-Based Community Organizations**

The Department of Education held the first of several conferences on combining faith-based initiatives with the Department of Education's "No Child Left Behind" initiatives. The idea behind the conference according to Under Secretary of Education Gene Hickok is "to level the playing field so that these (faith-based) organizations will have the same access to funding opportunities as other organizations." Conference attendees included local religious leaders, community leaders, public and private school officials and local and regional government officials. Attendees were instructed on the availability of public/private partnerships made possible by *No Child Left Behind* legislation.

Attendees also learned about federal grant availability and received grant writing advice. The departments of Labor, Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and the Corporation for National and Community Service also discussed the availability of faith-based grants within their respective agencies.

For more information visit: <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/05-2002/05302002b.html>

## **Department of Education Unveils Strategic plan for 2002-2007**

The Department of Education has unveiled its strategic plan for 2002-2007. The plan has six specific goals:

1. To create a culture of achievement
2. Improve student achievement
3. Develop safe schools and strong character
4. Strengthen the quality of educational research
5. Enhance the quality of and access to postsecondary and adult education
6. Establish management excellence

With regards to overall goals, Secretary Paige outlined a plan to change an educational culture from one of “compliance and susceptibility to instructional fads to a culture of achievement, professionalism and results.”

Within the department itself, Paige wants to stress accountability. Along with several other goals, Paige outlined five specific goals that coincide with the President’s Management Agenda (PMA):

1. Strategic management of human capital
2. Competitive sourcing
3. Improved financial management
4. Expanded e-government
5. Budget and performance integration

The entire plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/stratplan2002-07/stratplan2002-07.doc>

## **Study Recommends Increasing Teacher Compensation**

A report released by the Progressive Policy Institute details recommendations for altering teacher compensation patterns, focusing on increasing overall pay. The report advocates a compensation system that would attract more teachers, give them incentives to take tougher assignments (failing schools), stay on the job longer, increase student achievement and force poor teachers out of the system.

The specifics of the new system are detailed in the report, but it is based around the idea of paying teachers more and in return expecting more out of them. With increased wages, teaching jobs can become more competitive with the private sector, thus attracting better talent. Another key aspect is that current pay systems reward seniority and continuing education instead of rewarding results and achievement. The final suggestion concerns allowing states and local authorities more flexibility in constructing their own pay and bonus systems.

The full report can be downloaded at:

[http://www.ppionline.org/ppi\\_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=110&subsecid=135&contentid=250543](http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=110&subsecid=135&contentid=250543)

### **First Lady Opens Endowment for School Libraries**

First Lady Laura Bush opened her endowment for the Laura Bush Foundation for Americas Libraries with \$5 million dollars in initial pledges. Laura Bush chose chairman and CEO of Marriott International Inc., Bill Marriott to serve as chairman of the foundation. The announcement was made at the end of the White House Conference on School Libraries. The conference was designed to discuss government policy issues, the latest research and methods that result in successful local libraries. More information on the foundation can be found at: [www.laurabushfoundation.org](http://www.laurabushfoundation.org).

### **Preliminary Recommendations from President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education**

The final meetings of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education will occur on June 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary task force reports were made to commission members at the May 30-31 meeting. Final recommendations will appear in the Federal Register by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

In terms of accountability, recommendations were made to improve assessment, monitoring and other accountability systems for special ed in addition to changes in parental choice and graduation options. The recommendations open the door for parents to use federal money in the form of vouchers to move their child to a more successful school.

The Commission wants to determine what the actual costs of special education are. There is no consistent set of numbers that separately account for general education costs and special education costs for a student who requires special education. Other finance recommendations are based on technical aspects of federal, state and local funding.

Personnel issues touched on by the Commission focus on professional development, increasing incentives for qualified special ed teachers and methods of addressing the special ed teacher shortage. Other recommendations focused on streamlining systems administration and integrating special ed (both financially and educationally) with general education.

With regards to identification and assessment of special ed children, the Commission is in favor of early and accurate screening.

The Commission examined transitional issues as well. The Commission wants to better coordinate the transition process from school to "the real world." The Commission

would like to see special ed students competitive in the entire job market, not just competitive in special ed employment facilities.

More information on the commission can be found at  
<http://www.ed.gov/inits/commissionsboards/whspecialeducation/>

### **House Education and the Workforce Committee launches “Great IDEAs” Website**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the House Subcommittee on Education Reform launched a new website entitled “Great IDEAs.” The website is designed to facilitate communication between the general public and the subcommittee’s work on altering the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The website allows for the public to offer suggestions on how to alter the current Act. Subcommittee Chair Michael Castle (R-DE) stated that the more specific the comments, the better, especially with regards to citing specific clauses and language.

The “Great IDEAs” website can be found at:  
<http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/107th/education/idea/ideacomment/ideaform.htm>

### **New Report Studies Dramatic Increase in Reading Performance at Eight Schools**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, McGraw-Hill Education released a report entitled “Results with Reading Mastery.” The report looks at eight schools across the country that have shown dramatic improvements in reading proficiency scores as a result of the “Reading Mastery” program. Before adopting the “Reading Mastery” program, these schools were posting some of the lowest scores in the nation. After implementing the program, the scores are now some of the highest despite the schools serving a large portion of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and being located in very poor geographic regions. Schools using the Reading Mastery program have fewer disciplinary incidents, fewer referrals to special education programs and show increased academic performance in the social sciences.

The eight schools studied are:

- Portland Elementary School, Portland, Arkansas
- Fort Worth Independent School District, Fort Worth, Texas
- Wilson Primary School, Phoenix, Arizona
- Lebanon School District, Lebanon Pennsylvania
- Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District, Chicago, Illinois
- Roland Park Elementary/Middle School, Baltimore Maryland
- City Springs Elementary School, Baltimore, Maryland
- Eshelman Avenue Elementary, Lomita, California

## **House Subcommittee on Education Reform holds hearing on IDEA Reauthorization**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the House Subcommittee on Education Reform of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing concerning reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The testimonies emphasized three specific points. The first point was that IDEA does not need to be re-written, just slightly revised. It was recently reauthorized in 1997 and has only recently been fully implemented. The second point was to move the bill quickly through the House. The third point was to make clear that although the 40 percent funding level is “popular,” that level of funding should not be its own goal. Programs should be judged in quality of results, not in quantity of funds spent.

Another issue covered in the hearing was the importance of early diagnostic testing of students who could potentially need special education. The earlier the detection of reading difficulties in a child’s life, the better chance that child has at having those problems corrected. Witnesses also stressed that effectively training teachers in effective reading techniques can drastically reduce instances of reading failure in students.

## **Senate Committee on Health Education Labor and Pensions Holds Hearing on IDEA**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Committee on Health Education Labor and Pensions held a hearing on reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The topic of the hearing was accountability, although a great deal of the discussion focused on special ed teachers. Witness Dr. Stan Shaw, Chair of the Department of Special Education of the University of Connecticut spoke on how the state of Connecticut has been able to recruit and retain successful special ed teachers. Dr. Shaw outlined several reasons for Connecticut’s success including the state’s commitment with Professional Development Schools, intensive field experience, integrated training between general and special educators, internships and successful collaborations between higher education institutions and local schools. Other witnesses testified about reading intervention programs, lack of federal enforcement of IDEA and increasing resources to transition from Vocational Rehabilitation, Higher Education, Ticket to Work and TANF.

Dr. Shaw made several specific recommendations to the committee with regards to IDEA reauthorization:

- Focus reauthorization on enhancing personnel preparation.
- Provide resources for states and institutions of higher education to raise standards and create incentives for attracting candidates.
- Index Part D funding to Part B funding so that the part D allocation is 10% of Part B. This funding should be directed to higher education institutions to address the severe shortage of special education faculty.

## **Study Shows Head Start Program Benefits Children and Parents**

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy Thompson released a report studying the effects of the Early Head Start program on children and their parents. The study found that children in the program developed better cognitive and lingual skills than children not in the program. Children in the program were also found to more willing to engage in tasks, pay more attention, be better at socio-emotional tasks and show less aggression when they entered school.

Parents of children in the Early Head Start Program were studied as well. Parents of children in the program reported that they had to physically discipline their children less often, spent more time and effort to help their child learn at home and in general, demonstrated more “positive parenting behavior.”

The report ordered from [www.headstartinfo.org/cgi-bin/pubcatstore.cfm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/cgi-bin/pubcatstore.cfm)  
The report will be made available at the following address: [www.acf.dhhs.gov/news](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news) later this month.

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

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS  
Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

<b><i>June 3 (Mon.)</i></b>	<b><i>Senate reconvenes</i></b>
<b><i>July 1 – 5</i></b>	<b><i>Senate not in session</i></b>
<b><i>July 4</i></b>	<b><i>Independence Day</i></b>
<b><i>July 8 (Mon.)</i></b>	<b><i>Senate reconvenes</i></b>
<b><i>August 5 - September 2</i></b>	<b><i>Senate not in session (August Recess)</i></b>
<b><i>September 2</i></b>	<b><i>Labor Day</i></b>
<b><i>September 3 (Tues.)</i></b>	<b><i>Senate reconvenes</i></b>
<b><i>September 16 (Mon.)</i></b>	<b><i>Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)</i></b>
<b><i>October 4</i></b>	<b><i>Target adjournment</i></b>