

NOVEMBER 13, 2015Della Cronin, Editor
dcronin@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

Well, it is Friday so that means the time is right for another major announcement from Capitol Hill. According to multiple sources, House and Senate lawmakers have reached a preliminary agreement on a long-sought after bill to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* currently known as the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Further, education media is reporting that Conferees will be named next week when the House and Senate are back in session and at least one official meeting of the Conference Committee will take place. The legislation could be on the floor of the House as early as the last week in November, and on the Senate floor early in December. Please note – this is not official and there is a little thing like completing the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations process by December 11th to avoid a government shutdown which will also demand the attention of all lawmakers. This alone will require significant floor time in both chambers. Also swirling around in a cloud of speculation is the actual content of the ESEA conference agreement. Who are the winners and losers? While no official documentation has been released to the public, rumors are rampant as to what did and did not make it in the final bill. We expect details to trickle out over the coming week; however, we anticipate that while the major players got their priorities in the final package, no one got everything they wanted. This probably means a focus on the bottom five percent of low-performing schools; stronger accountability language; reduced secretarial authority; a new early childhood program and many discreet programs placed into one large block grant. Stay tuned for more details as they unfold.

On the appropriations front, staffers remained quiet and locked in their offices and conference rooms negotiating their bills. Ultimately, staff is working to produce an omnibus spending bill that can be passed before the December 11th expiration date of the current temporary funding measure. Each subcommittee has a deadline of Friday, November 20 to complete its work and report any unresolved issues (likely to be just policy riders) to the full Committee. This ambitious timeline calls for those unresolved issues to be settled and the bill finalized by Thanksgiving, but that may well slip into the week of November 30—sort of on the same track as the ESEA reauthorization. Interestingly, newly elected Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) has

instructed Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) to hold “listening sessions” open to Republican members on those bills that had not passed the House which includes the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) bill. These will be one-hour, Members-only sessions led by the respective subcommittee chairs. The session for LHHS will be held next Thursday, November 19.

Rumors about the Senate trying to pass one or two or even three separate spending measures with the remaining bills put in an omnibus also circulated this week. Specifically Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), Chairwoman of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee stated she would possibly try to bring the Transportation-HUD bill to the Senate floor though that was not confirmed. She also noted that many Members’ preferred moving forward on the Defense spending bill, but that certainly would cause the Democrats to push back as they already have filibustered this particular bill three times.

All this activity leads one to think that the holidays may be especially joyous for education advocates with potentially two major pieces of legislation crossing the finish line!

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2. In Brief

WHITE HOUSE HOSTS FIRST EVER NEXT GENERATION HIGH SCHOOL SUMMIT

On Tuesday, the Obama Administration hosted the first-ever White House Summit on “Next Generation High Schools.” The event highlighted students, educators, philanthropists, and entrepreneurs who are reinventing the high school experience to better empower students to seize opportunities in today’s economy, and prepare students for success in college and a career. Dating back to his 2013 State of the Union Speech, the President has called for a national effort to create more “Next Generation High Schools”—schools that incorporate key elements of redesign, including more personalized and active learning, access to real-world and hands-on learning such as “making” experiences, deeper ties to post-secondary institutions, and a focus on expanding STEM opportunities for girls and other groups of students who are underrepresented in these high-growth, well-paying fields. The Summit came on the heels of new data that showcases the collective impact of efforts to improve high schools over the past five years. New data released today by the Alliance for Excellent Education, the America’s Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises, and the Everyone Graduates Center show a significant reduction in the percentage of students who do not complete high school on-time—from 1,015,946 students a year in 2008 to 744,193 students in 2012—a 27% drop in just four years. To build on this record, the Administration is announcing several new resources and investments to support the redesign of high schools. Significantly, the Administration will announce its intention to award over \$20 million in federal grants through its Investing in Innovation (i3) grants specifically to support the reform and redesign of high schools that serve a high percentage of low-income students. For more information about the summit, including a description of the public and private partnerships driving these high schools, please go [here](#).

NCSECS HIGHLIGHTS DATA ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

On Tuesday, the [National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools \(NCSECS\)](#) held a briefing, “A Closer Look at Charter Schools: How Students with Disabilities are Faring in Public Schools.” After opening remarks from Seth Galanter, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, NCSECS cofounder and president Lauren Morando Rhim shared the primary findings from the report. Overall, traditional public schools enroll more students with disabilities, but charter schools are more inclusive of the students with

regards to class time in a general education setting. In both charters and traditional public schools, students with disabilities are suspended or expelled more often than their peers without disabilities. In reaction to the findings, James Wendorf, executive director of National Center for Learning Disabilities, called the report “a necessary foundation of data.” Weade Wallace, executive director of Advocates for Justice in Education, discussed the need for charters to have more opportunities to share models of inclusion with one another. Robin Lake, director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, said that this report creates an opportunity to continue the research on a school level to really understand what is happening. Mashea Ashton, CEO of the Newark Charter Schools Fund, emphasized increased access and simplification of the system, noting that most of Newark charter schools are now on a universal enrollment process with a centralized application. For more information about the status of students with disabilities in charters compared to traditional public schools, you can read the report [here](#).

NEW TEACHSTRONG CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES TO ELEVATE TEACHING PROFESSION

On Tuesday a diverse set of education organizations joined together to launch a new public awareness campaign called TeachStrong to modernize and elevate the teaching profession. To help announce this effort, the Center for American Progress (CAP) invited Governors Terry Branstad (R-IA) and Jack Markell (D-DE) to provide opening remarks at this public event held at the Mayflower Hotel highlighting their efforts to elevate the teaching profession in their states and the importance of uniting around this issue. Their remarks were followed by a discussion moderated by author Amanda Ripley and guest panelists including former Congressman George Miller (D-CA); Mary Cathryn Ricker, executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers; Peggy Brookins, president and CEO of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; and Booby Miles, multi-classroom leader and science teacher in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC Schools. It was noted throughout the discussion that Americans, unlike a number of foreign countries such as Finland and Singapore, do not hold the teaching profession in high regard. Miller focused on the need to improve teacher preparation programs while Ricker emphasized improving and supporting professional development for teachers in the classroom. She stressed that innovation exists already within the school building and it is critical to “listen to the teacher’s voice.” Brookins noted that from selection and preparation to leadership opportunities and competitive compensation, the teacher career continuum lags behind other professions like medicine and law. Providing the framework for the effort, Carmel Martin, executive vice president for policy at CAP, acknowledged that many initiatives to support teachers have been launched, however she stated, “it is time to make a comprehensive effort” to make teaching profession a national priority. In order to accomplish this, 40 supporting groups representing teachers unions, civil rights organizations, education reform leaders and policy organizations all have agreed on nine overarching principles for how best to revamp the profession. This includes investing in and developing policies focused on the recruitment, preparation, support and compensation through a teacher’s entire career. To find out more about the campaign go [here](#).

ACS HOLDS BRIEFING ON BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING STEM IN K-12 SCHOOLS

On Thursday November 5th, the American Chemical Society (ACS) held a briefing titled, “Teaching STEM Effectively,” as part of their Science and the Congress project. University of Hartford professor and former American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Congressional Fellow Laura Pence moderated the non-partisan panel which focused on examples of effective professional development programs and support for STEM teachers in K-12 classrooms. Linda Rosen, CEO of [Change the Equation](#), presented data that illustrated gaps in teacher preparation and experience for students of color. Rosen highlighted that while many

students of color don't have teachers with undergraduate experience in math or science, it is somewhat promising that many of their teachers do have at least 5 years of experience teaching in those subject areas. However more needs to be done to ensure diversity in the workforce, as black and Latino students make up 40% of students but only 13% of their teachers are of the same ethnicity. Following up on that point, Mary Ann Rankin who is Provost at the University of Maryland College Park and Barbara Sitzman who is President of the [American Association of Chemistry Teachers](#) discussed how more can be done to prepare a diverse pool of teachers in college and the classroom respectively. Sitzman pointed out that any effective professional development needs to facilitate deeper content knowledge, discourage teacher isolation, and balance real world connections with theory. Rankin discussed what can be done before teachers hit the classroom, as the [UTeach Institute](#) program has established partnerships with 44 universities in 21 states to improve preparation through project based and inquiry based instruction. At the end of the spectrum, Dr. Jaime Curtis Fisk of the Dow Chemical Company showed how industry can support efforts to grow the pipeline. In addition to financial support, Dow has made the STEM Ambassadors program a priority so that employees are trained to do classroom outreach that inspires students to pursue science and engineering fields. For more on this and previous ACS Science & the Congress Project briefings, please go [here](#).

CAP AND CCSSO DISCUSS STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS AND ESEA WAIVERS

On Tuesday, November 3, The Center for American Progress (CAP) and Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) sponsored a live event and webinar, "How Can States Effectively Hold Schools and Districts Accountable for Improving Student Outcomes?" Moderated by Catherine Brown, vice president for education policy at CAP, the panelists featured were: Carmel Martin, executive vice president for policy, CAP; Carey Wright, Mississippi State Superintendent of Education; Tommy Bice, Alabama State Superintendent of Education; Daria Hall, director of K-12 policy development, The Education Trust; Chris Minnich, executive director, CCSSO. Brown opened the event by noting that under the waivers issued by the Department of Education under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, states have been given a large degree of autonomy to track whether schools are providing a quality education for their students and asked the panelists to elaborate on the pros and cons to these accountability systems. Bice and Wright both acknowledged that student outcomes still had to matter, even in the context of a redesigned system, with Wright making special note of Mississippi's renewed focus on struggling students and highlighted the release of current National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data which shows Mississippi as one of the few states showing gains in both reading and math, for all groups of students. Brown then explained that many ESEA waivers contain a requirement to focus primarily on the lowest performing schools, or the bottom 15% of schools. In this context, she asked if a new accountability system should focus on those schools or otherwise. Hall acknowledged the good efforts in some states to improve outcomes for struggling students and then emphasized that the new law must assure states focus on the performance of all students, not just the bottom 15%. Minnich echoed that all students must matter and said that he believed a new accountability system could both provide flexibility and assure states focus on the outcomes of all students. Brown wrapped up with final comments about the proposed timing of the reauthorization of the ESEA. To watch the webinar, go [here](#).

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING LINKED TO IMPROVED LEARNING OUTCOMES

On Tuesday, November 3, PDK International and the Gallop Organization hosted an event focusing on social and emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom. Moderated by former superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland) and current CEO of PDK

International, Joshua Starr opened the event by stating his strong belief that while academic proficiency for all students is essential, local school districts must develop comprehensive plans to provide all students with the skills and knowledge they will need in college and the work place—academic excellence, creative problem solving, and social emotional learning. Tim Shriver, who serves as the Chairman of the Special Olympics as well as Board Chair of the **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning** (CASEL), provided the keynote address. In his remarks, Shriver emphasized that in order for students to achieve academically, teachers must be trained in both content as well as child development because there is “an inescapable link between emotion, relationship and learning.” He added that teachers around the country agree as evidenced in a study of teachers commissioned by CASEL and Civic Enterprises called *The Missing Piece*, which found that 93 percent of teachers agreed that SEL is critical to improving academic performance and 95 percent of teachers believe that SEL skills are teachable. Shriver noted that in the ongoing debate around the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) there is no discussion on *how* kids learn but only what they learn. He views this as a serious disconnect ultimately impacting student success. Lastly, Shriver posited that a National Commission on SEL needs to be established to develop an overarching framework for the successful integration of social, emotional, and academic growth in pre-K to 12 education. The Commission would bring together a diverse group of stakeholders in the key areas of research, federal and state policy to create a united and aligned voice on how to implement this agenda. Shane Lopez, Ph.D., a senior scientist at Gallup and the research director of the Clifton Strengths Institute, also presented his findings on the importance of hope and encouragement as critical factors driving student motivation. He argued for the psychological reform of America’s education system emphasizing that schools must function “less like impersonal factories and more like dynamic human development centers that enable students to achieve the meaningful futures they say they really want.” Lopez is the chief author of the Gallup Student Poll which measures hope and engagement which, in turn, lead to wellbeing and academic success. “Schools must be places of hope,” and teachers must learn how to institutionalize SEL and hope into their classrooms which will ultimately lead to improved academic achievement for all students. To learn more go [here](#).

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3. New Publications

How Statewide Afterschool Networks Increase Investment in Afterschool
American Youth Policy Forum (November 2015)

Progress is No Accident: Why ESEA Can’t Backtrack on High School Graduation Rates
Alliance for Excellent Education (November 2015)

The Condition of STEM 2015
ACT (November 2015)

Toward a Better Balance: Bolstering the Second “C” in College and Career Readiness
National Association of School Boards of Education (November 2015)

Key Trends in Special Education in Charter Schools: Secondary Analysis of CRDC 2011-2012
National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (November 2015)

Fundamental Change: Innovation in America’s Schools Under Race to the Top
U.S. Department of Education (November 2015)

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4. In the News

Arne Duncan Touts Study Showing 25% Dip in Number of Drop-Outs

Education Week (Nov. 10, 2015)

Can College Campuses Protect Free Speech While Also Curbing Voices of Hate?

The Washington Post (Nov. 10, 2015)

U.S. Department of Education Grants Approves ESEA Flexibility Renewal for Louisiana

U.S. Department of Education (Nov. 10, 2015)

The Economic Imperative of Bilingual Education

The Atlantic (Nov. 10, 2015)

New SIG Data Serves Up Same Old Conclusion: Mixed Results

Politics K-12 (Nov. 12, 2015)

U.S. Department of Education Announces Highest Rated Applications for 2015 i3 Competition

U.S. Department of Education (Nov. 13, 2015)

Sources: House and Senate Negotiators Have Reached Preliminary Deal on ESEA

Politics K-12 (Nov. 13, 2015)

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5. About WPLLC

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