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Ellen Fern and Audrey Busch

[efern@wpllc.net](mailto:efern@wpllc.net)[abusch@wpllc.net](mailto:abusch@wpllc.net)

The following memo provides a summary of a recent study evaluating the effects of the economic downturn on children's access to preschools.

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### **This Week in Washington**

There is nothing like a pending holiday with the promise of parades, picnics and “politicking” that mark the Memorial Day Recess to spur the otherwise recalcitrant Senate into action. All last week, the Senate was hard at work trying to move an emergency supplemental spending bill that will provide funds for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the natural disasters that have plagued the nation of late; and other critical needs that can be paid for by printing money that is then added to the federal debt. Unfortunately, the \$23 billion Jobs for Education bill did not rise to that level of urgency. Despite his best effort, and with the strong support from education advocates, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) was forced to admit he lacked the votes to offer the amendment during the Senate debate of the bill. The \$56.6 billion emergency spending bill passed the Senate last Thursday evening, May 27—without the Harkin amendment.

On the House side of the Capitol, the news that a considerably larger emergency spending bill was in the works was a little more promising for education advocates. Congressman Obey, despite a skeptical press corps, vowed to include the \$23 billion in education funds in the House bill in addition to the \$5.7 billion necessary to address the Pell Grant shortfall. Congressman Miller vowed to fight to keep the funds in tact during the floor debate. But, as the week unfolded, it became clear that the press were not the only skeptics regarding a large emergency spending bill. Representative Obey was forced to postpone the House Appropriations Committee markup of the bill because of what he described as “chaos” in the House.

The emergency supplemental was not the only victim of House disarray over spending. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) had also hoped to pass a Jobs and Tax Extender bill prior to the recess. By Thursday afternoon, the cost of that measure had risen to over \$200 billion, and complaints from Republicans and Democrats alike put the floor debate on hold. The most urgent concerns were tax extenders, delaying a Medicare reimbursement cut and extensions of unemployment benefits that otherwise expire over the weekend. A paired down version of the bill did pass eventually Friday night.

In light of passage of the Financial Services Reform bill last week and anticipated progress on the Emergency Supplemental and Tax Extenders and Jobs legislation, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) optimistically reported at the end of the week that the Senate

intends to debate a budget resolution for FY 2011 in early June. This too was good news for education, as the Chairman's mark made clear that funding for education would be a priority in FY 2011 when all other federal spending will be frozen. If the Pell Grant shortfall is addressed through the emergency spending bill then perhaps there will be some cause for optimism in what otherwise appears to be a bleak forecast for education spending this year. By week's end, however, Conrad's optimism seemed to be too good to be true. Perhaps a week back home marked by parades, cookouts and flag waving will send Members back to Capitol Hill on June 7<sup>th</sup> in a better mood and position to get things done.

## **RTTT Applications Due, TIF Applications Released, Other ARRA News**

The Department of Education has until September 30, 2010 to commit the funds the agency received via enactment of last year's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, Promise Neighborhoods and other programs are part of the large effort. Applications from states applying for the second round of RTTT funds, after only Delaware and Tennessee were successful in the first round, were due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Last week, the Department of Education (ED) launched the grant applications for \$437 million in Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) resources made available for school districts, non-profits and states. TIF grants support local projects that reward teachers, principals and other school personnel who improve student achievement. States, districts and non-profits partnering with states or districts are eligible to apply. Applications are due July 6 and grants will be awarded in September. The estimated range of awards is \$5 million - \$10 million, and the Department expects to award approximately 40-80 grants. Also, last week ED published a list of letters of intent to apply for funds under the Promise Neighborhoods program. That program, publicly exemplified by the Harlem Children's Zone, is intended to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of all children in the nation's most distressed communities, including rural and tribal communities, and to transform them. For more information on the TIF announcement, visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2010/05/05202010.html>. For the latest on the Promise Neighborhood program, visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html>.

## **NCES Releases Condition of Education 2010**

On Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) held a briefing to release *The Condition of Education 2010*. The Congressionally-mandated, annual report details 49 indicators of important developments and trends across U.S. education—K-12 and postsecondary—including participation in education, learner outcomes and, this year, an examination of high-poverty schools. Among the report's many findings: while there have been some improvements in math and reading scores among 4<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-graders, the country's achievement gap persists. The report predicts that enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools will increase to 52.3 million in 2019. It found that the number of students attending charter schools had tripled between 1999 and 2007. Also, the average high school graduation rate is 74% nationally. Data shows that the percentage of students who graduate high school and immediately enroll in a 2- or 4- year college increased by 19 percent between 1972 and 2008, from 50 percent to 69 percent. This year's report included a special section examining the nation's 16,122 high-poverty schools. The report shows an increase in public elementary and secondary schools described as high-poverty from 15 percent and 5 percent, respectively, in 2007-08, to 20 percent and 9 percent, respectively, in 2008-09—an increase that arguably occurred even before the full effects of the country's economic downturn were seen. The South and West had a higher percentage of high-poverty elementary schools than the Northeast and Midwest, and Mississippi has the highest percentage of high-poverty schools at 53 percent. The

*Condition of Education* report also included a number of other academic indicators, including overall figures on enrollment, high school graduation rates, and college attainment. For more information, visit: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>.

## **CAP and Half in Ten Held Ending Childhood Hunger Event**

Last Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, the Center for American Progress (CAP) and Half in Ten held an event titled, “A Look at the Problem, the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, and Other Solutions.” The event marked the release of the report, *Feeding Opportunity: Ending Child Hunger Furthers the Goal of Cutting U.S. Poverty in Half over the Next Decade*, and aimed to trigger the passage of a stronger Child Nutrition Act. At the event, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack called for a “robust commitment” to the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act and shared three reasons why ending childhood hunger should be a national priority: 1) a hungry child cannot learn and participate fully in class; 2) chronic diseases developed during childhood increase overall healthcare costs; and 3) the lack of physically fit young people has alarmingly diminished the pool of fit recruits for the country’s military. Panelists at the event praised the Administration’s commitment to child nutrition and echoed Vilsack’s urgent tone. They also said that it has been suggested that the Senate might consider Child Nutrition Act reauthorization legislation on the floor in July, and that House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA) is planning to release a paper regarding the issue soon. For more information and to view a recording of the event, visit: <http://www.americanprogress.org/events/2010/05/childhood.html>. To view the report, visit: [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/05/pdf/feeding\\_opportunity.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/05/pdf/feeding_opportunity.pdf).

## **IES Awards 20 States Funds for Longitudinal Data Systems**

The Institute of Education Sciences has awarded 20 states grants for the design and implementation of statewide longitudinal data systems. These grants, funded through last year’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), are intended to support states with the development and implementation of systems that promote the linking of data across time and databases, from early childhood into career, including matching teachers to students, while protecting student privacy and confidentiality consistent with applicable privacy protection laws. The total value of the three-year grants will range from \$5.1 million to \$19.7 million. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands had applied for these funds. For more information, including a list of the winners, all applicants, and the scoring the resulted in the 20 awards, visit: [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/fy09arra\\_announcement.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/fy09arra_announcement.asp)

## **Ed Rules On Eligibility For Foster Children To Receive Title I Services**

As a result of a recently released monitoring report of the Florida Department of Education’s (FDE) Title I programs, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has issued a clarification regarding the eligibility of foster children to receive Title I funds. While local education agencies (LEAs) are allowed to use Title I funds for homeless children who do not attend Title I schools, ED stated that a student who is in foster care, but is not homeless or does not meet Title I eligibility requirements, is not eligible to receive services granted under Title I, Part A. ED’s program review found that FDE had not “ensured that its LEAs reserved Title I funds for allowable activities,” specifically in Duval County Public Schools, which reserved funds to provide service to foster children not proven eligible for Title I. ED has required FDE to make certain that its districts only reserve Title I funds for “allowable activities” and must provide ED with a description of how and when LEAs were informed of this requirement, as well as a description of how it will ensure that this requirement is implemented correctly each year. If

significant compliance issues are found in monitored programs, ED's Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) office will place a condition on the programs' grant awards until all identified problems have been resolved and documentation of the resolution has been provided, at which point the condition will be removed.