

Legislative Update October 28, 2010

Issues

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- * State Literacy Teams
- * Interesting Changes at US ED
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Federal Funding

When the Congress left for the midterm elections it passed an emergency spending bill called a Continuing Resolution (CR). This CR runs to December 3rd. The Congress decided to recess without taking up most of the "must-do" list; it deferred decisions until the Lame Duck session starting November 15, running for one week and then reconvening November 30 for the balance of the session. In the CR most education programs have few changes from the previous year because it is of little matter as most elementary and secondary education programs are forward funded. This means that the money doesn't flow to the states and schools until summer 2011. However, it also means that the funds will not be changed.

What the final decisions will be for the next school year are very much in doubt. This is because while the Senate education appropriation's committee has released its draft numbers, the House education appropriation's committee has not. As of this writing, the best guess is that Title I Part A will get an increase, as will IDEA and School Improvement Grants. Programs such as Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy will be level funded at \$250 million. Even Start and many other programs are either slated for a cut or, at the very best, level funding. The differences between House and Senate numbers mean that a final decision still needs to be made.

State Literacy Teams

The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) program was authorized and funded as part of the FY 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act to support the development of a comprehensive literacy program for students from birth through grade 12 in each state. In FY 2010, \$10 million was set aside for formula grants to assist states in creating or maintaining a State Literacy Team composed of individuals with the required expertise in literacy development and education for children from birth through grade 12, and to assist states in developing a comprehensive literacy plan.

The Department of Education (ED) has strongly encouraged states to involve districts in creating and implementing such a state-level plan. In August, ED published grant applications in the Federal Register for State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to apply for these funds. ED made a commitment to review applications quickly in order to get money to SEAs as soon as possible.

State Literacy Team members can be part of the State's Department of Education or people who work outside the SEA. The important thing is that the team consists of members who together have the requisite expertise to advise on a comprehensive plan.

These include people with knowledge of and experience in: literacy development and instruction at all age/grade levels; implementing literacy programs at the school, district, and State levels; evaluation; response-to-intervention (including utilization of universal screening, multiple tiers of instruction, early intervening services, validated interventions, and student progress monitoring to inform decision-making); screening and performance measurement in the areas of phonological awareness, word recognition, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing; helping struggling readers, English language learners, and students with disabilities; professional development; and teacher preparation and state licensure/accreditation in literacy development and instruction. For more information about this program go to:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders-literacy/index.html>.

If you have information about how your state is functioning in this area, please send a message to irawash@reading.org<mailto:irawash@reading.org>. Please put in the subject line: state literacy teams.

Changes at US ED

The United States Department of Education is in the process of undergoing an interesting change. The Secretary is going to be changing how the programs funded by the stimulus are coordinated. Specifically this means that the office that manages Race to the Top will be moving to the Office of the Secretary. In addition it will be working to combine the efforts with several other programs, such as the teacher incentive fund and the innovation program. The office will be constructing "state-desks" to help coordinate these programs with Title I, Title III, and IDEA. This will be a significant shift in how the Department manages and coordinates programs.

Lame Duck Session

When a Congress reconvenes after an election some of its members will have lost their seats. While the new Congress will not convene until January 4, 2011, the current Congress still acts with authority. However, it is called a lame-duck session to represent its lack of full confidence.

During the upcoming lame-duck session the Congress is planning on working on the funding measures (for education and most other parts of the government), the tax code, and several other areas. It could be a very busy session but what isn't known is if members who have lost their seats will be willing to come back to DC and vote. Usually the agenda of a lame-duck session is restricted to "essential-measures." After the election, Richard Long will be conducting a webinar to review the election's impact on the lame-duck session and the upcoming year in Congress. See the Calendar section below.

Calendar:

Upcoming Events at IRA

For the Webinar on November 4th:

ELECTION TURNOVER: What is next for Reading? (And what you can do)
Hosted by Rich Long. Registration is limited to 100 participants.

<http://www.reading.org/GENERAL/CONFERENCES.aspx>

* November 4th at 8:00 pm (Eastern)

For the Government Relations Workshop on November 11 and 12.

This workshop will focus totally on state related education issues.
Held at the International Reading Association's DC office
444 North Capitol St. NW
Conference Room 333
Washington, DC 20001

There is still time to register. Click on this link:

<http://www.reading.org/General/Conferences/GovtRelationswrkshp.aspx>

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WORKSHOP AGENDA

Thursday November 11 - Hall of States (Room TBA)

11:30 - 12:00 Registration

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch (provided for all workshop participants)

12:30 Welcome and Introductions

Discussion of Reading Legislation including:

* LEARN Bill

* Reauthorization of ESEA

* Funding

Initiatives At Department of Education and How Reading Will Be

Impacted:

* Professional Development

* Early Childhood Initiatives

* Links to IDEA and Other Programs

* State Literacy Teams

* Other Programs - Race to the Top, Innovation, Technology

2:00 - 3:00 Meeting Your Legislator:

* How to Deliver Your Message

* Talking Points

o LEARN Bill

o Funding for Reading Programs

6:30 pm No Host Dinner

Friday November 12, 2010 - Hall of States (Room TBA)

8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast (provided)

8:30 - 9:30 Core Standards - how you can impact them before they impact you

11:30 - 12:00 Applying Lessons Learned to State Advocacy

How can you help your State and Local Council in their advocacy efforts?

- * Selecting Issues
- * Teaching Others How to Talk about these Issues
- * Being Engaged in the "The Process"

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00-3:00 Identify Legislative Issues and Setting Priorities

- * Using Surveys/Identifying Needs
- * Internet Information
- * Legislative Agenda
- * Working with Your SEA, Governor, & State Board

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