

## September 8, 2011 Legislative Update

### Striving Readers' Comprehensive Literacy Program

The US Dept. of Education will announce the award winners.

### Funding and Debt Ceiling News

The debt ceiling has been lifted but education continues to see drastic cuts even though Pres. Obama has said he'd protect education. More funding has been designated for Pell grants. However, currently, there is a 10-year cap on federal spending with a 7 billion overall reduction (18%) for 2012 that starts Oct. 1. This places a burden on states to fund K-12 education. A new bi-partisan Congressional Committee must find \$1.5 trillion more in cuts over the next 10 yrs. All state budgets will suffer. We'll see fewer teachers, librarians, cafeteria workers, and overcrowded classrooms,

### No Child Left Behind and Waivers

82% of schools are labeled "failing" with the current student assessment system that does not measure student growth. The target is 2013-14 for all students to be proficient in math and reading.

Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has announced states can apply for waivers from NCLB requirements if they meet 4 criteria:

- o Teacher and principal effectiveness
- o Turning around low performing schools
- o Growth-based accountability system
- o College and career ready standards

### Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

#### ESEA Reauthorization

NCLB expired 3 years ago. Reauthorization is unlikely to happen soon. The House Education and Workforce Committee has passed 3 legislative bills. In June, the *Setting New Priorities in Education Spending Act*, eliminated 43 programs, including the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program. The Committee also approved the *"Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act"* to encourage the expansion of high-quality charter schools as well as the *State and Local Funding Flexibility Act*. This act allows federal funding to be moved within the state and school district budgets for a variety of needs within ESEA. School districts could transfer money into Title 1 or Title 1 or Title 3 or to other sections. The Committee is currently working on the teacher quality bill, which has bi-partisan agreement, and Chairman John Kline (R-MN) hopes to get this bill to the committee by the fall.

In the Senate, Senator Harkin is working on reauthorization with his committee as well as on IDEA funding which is set at \$11.5 billion. IRA continues to call for the reauthorization and indicates that ESEA should focus on the ability of all schools to improve literacy instruction. IRA also supports the use of assessments that inform instruction in the rewriting of ESEA.

#### The LEARN Act

LEARN Act (Literacy for All Americans, Results for the Nation) is still in the mix. In the Senate the expectation is that the LEARN Act will be an amendment when the ESEA package moves forward. In the House, it is much more likely that all professional development ideas will be in one general area and that the state and school districts would decide which curricular areas to emphasize. This is part of the House majority's philosophy that the federal government should not be making education decisions better made at the local level. The House majority, however, is still unsure how to balance the ideas of greater flexibility with the traditional federal role in education that sends money to school districts to help them impact high need populations.

#### Common Core Standards and the Consortia

States are working on the implementation of the standards. In the meantime, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortia (SBAC) has submitted criteria for vendor proposals to begin the development of benchmark and summative assessments. SBAC will have specifications for selected response, constructed response, performance tasks and technology embedded items in line with their computer adaptive testing model. Assessment criteria will be finished by December for development to take place.

#### Formative Assessment

Members of the Government Relations Committee are working Dr. Rich Long, Director of State and Federal Relations, and a task force to develop guidelines for a formative assessment position paper for IRA. The guidelines will align with the common core state standards. In the meantime, some states, including Maryland, have developed position statements for formative assessment along with exemplars of teacher-based formative assessments that will be posted on the state council websites. Keep posted for more news on this important topic.

## **MARYLAND NEWS**

MSDE is a leader with professional development for teachers this summer. Every public school in MD, all 1450 schools, sent a team of educators to one of the 11 educator effectiveness academies for training on the Common Core State Standards. Maryland was one of 11 states plus D.C. to win the award through the Race to the Top competition, the \$4 billion grant program, funded by the 2009 economic stimulus package to foster school improvement and innovation. Along with 44 states and D.C., MD won 250 million over 4 years through the competitive grant program.

Maryland's vision for reform is to:

- o Revise the PreK-12 Maryland State Curriculum, assessments, and accountability system based on the Common Core Standards to assure that all graduates are college- and career-ready.
- o Build a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to monitor and promote student achievement.
- o Redesign the model for preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals.
- o Fully implement the innovative Breakthrough Center approach for transforming low-performing schools and districts.

## **Advocacy Opportunity**

**Virtual Legislative Workshop/Two day event!**

**Click here to sign up for the Oct 20 & 21 Virtual Legislative**

**Workshop**<<https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dG5TdW1W0ThQWmRZdHAtc0QtX3pkTFE6MQ>>

Thursday October 20, 2011

1:00 - 5:00 PM EASTERN

Virtual Reception from 5:00 - 6:00 PM

and

Friday October 21, 2011

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM EASTERN

Presenters: Rich Long, IRA Director of Government Relations with guest speakers from Congress, the administration, and advocacy groups

Issues impacting state education agencies and IRA state councils and how to cope with these issues:

Common Core Standards

Funding Cuts

NCLB Waivers

Teacher Evaluations

Audio and Visual by Internet. (Log in details will be emailed to you)