



## Federal Update – January 16, 2008

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Questions?

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### **Sweeping Reductions in Final Appropriations Limit Head Start, NCLB Title I Funds for 2008**

A technical adjustment in the consolidated appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2008 produced significant reductions in the amount of funding available for Head Start for the remainder of FY08.

In an effort to avoid another presidential veto of domestic spending legislation, congressional appropriators included a 1.747 percent reduction in the total spending reserved for agencies in FY08. Because this reduction applied both to new funds appropriated this year and to advance funding from the FY07 continuing resolution, the final legislation provided \$6.878 billion for Head Start, or a \$10.6 million decrease from the prior fiscal year. This means that no money will be available to expand Head Start enrollment, to fund quality improvement, or to assist states in implementing their State Advisory Councils in FY08, among other activities. According to the National Head Start Association, this cut equals the cost of enrolling over 26,500 children in Head Start and Early Head Start for FY08. [Click here to view the NHSA's analysis of the impact of the cuts to Head Start.](#)

The same action affects Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, although according to congressional sources the impact is not expected to be as significant because of a greater level of discretion within Department of Education allocations. According to the House Appropriations Committee, total funding for Title I will be \$13.889 billion, or \$20 million less than the president's request and \$421 million less than the earlier conference report which was vetoed by the president.

## **Spellings, Bush, Kennedy Weigh in on Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind**

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings joined with President Bush on January 10 to call for the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2008.

Last year, the House took the lead on the reauthorization process but was ultimately stymied by resistance to Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller's proposals for measuring schools' progress in reaching accountability standards and for performance bonuses for teachers. In an op-ed dated January 7 in the *Washington Post*, Senator Kennedy signaled he will introduce his own draft of the bill during this session. Doubts remain as to whether Congress will accomplish this goal by the end of 2008, a task complicated by the questions raised during discussion of the House bill and by anti-NCLB politics on the presidential campaign trail.

[Click here to view Secretary Spelling's remarks](#) and [click here to read Senator Kennedy's op-ed in the \*Washington Post\*](#).

## **As House and Senate Return From Recess, Higher Education Act Leads the Agenda**

The House returned on Tuesday, January 15, from the winter recess to a crowded legislative calendar in a politically charged election year. Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller is petitioning the House leadership to move a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, H.R. 4137, to the floor by early February. The bill is expected to pass and go to conference with the Senate, where the fate of several important provisions for pre-k teachers—including \$10,000 in loan relief under the largest federal student lending program—will be decided.

The bill lays out the bulk of federal policy toward higher education institutions, including controversial elements such as regulation of the student loan industry. The law is set to expire on March 31 and has not been reauthorized since 1998. While the President has objected to components of the Senate bill (H.R. 1642), the White House has not threatened to veto the current legislation.

## **Pre-K Now Releases Recommendations for Teacher Recruitment Grants**

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy's push to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act opens a window of opportunity to fully include pre-k teachers in a key program to train and recruit educators. The section of NCLB that authorizes the program, Title II, Part A, currently allows only a fractional amount of funding to go to local partnerships that include community-based pre-k providers and fails to make training in early childhood development more widely available to pre-k teachers working in school- and community-based programs. To fully include pre-k in this important program, Pre-K Now is advising the Senate committee to make the following changes:

- Include a definition of a "highly competent pre-k teacher" to serve an analogous function to the "highly qualified" teacher definition in the teacher recruitment and retention grants under Title II, Part A. The

definition should include a bachelor's degree and specialization in early childhood education in addition to any certification required by the state pre-k program.

- Explicitly denote that pre-k teachers working in a school-based setting are eligible to receive funds awarded to local education agencies for the purpose of training and recruiting teachers.
- Denote that local education agencies and local partnerships may use funds to provide “high-quality professional development” for pre-k teachers and supply a definition that requires that “high-quality professional development” include a minimum of 15 hours of professional development per teacher annually and prepare teachers to provide for the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of their students.
- Increase the amount of funding available to local partnerships through the formula in section 2113 (20 U.S.C. 6613) in order to provide more resources for community-based pre-k providers and note that Head Start programs, private child care programs, and any other state-licensed entity contracting with a local education agency to provide pre-k would be eligible to receive this funding under the new law.
- Provide that states may use their portion of a grant awarded under this part to create articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges and universities that will allow credits to be transferred between programs that lead to a bachelor's or advanced degree in early childhood education.
- Provide that local education agencies and local partnerships may use funding awarded under this part to assist lead teachers, paraprofessionals, and other members of their staff in earning bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees in early childhood education on a part-time or full-time basis.

[Click here for Pre-K Now's letters on Title II of NCLB and other policy recommendations for federal policy.](#)

### **Correction: Pre-K Now Memo on State Advisory Councils on Early Education and Care**

Our memorandum, dated December 7, 2007, on the provisions for State Advisory Councils on Early Education and Care in the Head Start reauthorization mistakenly omitted the requirement that the State Councils include representatives of Head Start, Early Head Start, migrant and seasonal Head Start, and Indian Head Start providers. [Click here for a corrected version of the memo.](#)