

8/2/10 Update from our National Affiliate: Association for Career & Technical Educators (ACTE)

House Appropriations Committee Marks Up FY 2011 Bill

On July 29, the [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) approved its [Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill](#) on a party-line vote. In this bill, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act remained level-funded at last year's levels. The Senate Appropriations Committee did not adopt any amendments to the [subcommittee's bill](#) approved on July 27.

The Senate Appropriations Committee increased the Department of Education's overall budget by \$2.6 billion over last year's levels. Here are a few reported allocations:

- \$14.9 billion for Title I Grants of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a \$450 million increase from last year's levels
- \$625 million for School Improvement Grants, an increase of \$79 million
- \$675 million for Race to the Top grants, \$125 million less than the House and \$475 million less than the president's request
- \$250 million for Investing in Innovation (i3) grants, \$150 million less than the House
- \$2.95 billion for Teacher Quality grants, a \$7 million increase from last year
- \$1.26 billion for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, \$35 million more than the House and an increase from last year
- \$100 million for Education Technology Grants, level-funded from last year

The committee also invested in worker training. The bill provides \$3.8 billion, an increase of \$163 million from last year's levels, for Workforce Investment Act state grants. It also increased the Green Jobs Innovation Fund by \$25 million for a total of \$65 million. In the health and human services portion of the bill, the committee increases public health workforce training grants by \$20 million, for a total of \$57.9 million. This portion of the bill also doubles money for the Nurse Faculty Loan Forgiveness program.

The House subcommittee marked up its [allocations](#) a few weeks ago and also proposed level funding to the Perkins program. Neither the House nor Senate bill adopted the president's proposed program consolidations. As a result, Perkins' Tech Prep and Basic State Grants will remain separate funding streams under the current proposals. Neither chamber is expected to move its spending bill until late this year.

Specific allocations for education and workforce training programs will be posted on [ACTE's Web site](#) once they are available.

Senate Continues to Work on Education Jobs Funding

Congress has been [working](#) to finalize a bill that would provide \$10 billion to help save education jobs across the country. The initial strategy was to include the education jobs money in the Fiscal Year 2010 defense supplemental bill. This bill, with the education jobs fund and other domestic allocations, passed the House in June, but faced strong opposition in the Senate. When the Senate passed the supplemental, all the domestic allocations were removed, including the \$10 billion for education jobs. The legislation then returned to the House, where it was passed and signed into law.

In hopes of still providing funds to help save education jobs, the Senate is scheduled to vote on a package initiated by Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Patty Murray (D-WA) on August 2. This package would provide \$10 billion to save education jobs and money for the [Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentages](#) (FMAP) program, which would provide assistance to states to meet their obligations to fund Medicaid. Although this piece does not directly affect education or training funding, 30 states have already included additional federal resources in their state budgets, assuming these funds would be provided. If Congress does not appropriate these funds, those 30 states will face a budget shortfall and will have to make additional cuts, possibly to education, to meet their obligations. This package has designated offsets, so the adoption of these allocations would not increase the deficit.

If the Senate is able to pass this new bill, the House will vote on the bill when they reconvene in September. If the Senate is unable to pass this package, it is unlikely that there will be any additional action. This appears to be the last hope for additional education jobs funding, but its prospects are very uncertain at this point. Please contact your senators to ask that they approve the education jobs funding. Time is of the essence as the first vote on this issue is expected later today. Contact information for your senators can be found on the [ACTE Web site](#).

Despite Congress, ESEA Ideas Move Forward

House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA) said at a Washington event on July 27 that he and Rep. John Kline (R-MN) have agreed to work through August on a reauthorized version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); however, there is little doubt that Congress will leave this year without finalizing a bill given time constraints. Despite the roadblocks to final passage, House and Senate staff have been working behind the scenes, and there are many conversations and initiatives being launched related to the reauthorization.

On July 29, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and 20 other education organizations held a briefing to highlight "[Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child](#)," a set of policy recommendations calling on Congress to support core subjects beyond reading and math in ESEA. Supporters of the recommendations also worry about the Obama Administration's consolidation of federal programs and ask instead for continuation of specific funding for all core subjects.

When Rep. Miller spoke on July 27, he said that there is broad-based support for President Obama's ESEA blueprint, but that is debatable. There has been a lot of scrutiny of the Obama blueprint including the great focus on competitive grants that the blueprint advocates. Many believe the competitive grants focus will leave out schools that lack good grants writers. The ASCD recommendations support the use of competitive grants if focused on a broad range of subjects beyond math and science.

One thing nearly everyone agrees on is the ESEA law needs to be significantly altered if it is to prepare college- and career-ready students for the 21st century. The question is how? View [ACTE's ESEA Recommendations](#) and "[What is Career Ready?](#)" definition for our

suggestions.

Secretary Duncan Promotes CTE at Race to the Top Announcement Event

On July 27, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan [spoke](#) at a National Press Club luncheon and discussed the Administration's ongoing efforts to address education reform at the state and local levels. "Education is the civil rights issue of our generation," Secretary Duncan claimed, as the United States now ranks 10th in the world in the rate of college completion for 25- to 40-year-olds. As a result, "a quiet revolution is underway in our homes and schools, classrooms and communities" for greater engagement and better education opportunities. Secretary Duncan outlined the Administration's "modest role" in supporting education reform. This includes:

- challenging everyone in the system-parents, students, educators and elected officials-to get better
- greater education incentives for funding opportunities such as Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation Fund and the Teacher Incentive Fund, which have produced significant changes at the state level
- the FY 2011 budget, which calls for full funding of formula programs
- greater accountability for states and districts, not just schools
- measuring students' individual growth rather than proficiency, that is in the Administration's blueprint for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Secretary Duncan also had positive remarks related to CTE. During the Q&A portion of the event, an audience member asked about the need for more CTE. Duncan mentioned the need to build more technical skills and said that CTE programs are another way of offering a range of interesting programs to keep students engaged in schools.

In addition, Secretary Duncan [announced](#) the 19 finalists for phase two of Race to the Top during this speech. The finalists are: Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and South Carolina. These finalists will present in person in Washington, DC, during August before winners are announced in September.

Strong Support for GI Bill Fix

On July 21, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held a [hearing](#) on S. 3447, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010, and other bills that would make changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The hearing provided evidence of strong support for making changes to the law to allow veterans to use their benefits at non-degree-granting postsecondary institutions, like area CTE centers, which is not currently allowed.

Committee Chairman Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Ranking Member Richard Burr (R-NC), Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), Sen. John Tester (D-MT) and Sen. Scott Brown (R-MA) all expressed support for the changes related to technical training included in the bill. Representatives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and the American Council on Education also supported the changes.

In addition to opening up funding to non-degree-granting institutions and apprenticeship programs, the bill would also address concerns related to benefits for online courses, make more National Guard members eligible and simplify tuition payment caps. After the hearing, Chairman Akaka pledged to hold a committee markup and vote on the bill on August 5.