

International Reading Association

Legislative Update

May 14, 2010

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Overview

The movement on education related issues continues to be fast moving. The second round of the Race to the Top applications are due June 1st, the final version of the Core Standards are due out within weeks with an assessment contract is to be released soon, discussions on links between early childhood and literacy continue (with a big meeting in Anaheim in July), US ED is working on the requirements for states to form State Literacy Teams, hearings are being held on the rewriting of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, funding for schools for the upcoming fiscal year being planned, AND a potential to save 300,000 teachers jobs is on the table.

Teacher Jobs Bill -- Action Needed --

It is expected that over 300,000 teachers are going to lose their jobs due to the continuing impact of the economic downturn. There is a proposal in the Congress to change that, but; it isn't going to pass unless calls and emails are made.

If you have an opinion on this matter, now is the time to call your Senator (at 202-224-3121) or email them (you can get their email address at

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

The proposal is expected to be offered by Senator Harkin (D-IA), S. 3206, the Keep our Educators Working Act, when it is offered as an amendment to the Emergency Supplemental funding bill. It will be offered as an amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill to increase spending by \$23 billion dollars. These funds would be sent to the states to be used to replaced the lost funds that would have been used to support funding for schools (and police and fire as well). The vote will be as early as Wednesday 19th or within a few days after that date. The amendment will need 60 votes in the Senate because it isn't taking funding from other areas. 60 votes will be tough, but possible and a coalition has been formed and many groups are involved in this push.

So why should you take time to do this? Every phone call or email counts as over 50 votes by most Senate offices. And, it is really surprising how few people will actually make the call or send the email, so yes, your call and your asking friends and colleagues to speak up for teachers (and the children they are serving) can make a difference.

ESEA - The Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The House and Senate education committees are moving ahead with rewriting ESEA. The House ed committee is expect to have a draft later in May, while the Senate ed committee is looking at early June. Both are saying that they are trying to finish the bill and send it to the president by August.

While most observers believe that this will not happen, it is clear that work is being done. IRA has submitted its comments to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension that were developed by an expert committee and the subject of a survey by Legislative Action Team members and state council leaders.

State Literacy Teams and The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program.

There is a total of \$250,000,000 in The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program (SRCL.) Of that total, \$225 million will be available as competitive grants to the states that will be early 2011. Not many states will get the grants- perhaps only 8 to 10- because of the size of the appropriation and the desire of the US Department of Education to concentrate funds and issue them based on quality of the intervention.

However, the first part of the program will be a formula funded program to the states to develop a comprehensive literacy plan. (Note: This is a grant, for which states will need to apply to; but all states can, if they choose, to receive funding.) There will be \$10 million for all SEAs and most states will get \$150,000 towards development of the State Literacy Team (SLT) and comprehensive state literacy plan including age 0 through 12th grade. This plan must include outlines of assessment and evaluation. The application for these funds should be available on September 1st.

Appropriations Update

The House and Senate appropriations committees are moving ahead with developing their spending plans for education. However, before they can finalize their plans the Congressional Budget process must determine how much money will be the "pot" to be used by the individual programs. While the president's budget outlined a big share for education, it also assumed that the budget shortfall for Pell grants, would come from another part of the budget - not the annual appropriated education programs. This may not be the case, if it isn't then there will be effectively \$5 billion less dollars for all of education. We are monitoring this issue very closely.

Coming up on the IRA calendar:

Response to Intervention (RTI) webinar series winds up with two remaining webinars on May 18th and June 1st.

Register for the RTI webinars by emailing irawash@reading.org and including your name, home address, email and IRA membership number (if you are a member) You will be emailed access instructions prior to the event.

RTI: Teacher Expertise, May 18, 2010, 8 PM EST

The greater the literacy difficulty, the greater the need for expertise in literacy teaching and learning. Learn comprehensive approaches to professional development that involve preservice, induction, inservice education and the importance for working with mentors. (register now link)<<http://www.reading.org/General/Conferences/RTIWebinars.aspx>>

RTI at Secondary level. June 1, 2010 at 8 PM EST

Learn how to make RTI systemic and comprehensive at the middle and high school levels. (register now link<<http://www.reading.org/General/Conferences/RTIWebinars.aspx>>)

(New Series) Webinar on Selecting and Using Core Reading Programs, June 3, 2010 at 8PM EST.

What core reading program should you adopt? How do you make the "right" choice? Learn how to put it all together and make your core reading program work for you. Hosted by Peter Dewitz. (register now link<<http://www.reading.org/General/Conferences/RTIWebinars.aspx>>)

Register for the Core Reading Programs webinar by emailing authorwebinar@reading.org<<mailto:authorwebinar@reading.org>> and include your name, home address, email and IRA membership (if you are a member) You will be emailed access instructions prior to the event.

Legislative workshop, June 21-22, 2010

This mini-workshop features new initiatives and programs for educators. We will train workshop participants to be effective advocates on both state and federal issues. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with their Members of Congress and/or their staffs on Capitol Hill.

We would like to limit registration to 25-30 attendees.

(To register and preview

agenda)<<http://www.reading.org/General/Conferences/GovtRelationsWrkshp.aspx>>

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