

Notes from January 27, 2010 NCPIE Meeting

Topic of Meeting: ESEA reauthorization and School Improvement Grant (SIG) presented by Massie Ritsch, Deputy Assistant Secretary for External Affairs and Outreach Services, Office of Communications and Outreach, US DOE

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Political Context:

- Focus of national education platform will be to reauthorize the *Elementary-Secondary Education Act* (ESEA, formerly *NCLB*) by July 31, 2010.
- Obama has called a freeze on non-discretionary spending except education.

ESEA proposed shifts:

- Rewarding schools that are making above average growth and progress in student achievement.
- Winning streaks in closing achievement gaps—models ready for scale up.
- Rewarding excellence and using other measure other than high stakes as a means for measuring success, perhaps incorporating school climate surveys and safety as additional data points. Perhaps even using an “A”, “B”, “C” rating for schools similar to restaurants.
- Proposal that special education testing be more focused.
- Transform schools to adapt to the 21st century.

Questions still need to be addressed:

- Stakeholder comments that under NCLB there was a narrowing of curriculum—how can this be revisited?
- How can accountability for parents occur? How can schools be motivated to work with parents? What can be proposed to address this issue?
- Does 1118, Section A 1% set aside budget for family engagement make sense? Should it be more money? How should this stipulation be monitored?

Federal Budget:

- New federal budget released on February 1, 2010 will propose regrouping like programs in order to pool together money and resources, this may eliminate some programs.
- There will also be a different structure and about 100 different programs.
- Extra money will be allocated to ESEA including, but not limited to:
 - a. Higher Education
 - b. Early Learning Opportunities-\$10B
- Student Loans-shift to direct lending

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- Budget will be the blueprint for ESEA, there will be a shift from compliance to rewarding innovation and excellence.

Summary of SIG:

\$3.5 billion will be released to SEAs for Title I Schools OR Title I eligible schools (schools that would qualify if their LEAs would count secondary schools in Title I) which are in the bottom 5% of low-performing schools. Nationwide this accounts for 5,000 schools.

Process:

- Peer reviewers for Race to the Top Funds will consist of a cross section of educators and community stakeholders.
- Applications due end of January and first round of finalists will attend a conference in early March to present their proposal to reviewers. Awards will be given for the 2010-1011 school year by April 1, 2010.

4 Assurances/Focuses for grants:

- College & Career Readiness—especially consistent standards
- Effective use of data to inform student progress/achievement
- Teacher and School Leadership Professional Development
- Focus on turnaround schools, the lowest performing 5% of schools

4 Models to Choose from for SIG Funds:

1. Replace/restructure all school leadership and at least 50% teachers.
2. Only leadership change and teachers remain.
3. Turn school over to a Charter School or other NGO to run.
4. Close down school and move students to a higher performing school.

Student Achievement & Assessments:

- 48 states are working together to develop consistent standards in math & reading.
- \$350M will be given out in funding to develop state assessments that match new standards.

Innovation Grants (i3):

- Approx. \$650M in funding available to school districts who partner with non-profits.
- RFP will be released at the end of February 2010.
- Awards will apply to 2010-2011 school year.
- As part of the grant there will also be a Promising Neighborhood Grant modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone Project.
- Comments or ideas for grant guidelines? Send input to Carrie Jasper and Kim Morton so they can forward to Massie Ritsch.

Issues/Questions Raised by NCPIE Members:

- How do we engage parents in academic rigor?
- How can we monitor what is already contained in ESEA, 1118 Section A regarding requirements for family engagement?
- How do we mobilize public will to support school reform and family engagement in schools?