FY2003 BUDGET UPDATE

March 20th, the House passed its FY2003 Budget Resolution by a vote of 221-209. No Democratic amendments or alternative budgets were allowed to be offered. Prior to the vote, the House Rules Committee rejected four education amendments by Representatives George Miller (D-CA) and Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX) that would have increased funding (by $10 billion). The House-passed budget assumes the President’s budget for education with only a 2.8% or $1.4 billion increase over FY2002.

March 21st, the Senate Budget Committee held a mark-up of their FY2003 budget resolution, which includes $5.4 billion more for education funding than the President’s proposed FY03 budget and fully funds IDEA with six years of mandatory increases.

Some Senate Budget Committee members had wanted to include provisions that would limit future spending by setting strict budget caps for the years beyond FY2003. While this proposal was not agreed to by the Committee, similar amendments are expected to be offered during floor debate. The full Senate is expected to begin debate on the budget resolution after spring recess, which started this week and lasts through April 8.

In coordination with House and Senate budget action, Sen. Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Miller (D-CA) released a letter to President Bush stating that an additional $10 billion is needed for education in FY03. This action is largely a symbolic effort, and does not have majority support in either the House or the Senate.

As a reminder, the budget resolution is a non-binding spending blueprint intended to guide the Appropriations committees for FY2003 funding. CCSSO and the education community will work with Congress to significantly increase funding to meet the new requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and deal with shrinking state education budgets.

ISBE EARMARK REQUESTS

ISBE secured $5,190,000 in Federal special appropriation earmark requests for sixteen projects in the FY 2002 Labor/HHS Appropriations bill. In early March ISBE received the applications for these projects from the U.S. department of Education. Since then agency staff have been working with local school district personnel to complete the applications and return them to USDE for review. ISBE should receive the funds for these projects in June and begin the transfer of these funds to the appropriate local education agency in July.
Fifty seven Federal special appropriation earmark requests, totaling $15,735,000, have been submitted to the Illinois Congressional Delegation for the coming year. Members of Congress will submit their final recommendations for education earmark requests to the Labor/HHS appropriators by mid-May. As in past years it is expected that the Labor/HHS Appropriations bill will be the last of the thirteen appropriation bills to be considered next fall.

**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001: Guidance and Proposed Guidance**

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and will help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

The following is a list of the guidance and proposed guidance that has been release by USDE to date:

- Proposed requirements for optional State consolidated applications submitted under section 9302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110 (NCLB) were posted in the Federal Register March 6, 2002. Submitting a consolidated application will allow a State to obtain funds under many Federal programs through a single application, rather than through separate applications for each program. ISBE returned comments on the proposed requirements to USDE before the April 5, 2002 deadline.

- Guidance on the Enhancing Education Through Technology (Ed Tech) Program was published March 11, 2002. This document provides guidance on the purposes and goals of the Ed Tech program, the State and local application processes and an entity’s eligibility for a grant award, the uses of Ed Tech funds, other programmatic requirements, and the relationship of various flexibility provisions to the program. The Department will supplement this document with further guidance as additional issues arise during implementation of the program.

- Draft guidance for the Early Reading First was released on February 14, 2002. The overall purpose of the Early Reading First Program is to prepare preschool age children to enter kindergarten with the language, cognitive, and early reading skills necessary for reading success, thereby preventing later reading difficulties. Early Reading First will transform early childhood programs into centers of excellence that provide a high-quality education to preschool age children, especially those children from low-income families.

- Draft Guidance for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program was released on February 28, 2002. Even Start is an education program for the Nation’s low-income families that is designed to improve the academic achievement of young children and their parents, especially in the area of reading. Even Start provides educational services for the family, parents and children alike, so that adults and their
children will be able to take advantage of and benefit from the tremendous opportunities available to them in this Nation.

- Guidance for the Reading First Program was released April 2, 2002. The Reading First program will provide the necessary assistance to States and districts to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. Reading First funds will also focus on providing significantly increased teacher professional development to ensure that all teachers, including special education teachers, have the skills they need to teach these programs effectively. Additionally, the program provides assistance to States and districts in preparing classroom teachers to effectively screen, identify and overcome reading barriers facing their students.

Additional information regarding these and other NCLB notices in the Federal Register can be found at: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/index.html#frn.

IDEA REAUTHORIZATION

On March 21, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee heard testimony from Robert Pasternack, the Department’s Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. “From Reading First...to the Title I accountability provisions...the No Child Left Behind Act makes great strides in improving educational opportunities for students with disabilities," he explained. "With these and other changes in place, we must now turn our attention to the IDEA and determine what we need to do to further improve the law."

Among the challenges cited: preparing both regular and special education personnel ("The successful implementation of the IDEA is perhaps most critically dependent on the quality of the people who implement the principles contained in the law..."); making sure that children with disabilities are part of accountability systems; providing research and assistance on alternate assessments and appropriate accommodations ("For example, curriculum and assessment materials can be designed for maximum flexibility by allowing information to be presented in a variety of visual or auditory modes..."); lowering the dropout rate and boosting the graduation rate of students with disabilities; and ensuring the proper identification of children with disabilities ("We know...that many are classified as such because of the lack of effective reading instruction using scientifically based instructional approaches...").

What about mandatory funding? "What we need to do is identify what works," Pasternack said. "It is not always about money."

The Senate is scheduled to hold a hearing on IDEA discipline on April 25, with more hearings expected throughout this year. All testimonies from the hearing can be viewed at the following link: http://labor.senate.gov/Hearings-2002/mar2002/032102wit/032102wit.htm. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/03-2002/20020321.html. (See also the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education at http://www.ed.gov/insit/commissionsboards/whspecialeducation/.)
PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES EFFORT TO IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
April 2, 2002, President Bush announced a new initiative to improve early childhood education for millions of America's youngest children. The president's initiative will:

- Strengthen Head Start to improve the quality of experiences for young children, including training the nearly 50,000 Head Start teachers in the latest and best techniques;
- Ensure that pre-school programs are more closely coordinated with state K-12 education goals; and
- Improve the information available to parents and caregivers about the best practices in early childhood development, including an unprecedented $45 million research effort to identify effective early literacy programs and practices.

The early childhood initiative announced by President Bush seeks to improve the state of early childhood education, where too many children come to school unprepared to learn. Because a significant number of young children receive care from people other than their parents (62 percent of children age 5 or younger), federal and state governments provide more than $18 billion annually (more than $14 billion in federal support alone) to help families—particularly low-income families—provide for pre-K care.

Despite these significant resources, not all children are receiving care that is high-quality care because: 1) many states do not fully align what children are doing before they enter school with what is expected of them once they are in school; 2) early childhood programs are seldom evaluated based on how well they prepare students to succeed in school; and 3) there is not enough information for early childhood teachers, parents, and other child care providers on the activities that prepare children to be successful in school.

CCSSO STATEMENT ON WHITE HOUSE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) supports the focus President Bush is placing on improving early childhood education for America’s children through his new initiative and calls on the Congress to enact legislation that will help provide every child with access to high-quality early childhood education.

“Early learning creates a foundation for later achievement, and efforts to help children develop to their fullest cannot be postponed until they reach the age of five or six,” said CCSSO Executive Director G. Thomas Houlihan. “The Council is determined to see that every child has the opportunity to develop to his or her fullest potential, and we hope that the President’s new initiative will assist states in ensuring that every child comes to school ready to learn.”

As the Administration and Congress move forward to further consider strategies on early childhood education, CCSSO urges them to make a commitment to strategies that will:

* Ensure that every child has the opportunity for high-quality, universal early care and education at age 3 and 4 through either public or private schools and agencies with funding through public and/or private sources, depending on need;

* Assure the continuity of education experiences as children move through early childhood programs into elementary school, particularly in terms of pre-literacy preparation;

* Strengthen early childhood program standards and accountability and improve assessment of child development and readiness;
* Expand and disseminate new knowledge about how to improve early childhood education; and
* Promote parent and family education and join in coordinated health, child care, and education services which enable families to provide creative developments for their infants and toddlers.

CCSSO stands ready to join with families, colleagues, policymakers, and the public to design and implement strategies and resources on early childhood education that will ensure high standards of performance for every one of America's children and prepare each child to succeed as a productive member of a democratic society.

CCSSO has long supported initiatives to strengthen early childhood education in the states. In 1988, CCSSO issued its first policy statement in support of early childhood care and education. The burgeoning body of knowledge about the youngest learners, and the increasing public awareness of their growing need for quality early education experiences, led the Council to restate its policy in 1999 to reflect the new realities, understandings, and opportunities. Please visit www.ccsso.org to download a copy of CCSSO’s policy statement.

HOUSE EDUCATION & WORKFORCE COMMITTEE PASSES EDUCATION RESEARCH BILL

Last Wednesday, the House Education and Workforce Committee favorably reported H.R. 3801, the “Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002” by a voice vote. The bill would reauthorize programs relating to education research and development, regional technical assistance, and statistics. Before convening the mark-up, Committee members agreed that the bill needed further refinements, though mostly minor, before it was reported out of the committee and brought to the House floor after the spring recess for passage.

The bill was first introduced by Education Reform Subcommittee Chairman Michael Castle (R-DE), who along with Ranking Member Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI) are the key authors of the legislation. There were several changes made to the bill reported out of the Subcommittee as part of a last minute bipartisan agreement before the mark-up.

The agreement included substantial reworking of the provisions for regional technical assistance. In brief, the Secretary of Education would designate 10 regional areas and select two entities, one for technical assistance and one research and development, to serve each region. Regional Advisory Committees would advise the Secretary with the selection process for each region. The committees would include every chief state school officer in the region as a member, and also include local educators and practitioners, research specialists, business leaders, and teachers appointed by the governors in consultation with the chief state school officers.

A single Regional Governing Board would govern both the research and development and technical assistance entities in each region. On each governing board would serve every chief state school officer in the region. The other members would be chosen jointly by the governors and chief state school officers, and consist of local practitioners, field specialists, parents, and business leaders. The Regional Governing Boards would have sole authority for determining the contracts with the technical assistance and R&D entities.
During the mark-up, Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) introduced and withdrew an amendment to authorize the Eisenhower Math and Science Consortia and Clearinghouse for five years. In addition, Rep. David Wu (D-OR) introduced and withdrew an amendment to authorize the Regional Technology Centers. The current bill only authorizes continued funding of these entities for the duration of their grants. Rep. Castle noted that further consideration would be given to the Eisenhower Math and Science Consortia and Clearinghouse and the Regional Technology Center before the bill comes to the House floor. However, it is highly unlikely that these two programs would be inserted back into the bill. The following is a short summary of H.R. 3801:

- Replaces the current Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) with a new Academy of Education Science (AEC). The AEC would conduct and support research, disseminate findings, and strengthen and promote the coordination of scientifically based research. The Academy would function as a separate office under the direction of the National Board for Education Sciences. The new Academy is authorized at $400 million, which will cover the various programs under the Academy including the National Center for Education Research, the National Center for Program Evaluation, and the National Center for Education Statistics.

- Creates a National Center for Education Research (NCER), which would replace the five existing education research institutes. The Center will sponsor sustained research in education, with an emphasis on increasing student achievement. The Center will fund research into “scientifically based education research.” In addition, the Center in order to promote long-term research, will award at least 50% of its grants in each fiscal year to long-term research programs.

- Creates a National Center for Program Evaluation (NCPE), which would conduct independent and rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of federal education programs, especially on student achievement in the core academic areas of reading, math and science.

- Maintains the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES will continue to collect and analyze education information and statistics.

- Creates a Regional Educational Applied Research and Technical Assistance program, which would be a regionally based grant program with ten regional centers. These centers will oversee entities that will provide applied research, dissemination, training and technical assistance. Technical assistance will be provided to state education agencies, local education agencies, schools and other appropriate entities. This program is authorized at $189 million for FY03.

- Ensures the funding of the Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, Regional Technology Centers, and the Eisenhower Math and Science Consortia for the duration of their current grant periods.

- Authorizes $111 million for the National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) and the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

For more information on H.R. 3801, please see the Education and Workforce Committee website: [http://edworkforce.house.gov/markups/107th/fc/hr3801/320main.htm](http://edworkforce.house.gov/markups/107th/fc/hr3801/320main.htm). However, the complete legislative text on the Committee passed bill is not yet available - the text available on the website is the bill reported by the Education Reform Subcommittee.