Elementary and Secondary Education Act  
The conference committee (names noted last month) has had an organizational meeting and then one meeting on substance. They agreed on several points but the major issues have not been resolved.

The House Education and Workforce Committee issued a press release on August 1st stating that the committee members met on August 1st to finalize the President’s education plan met Wednesday to ratify a series of early agreements that will help disadvantaged students.

Areas of agreement:

- **Migrant Students.** Conferees reached an agreement on migrant education that will help states and local school districts better meet the needs of migratory children, ensuring that their academic records can be properly kept and shared as they change schools and locations.

- **Neglected and Delinquent Students.** Conferees have agreed to refocus the Neglected and Delinquent program on the goal of providing services to youth returning from correctional facilities. The agreement would make it easier for children to make the transition from state institutions to local school districts and allow the use of funds for several new activities, including peer mediation and mentoring.

- **Homeless Students.** Negotiators have agreed to give greater flexibility to states in providing technical assistance to local school districts to help them respond to the needs of homeless students. The agreement would also prohibit states from segregating students based on their homeless status, and address transportation issues children in homeless situations face.

- **Comprehensive School Reform.** Conferees have agreed on a number of changes to better enable schools to implement research-based reforms. Agreements include changes to state application requirements to ensure that schools are selecting school providers that are financially stable and ready to provide high quality assistance. Conferees also agreed to encourage local school districts that apply for grants to emphasize scientifically based research and effective practices.

- Conferees also agreed that the final legislation would be a **six-year reauthorization** of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The House-passed bill was a five-year reauthorization; the Senate-passed bill was a six-year reauthorization.

The most difficult issues, which also happen to be the ones undergirding the entire bill -- state assessments, the national accountability system, measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP), and funding levels -- will be the ones completed last.

The conference committee’s most difficult task will be to craft a national accountability system that is acceptable to all. The Senate-passed bill would require states to make constant progress in having 100% of their students proficient in ten years. The House-passed timeline is twelve years.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) issued its analysis of the House and Senate AYP measures on schools in Maryland, North Carolina, and Texas, states that were selected because of their exemplary accountability systems and, in the case of North Carolina and Texas, states that already test all students in grades 3-8 in reading and math as the President has proposed. Using either the House or Senate models, the study found that most of the schools in each state, and not just the Title I schools, would be identified as failing. The sheer number of schools would threaten the states’ ability to provide technical assistance to all the schools in need and would put the states in jeopardy of the financial sanctions for underperformance, a 30-75% loss of
state administrative funds. Although the study focused on three states, similar results could be expected in every other state as well.

With Congress’ traditional August district work period commencing August 3rd, conference aides will meet daily throughout the month of August in hopes that a final product can be ratified by members in September as students return to school.

**Special Education Status**
Relating to the reauthorization of ESEA, NASDSE has sent a letter and made telephone calls to all conferees, making the following points:

- Full funding for IDEA (with some minor language changes from the Senate language);
- Excluding any IDEA discipline language (save this issue for IDEA reauthorization); and
- Include students with disabilities in whatever AYP plan is adopted by the conferees.

In late June, Connecticut became the first state to bar teachers, counselors and other school officials from recommending psychiatric drugs for any child. School officials may still recommend that a doctor evaluate a child. The law is intended to make sure that the first mention of drugs for a behavior or learning problem is from a doctor. Representative Schaffer of Colorado, who has been an outspoken opponent of the growth of prescribed behavioral drugs for students, has praised the Connecticut law. Schaffer has testified at several House hearings on this issue and wants Congress to continue to examine this issue.

On June 27th, Representative English of Pennsylvania introduced H.R. 2339, which would amend the tax code to provide for a refundable credit for child disability education and training expenses. The maximum allowable credit would be $2,000 and could be used to offset expenses for such things as behavioral therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, auditory therapy, assistive communication technology and other services that might be designated in regulations. According to NASDSE, almost all of the expenses covered in the bill are already tax deductible. Comparable legislation has not been introduced in the Senate.

On June 18th, President Bush signed Executive Order No. 13217 on Community-based Alternatives for Individuals with Disabilities. The order commits the federal government to community-based alternatives for individuals with disabilities and calls upon the federal government to assist states and localities to swiftly implement the decision of the Supreme Court in the Olmstead case. The Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor and HUD, and the Social Security Administration are charged with undertaking a review of their policies, programs, statutes and regulations to determine whether any of them should be revised or modified to improve the availability of community-based services for individuals with disabilities. These reviews must focus on identifying affected populations, improving the flow of information about supports in the community, and removing barriers that impede opportunities for community placement. The review must also ensure the involvement of consumers, advocacy organizations, providers, and relevant agency representatives. Through a notice that appeared in the Federal Register on July 27th, the public is invited to submit comments on issues such as barriers in federal law, policy or programs that limit the ability of people of any age who have a disability to live more independently in the community, to participate in productive employment and participate in community life. Comments should be submitted by August 27th to New Freedom Initiative Group, Department of Health and Human Services, P.O. Box 23271, Washington, DC 20036-3271.

**Financial Situation**

Neither the Senate nor House has acted on education appropriations. The two chambers are far apart in their dollar requests for ESEA as well.

**Other Bills**
Two bills to promote math and science instruction were approved by the House recently. The *National Mathematics and Science Partnerships Act* would fund grants for colleges to partner with local districts in
recruiting and providing professional development of math and science teachers. The National Science Education Act would fund grants for master science and math teachers to support other science and math teachers. The National Science Foundation would administer both programs. Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate.

**Schedule**
Congress has adjourned for the August recess. Legislators will return to Washington the week of September 10.

Now would be a good time to visit your Illinois delegation member. You can reach them in their district office at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congressional District</th>
<th>Congressman/Congresswoman</th>
<th>District Offices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Congressional District 1 | Congressman Bobby Rush | 655 E. 79th Street  
Chicago 60619  
773/224-6500  
Staff: Judy Tucker |
| Congressional District 2 | Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. | 17926 S. Halsted, Ste. 2 W  
Homewood 60430  
708/798-6000  
Staff: Rick Bryant |
| Congressional District 3 | Congressman William Lipinski | 5832 S. Archer  
Chicago 60638  
312/886-0481  
Staff: Jerry Hurckes |
| Congressional District 4 | Congressman Luis Gutierrez | 3181 N. Elston  
Chicago 60608  
773/509-0999  
Staff: Wanda Nunes |
| Congressional District 5 | Congressman Rod Blagojevich | 4064 N. Lincoln Avenue  
Chicago 60618  
773/868-3240  
Staff: Brian Daly |
| Congressional District 6 | Congressman Henry Hyde | 50 E. Oak Street, Ste. 200  
Addison 60101  
630/832-5950  
Staff: Judy Wolverton |
| Congressional District 7 | Congressman Danny Davis | 3333 W. Arthington St., Ste. 130  
Chicago 60624  
773/533-7520  
Staff: Daniel Cantrell |
| Congressional District 8 | Congressman Philip Crane | 1100 W. Northwest Highway  
Palatine 60067  
847/358-9367  
Staff: Thelma Hummel |
| Congressional District 9 | Congresswoman Janice Schakowsky | 5533 Broadway Street  
Chicago 60640  
773/506-7100  
Staff: Leslie Combs |
| Congressional District 10 | Congressman Mark Kirk | 102 Wilmot Road, Ste. 200  
Deerfield 60015  
847/940-0202  
Staff: Dodie McCracken |
| Congressional District 11 | Congressman Jerry Weller | 2701 Black Road, Ste. 201  
Joliet 60435  
815/740-2028  
Staff: Reed Wilson |
| Congressional District 12 | Congressman Jerry Costello | 155 Lincoln Place Court  
Belleville 62221  
618/233-8026  
Staff: Frank Miles |
| Congressional District 13 | Congresswoman Judy Biggert | 115 W. 55th Street, Ste. 100  
Clarendon Hills 60514 |
White House Conference on Early Childhood

The White House held a conference on Early Childhood Cognitive Development July 26-27 in Washington. Co-hosted by Laura Bush, Secretary of Education Paige and Secretary of Health and Human Services Thompson, the summit was created by Mrs. Bush to highlight the early learning activities that parents and educators can use to prepare young children for school. State Superintendent McGee was a participant at the conference along with more than 400 government, education, community, and philanthropic leaders from across the country.

Secretary Paige called the summit the first step in a long range and widespread effort to raise public awareness of the science of and need for early childhood cognitive development. He described the new task force of senior education and health and human services department officials announced at the meeting as a way to put the research and recommendations presented during the course of the summit to work in government programs for young children. "Together, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services will ensure that the Head Start and preschool programs we support are doing the right things and getting results," Paige said. "We will also work to make sure every adult who cares for a child understands the methods we have learned at this summit and will use them at home. In other words, we will get the government's house in order, and spread the word to all the other houses, too."

Reports

NAEP Math Results Released
Mathematics scores for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were released in early August. The tests -- which measure number sense, Geometry, statistics and probability, and Algebra -- were administered last year. NAEP results are reported in two ways: as a scale score that runs from 0 to 500, and according to achievement levels (Basic, Proficient, and Advanced). Overall, the results for both 4th and 8th-graders were very encouraging. Both grades improved their scale scores from the last assessment (1996) and over the course of the decade. There were similarly impressive increases among the achievement levels. 12th-grades, however, recorded gains over the decade but showed a slight decline since 1996.

### 4th-graders: 1990 - 2000
- **Scale Score**: 213 - 228
  - Basic: 50%-69%
  - Proficient: 13%-26%
  - Advanced: 1%-3%

### 8th-graders: 1990 - 2000
- **Scale Score**: 263 - 275
  - Basic: 52%-66%
  - Proficient: 15%-27%
  - Advanced: 2%-5%

### 12th-graders: 1990 - 2000
- **Scale Score**: 294 - 301
  - Basic: 58%-65%
  - Proficient: 12%-17%
  - Advanced: 1%-2%

Student scores broken down by race/ethnicity increased and generally followed the larger overall pattern. However, the achievement gap among white and minority students did not close appreciably in any of the grade levels. Students who took more advanced mathematics courses performed better than those that did not. This was especially true of students taking Algebra in eighth-grade as opposed to "eighth-grade math" or pre-Algebra courses. Likewise, students who completed or were taking pre-calculus, calculus, or trigonometry scored better than students who had not taken those courses.

The math NAEP also included state results. No state exhibited a decline in scores and twenty-six states recorded increases in 4th-grade achievement over the past ten years while at the 8th-grade level twenty-seven states "showed significant gains" since 1990.


In terms of an Illinois perspective on NAEP, the following are comments from State Superintendent McGee.

- Illinois participated in grades 4 and 8, not in grade 12. It was the first time since 1990 that Illinois had enough participants to have state-level results. NAEP science results will be released this fall.

- NAEP gives us a different perspective on student achievement than the ISAT and PSAE tests. NAEP measures how well students are achieving compared to other students who took the test. ISAT and PSAE measure students’ achievement in terms of what they know and can do - how well they are meeting the rigorous Illinois Learning Standards. NAEP is not a norm-referenced test. It does measure how students do against set mathematics and science criteria, hence the designations, below basic, basic, proficient, etc.
• Basically, Illinois students are performing about the same as those in the rest of the nation, but that means the proportion of students at or above proficient is unacceptably low. So now what? This is the critical element:

  ▪ We must step up our efforts to teach the *Illinois Learning Standards* in every classroom, and ensure that our teachers have the preparation and professional development opportunities they need to help their students achieve the *Illinois Learning Standards*.

  ▪ We must close the achievement gap. NAEP results not only reinforce what we already know about our students’ math achievement overall, they also expose the achievement gap between our low income students (a large proportion of whom are racial/ethnic minorities) and students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The Standards are high expectations for all students.

  ▪ The State must continue to target resources and support to those schools and in those subject areas where they are most needed.

You can also find the formal press release from Governor Ryan at [http://www.state.il.us/gov/press/01/aug/0802tests.htm](http://www.state.il.us/gov/press/01/aug/0802tests.htm)

**Condition of Education 2001**

When the original Department of Education was created in 1867, the law stated that it should "*gather statistics and facts on the condition and progress of education in the United States and Territories.*" The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) currently carries out this mission for the Department of Education through such work as *The Condition of Education*, a mandated annual report submitted to Congress on June 1 every year.

This annual report presents indicators of important developments and trends in American education. Recurrent themes underscored by the indicators include participation and persistence in education, student performance and other outcomes, the environment for learning, and societal support for education. In addition, this year's special feature focuses on the issue of providing equal educational opportunities to first-generation students (i.e., students whose parents did not attend college) and how academic preparation can increase the likelihood of these students' access to and persistence in postsecondary education. The 2001 version can be found at [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/).

**Report on Home Schooling in the United States**

Approximately 850,000 children were receiving their education at home in 1999, according to a new report released today by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). *Home Schooling in the United States: 1999* reports that about 1.7 percent of children ages five through 17 — the equivalent of grades K through 12 — were homeschooled.

The study found that homeschoolers are more likely than other students to live with two or more siblings in a two-parent family, with only one parent working outside the home. Parents of homeschoolers are, on average, better educated than other parents, though income is about the same. The percentage of homeschooled students remained about the same at each grade level and at each level of family income. Boys and girls were equally likely to be homeschooled.

Parents gave various explanations for homeschooling their children. The most widely reported reasons were that they could give their child a better education at home, religious reasons, or a poor learning environment at school.

Parents were asked about relationships with their local schools. According to the report, about 18 percent of homeschoolers were enrolled in schools part-time. About 11 percent said they used books or materials from a public school and about 8 percent used a public school curriculum. About 6 percent of homeschoolers participated in an extracurricular activity provided by a public school or school district.
The report marks the first time that NCES has developed an estimate of homeschooling. "We look forward to repeating and extending the items asked about homeschooling in the 2003 Parent and Family Involvement Survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program," said acting commissioner of education statistics Gary Phillips. "Then we can answer important questions about whether homeschooling is increasing or decreasing and whether public and private school participation in homeschooling is changing."


**Key Education Policies on K-12 Education**

The Council of Chief State School Officers has released the 2000 edition of *Key State Education Policies on K-12 Education*, which is a continuation in the biennial series. The 50-state information focuses on education policies covering key policy areas of content standards, graduation requirements, student assessment, teacher licensure, school leader licensure and time and attendance. CCSSO began reporting on trends in education policies in the late 1980s when state legislatures and boards of education approved many policy initiatives aimed toward improving the quality of K-12 education. After consulting with state leaders, researchers, and CCSSO staff, coverage of key policy areas has continued to expand. The goal of these reports is to provide consistent, reliable information on similarities and differences in state policies, and thus to assist national, state and local policymakers and leaders in making informed decisions about policy changes.

The state representatives to CCSSO’s Education Information Advisory Committee (EIAC) coordinated collection of information in this report. Some of the information was obtained from other surveys, including the *Annual Survey of State Student Assessment Programs* and the *Manual on Teacher Preparation and Certification of Education Personnel*. Copies may be ordered from CCSSO’s Publications office at (202) 336-7016 or info@ccsso.org. The publication is also available in electronic version on the CCSSO Web site ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)).