And Now We Wait
Both chambers of Congress have completed their appropriations process for education. A conference committee is being appointed which will review and proceed with a single appropriations bill for education. The language of the bill is heavily dependent on the substance of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now undergoing reauthorization. The House bill increases funding for education by $7 billion overall (17%), the largest increase in the history of the U.S. Department of Education. The Senate bill, on the other hand, increases funding for education by only $6.3 billion overall, $700 million below the House level.

The Congress is in at least the fourth Continuing Resolution, set to expire on November 16th. Presently, none of the 13 appropriations bills have been signed into law. Only the Interior and Military Construction appropriations bills are ready for the President to sign.

As a sidelight, the Senate Finance Committee reported out the Economic Recovery Act which includes a 1 year extension of QZAB's $400 million tax credit for school construction in enterprise zones. Senator Byrd (D-WV) is preparing a $20 billion supplemental appropriations bill that reportedly includes $1 billion for school construction.

The ESEA Reauthorization Conference Committee has met several times, and reached three sets of agreement. They are likely to meet again after Thanksgiving, and tackle the remaining, hard issues. Should you wish to contact your delegation member, the next two weeks would be a good time to do so while they are in the district!

Delegation members will be home as of the end of the week, and won't return until the week of December 2nd. At that time they will need to deal both with the substance of and funding for education.

It is likely that Congress may simply "recess" when their legislative agenda is complete, rather than "adjourn." This would enable them to reassemble quickly in the event of any future national emergency.

ESEA Reauthorization
On October 30th another meeting was held by the ESEA conferees. Chairman Boehner (R-OH) remarked at the meeting, "We are closing in on a strong bipartisan conference report. We will finish this process soon, and send the President a bill he can sign into law before the end of the year."

Some of the highlights of the agreements reached on October 30th are:
- Title IV - 21st Century Schools, Part A - Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities. The agreement would retain the Gun Free Schools Act with minor changes. It would eliminate the section that requires the Secretary to disseminate policy guiding the implementation of the act and its connection to IDEA.
- IDEA and Discipline - Stay tuned, this will likely be an area of heated debate when the issue is addressed. Additionally schools would be asked to develop policies that allow teachers to maintain control of the classroom so that students can learn.
- Program Consolidation - A number of existing technology grant programs will be consolidated into one state-based technology grant program that sends more money to schools that serve disadvantaged students.
- School Prayer - Federal funds will be denied to any school district that prevents constitutionally protected school prayer.
- Boy Scouts of America - Funding will be denied to any public school or educational agency that discriminates against any group affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, as well as any other youth groups classified as patriotic societies under U.S. law.
- Military Recruiting - Allows armed forces recruiters the same access to high school students as college and job recruiters now have.
- Exemptions for Home Schools - Codifies the exemption for home schools in the Gun Free Schools Act.
- Hate Crimes Prevention and Religious Protection - Still being debated, some conferees offered an amendment to protect students and their parents from activities in the schools that would undermine their religious and moral beliefs.
- Internet Filtering - Maintains the Internet Filtering requirements that become law last year.
- Community Involvement - Community-based organizations, including religious organizations that provide safety and drug abuse prevention programs can apply for funds under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act.

Conferees have yet to reach agreement on key issues in Title I, including the definition of adequate yearly progress and provisions for state assessment and accountability. In addition, there is strong contention among Conferees over whether to adopt the Senate ESEA bill’s provisions for mandatory full-funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To date, Conferees have agreed to/ratified the following provisions in ESEA:
- Title I, Part B, Reading First
- Title I, Part C, Migrant Education
- Title I, Part D, Neglected and Delinquent Education
- Title I, Part E, Evaluations
- Title I, Part G, Comprehensive School Reform
- Title I, Part H, General Provisions
- Title III, Part B, Native Americans and Alaskan Education Programs
- Title IV, Part A, Safe and Drug Free Schools (several issues within these programs are still unresolved)
- Title IV, Part B, Charter Schools
- Title IV, Part C, Magnet Schools
- Title IV, Part D, Innovative Programs Block Grant (formerly Title VI)
- Title V, Part A, 21st Century After-School (several issues within these programs are still unresolved)
- Title V, Part B, Education Technology (several issues within these programs are still unresolved)
- Title VI, Impact Aid

National Awards
At the recent National Career Academy Conference in Chicago, Illinois was the recipient of two national awards. The Southeast High School Health Science Academy in Springfield, IL (Springfield School District #186) received the prestigious Henk Koning Award for outstanding academy, and Roy Lloyd from the Calumet Partnership Academy received the outstanding academy student award.

The Henk Koning award is named for the founder of the Philadelphia partnership academies, and recognizes the importance of strong business partnerships. The Southeast Health Science Academy has a strong relationship with the healthcare community, who provide valuable experiences and resources for teachers and students. The Academy in turn provides the healthcare community with a better prepared workforce. The Academy is in its 8th year of operation, and has maintained the same faculty since its inception. As part of the Academy, students receive their Certified Nurse Assistant education at the Capitol Area Vocational Center (CAVC).

Reports
NAEP Science Assessment Results
Results from the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science assessment will be released on November 20. In 2000, NAEP administered the test to approximately 50,000 students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in the nation. The test was also administered to approximately 200,000 students in individual states.
at grades 4 and 8 (to facilitate state-level analysis). Overall, 41 states and six jurisdictions participated. For more information, please go to http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/science/.

Results from the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science assessment will be released on November 20. In 2000, NAEP administered the test to approximately 50,000 students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in the nation. The test was also administered to approximately 200,000 students in individual states at grades 4 and 8 (to facilitate state-level analysis). Overall, 41 states and six jurisdictions participated. For more information, please go to http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/science/.

Standards
The American Federation of Teachers has issued its Making Standards Matter 2001 report in which Illinois gets glowing marks because: “Illinois’ academic standards generally are clear and specific and the state is well on its way to having a coherent standards-based education system.” The author of the report, Heidi Glidden, said “Illinois is a leader in developing a strong standards-based system, but now it needs to turn its attention to perfecting curriculum materials and accountability measures.” The AFT’s general news release is on the web at http://www.aft.org/press/2001/110201_msm.html. At the bottom of the release is a link that will connect the reader with the Illinois section.

School Crime and Safety
The annual "Indicators of School Crime and Safety," shows that most types of school crime dropped between 1995 and 1999, with the proportion of students saying they were victims of crimes dropping to one in 12. Indeed, between 1993 and 1999, the percentage of high school students who reported being in a fight declined from 16 percent to 14 percent and students who reported carrying a weapon during the previous 30 days dropped from 12 percent to seven percent. Students who reported street gangs in their school fell by nearly half (from 29 percent in 1995 to 17 percent in 1999) and fewer students said drugs were available on campus (from 32 percent in 1995 to 30 percent in 1999). Nevertheless, the percentage of students who were threatened or injured with a weapon remained constant between seven and eight percent. For more information, check out http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/iscs01.htm.

Redefining the Role of Principals
Principals should primarily be instructional leaders, a booklet released last week says, and delegate administrative tasks to others. The National Association of Elementary School Principals bills the 96-page publication as redefining the role of principals. Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do recommends that school leaders' top goal should be to raise student achievement. It can be viewed at www.naesp.org.

The publication represents a shift in emphasis from two earlier books published by the organization, which focused much more on managing a school. Standards for Quality Elementary & Middle Schools, published in 1996, included a heavier emphasis on management.

In justifying its redefinition of the principalship, the NAESP booklet cites the achievement gap between poor and some minority students and white students, swift technological change, and the movement for higher educational standards. But the booklet cautions that the call for greater accountability in schools "is potentially a serious weapon against public schools that fail to help their students reach the standards."

It outlines six steps principals should take to improve test scores, including balancing management and leadership roles; setting high expectations and standards; demanding rigorous content and instruction; fostering a culture of adult learning; using data; and engaging parents and civic groups in schools.

High School Graduation Rates in the United States
The Black Alliance for Educational Options and the Manhattan Institute’s Center for Civic Innovation released a new study by Jay Greene that examines the complex issue of high school graduation rates. Greene disputes the federal estimate of an overall 86% graduation rate (as it includes GEDs) and concludes from his own analysis that the U.S. high school graduation rate in 1998 was just 74%, including 78% of whites and 56% and 54% among black and Latino youngsters respectively. These rates turn out to vary hugely by state (consider 93% in Iowa, 57% in Georgia) and by city (87% in Fairfax County, Virginia, 43% in Milwaukee, 28% in
Cleveland). 85% of Boston’s African-American students graduate, compared with 34% in Louisville. While graduation rates alone are not a satisfactory gauge of educational performance, from a young person’s standpoint it matters hugely throughout life whether he/she has a high-school diploma. A copy is available from [http://www.manhattan-institute.org](http://www.manhattan-institute.org).

**Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership**

Public Agenda (as underwritten by the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds) surveyed 1800 public school principals and superintendents. In Public Agenda’s words, here are some of the main conclusions: “Superintendents and principals...voice confidence that they can improve public education, but say their effectiveness is hampered by politics and bureaucracy....What superintendents and principals need most, they say, is more freedom to do their jobs as they see fit—especially the freedom to reward and fire teachers....School leaders are far less worried about standards and accountability than about politics and bureaucracy.....” You can download a summary (and, until November 30, the entire report) from Public Agenda’s website, [http://www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org), or buy a hard copy for $12.50 from Public Agenda, 6 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016. E-mail info@publicagenda.org or phone (212) 686-6610.

**U S Department of Education Information**

The Department’s next Satellite Town Meeting is scheduled for November 20. For more information, please go to [http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=150](http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=150). The November Satellite Town Meeting, the third of the 2001-2002 series, aims to inform and prepare parents regarding the legislative changes from No Child Left Behind.

On November 8th, Secretary Paige announced the establishment of the National Center for Education Accountability, a collaborative effort to improve learning through the effective use of school and student data and the identification of best practices. The Center is a joint venture of Just for Kids, an Austin-based nonprofit organization that uses accountability data to examine and improve school performance; the University of Texas at Austin; and the Education Commission of the States, an interstate compact that helps state officials shape education policies. Associates will go into the schools, talk with teachers and administrators about their challenges, and observe the daily instructional strategies and leadership practices that have garnered success. "I would suggest that this time of change is an excellent chance for every school to examine its teaching methods, identify those that do not work, and replace them with better ones," the Secretary said. "Once accountability systems are in place in states around the country, I think parents and communities will have less patience for failing schools." For further information, link on to [http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/clearinghouse/30/83/3083.htm](http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/clearinghouse/30/83/3083.htm).

For the week of November 11-17, 2001

- **National Veterans Awareness Week**, a joint effort by the Departments of Education and Veterans Affairs, encourages schools to invite veterans into their classrooms in the days leading up to and following Veterans Day (November 11). Veterans are asked to share their experiences and teach students lessons about the history and significance of Veterans Day, helping students reflect upon the importance of the ideals of liberty, democracy, and freedom. "Lessons of Liberty," a new education initiative, will further expand opportunities for students to participate in activities that explore America's history and values in the midst of the war against terrorism. Check out [http://www.va.gov/vetsday/](http://www.va.gov/vetsday/) for more information.

- **International Education Week**, a joint effort by the Departments of Education and State, recognizes the importance of educating students about people and nations throughout the world in preparing students to live in a diverse and tolerant society and succeed in a global economy. To participate, schools can recognize students who have achieved high standards in foreign language, world history, or geography classes. Teachers can facilitate classroom-to-classroom connections with other countries. Libraries and museums can feature books, music, and works of art from abroad. Communities can sponsor discussions on international topics and invite professors or exchange students to speak about their countries. High schools, colleges, and universities can publicize opportunities for study abroad and exchange. For more information, link to [http://exchanges.state.gov/iew2001/](http://exchanges.state.gov/iew2001/).

- **American Education Week**, established by the National Education Association and the American Legion in 1921, celebrates the teachers and school staff who educate the nation’s school children. The 2001 theme, "Together: Making Public Schools Great for Every Child," reflects the reality that quality
education requires a successful partnership between school staff, parents, and students. The theme also emphasizes that everyone has a role to play in making public schools great -- parents, neighbors, business, and government, as well as teachers, principals, bus drivers, and all other school staff. Additional information is available at http://www.nea.org/aew/.