

**MAY 6, 2016**

Della Cronin, Editor

[dcronin@wpllc.net](mailto:dcronin@wpllc.net)

*The Education Report*, a weekly publication of WPLLC, provides an executive summary of public policy issues affecting American education. **Please use the bookmarks below to navigate to your area of interest:**

1. [Budget and Appropriations](#)
2. [In Brief](#)
3. [New Publications](#)
4. [In the News](#)
5. [About WPLLC](#)

---

## 1. Budget and Appropriations

After months of pondering the question, “Will they or won’t they?” it seems that the notion of the House debating and passing a budget resolution will finally be put to rest next week. Before Members of Congress left for this week’s recess, there was a closed-door meeting of GOP members and Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) sounded optimistic afterwards. The optimism seems to have been washed away by this week’s relentless DC rain. Conservatives continue to assert that the budget deal struck last year is too generous, while moderates want to proceed under that agreement, since the Senate and White House are likely to oppose anything smaller.

What does this mean? It means there is no House-passed budget resolution guiding House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY). Maybe that’s not a big deal, since it’s been reported that he and his cardinals are already developing bills based on the numbers in the 2015 deal, much to the chagrin of conservatives. Technically, the subcommittees can start debating and marking up those bills after May 15. The Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee and its Chairman, Representative Tom Cole (R-OK) are facing a difficult task once again. They expect to get a smaller-than-they’d-like allocation and will try to accommodate increases for the National Institutes of Health, investments to fight the county’s opioid abuse epidemic and the new structure of K-12 education programs. On that last point, the new Title IV, Part A block grant and its supporters face an uphill battle in a fight for \$1.65 billion for the new program.

Congress will be back in town next week and over the next month, education advocates will be hoping for progress on the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act reauthorization, as well as America COMPETES. The Senate has announced a hearing on America COMPETES, which is encouraging, although those familiar with the measure don’t see how a Senate proposal could be developed, considered, approved and reconciled with the partisan House bill before year’s end. While advocates have been very busy since the beginning of the year, it seems unlikely that work will slow anytime soon.

[Back to top.](#)

---

## 2. In Brief

### **COALITION EXPLORES STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH**

On Tuesday, a diverse group of education organizations spanning multiple interests – the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), CompetencyWorks, International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), National Association for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), and Reaching At-Promise Students Association (RAPSA) – hosted a briefing to discuss the release of a new policy brief, [Seizing the Moment: Realizing the Promise of Student-Centered Learning](#). The paper and the panel highlighted the importance of implementing student-centered learning strategies in education reform movements. Particular emphasis was placed on using those strategies to impact disenfranchised and disengaged students who are not well-served by the traditional school setting and end up dropping out. Policy experts and practitioners extolled the idea of “designing to the edges” when talking about curriculum development – saying that the use of competency-based, personalized, and student-centered learning will allow education systems to provide an experience that effectively engages more students and meets them where they are. Competency-based education (CBE), in particular, is a useful model for dealing with over-age, under-credited (OA/UC) students to help them move at their own pace and develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to graduate from high school and enter the workforce. Linda Dawson, Superintendent of [SIATech](#) – a network of public charter high schools designed to help dropout recovery – spoke about the need to share learning data with students and allow ownership in the design of their path back to a diploma as they utilize blended learning models. Don Spangler, one of the authors of the paper, also spoke about the need to champion innovation encourage growth to scale – specifically the new assessment pilot authorized by ESSA – and to replicate these practices as fast as possible. For more information, please go [here](#).

### **AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE HIGHLIGHTS ASSESSMENTS FOR SEL DEVELOPMENT**

On Thursday, the Afterschool Alliance held the second in a series of webinars on how programs can support social and emotional development titled, “Are You Ready to Assess Social and Emotional Development?” As part of this webinar, experts Deb Moroney and Michael McGarrah from American Institutes for Research (AIR) dug into the assessment landscape and shared tools, specifically their suite of logic models Ready to Assess, and best practices to encourage programs to recognize whether and how to implement assessments of social and emotional development. McGarrah reiterated throughout his portion the importance of identifying the proper considerations, such as level of rigor and population characteristics, with the outcomes desired for measurement. Also on the webinar was Kristin Romens, a senior consultant at The Learning Agenda, an organization that assists practitioners to use these tools effectively. She described the numerous challenges that should be taken into consideration before selecting an assessment. During the webinar a poll of viewers was taken which showed at least one major concern in the field centers on the difficulty of aligning assessment and practice. Understanding the concern, Romens went on to lead a candid discussion regarding how some out-of-school time organizations have used tools to develop and align their assessment strategy. For more information or to view the webinar, go [here](#).

### **AEE DISCUSSES NAEP TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING LITERACY ASSESSMENT**

On Thursday, the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) joined with the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to host a webinar on National Assessment of Educational Progress’s (NAEP’s) new Technology and Engineering Literacy (TEL) assessment. After a brief introduction from AEE President Bob Wise, Stephanie Wood-Garnett, Vice President of Policy

and Advocacy for Standards, Assessment, and Deeper Learning for AEE led a discussion on the development and rollout of the new assessment. Her guests were Bill Bushaw, Executive Director of the NAGB, and Peggy Carr, Acting Commissioner for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Together they explained how their organizations collaborated to develop the first NAEP TEL assessment in response to the increasing importance of technology and engineering to America's ability to contribute and compete in a global economy. Bushaw told the story of how ten years ago the National Academy of Engineering approached NAGB with the idea to do an assessment on this topic. This request started the process where the NAGB adopted the requisite policy and worked with NCES to conduct trials with eighth graders across the country to create an interactive, cross curricular, scenario based assessment. Peggy Carr noted that NCES will also be working to ensure alignment of the TEL with the Next Generation Science Standards as the goal is to ensure that more students meet the rigors of college readiness. This first assessment, which uses application of real world trouble shooting skills like fixing a water pump, will serve as a baseline for future tests. To watch the video and learn more about the new assessment, go [here](#).

### **PROJECT TOMORROW RELEASES 2015 SPEAK UP RESULTS, HIGHLIGHTS GAMING**

On Thursday, Project Tomorrow held a briefing on Capitol Hill to highlight the release of their Speak Up 2015 National Findings and the corresponding report, [From Print to Pixel: The Role of Videos, Games, Animations, and Simulations within K-12 Education](#). The Speak Up findings are part of an annual survey taken by students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members to gain a holistic perspective and data-rich insight into the latest trends in education and how they are improving student learning and outcomes. This year's survey focused on how videos and games are helping students self-direct their learning and how they allow teachers, parents, and the larger community identify diverse and innovative ways to help students engage with learning material. Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow, convened the event and moderated a discussion panel that included teachers and students from schools around the DC-Maryland-Virginia area. One of the reasons she noted that games and videos have risen in popularity in the classroom (the use of game-based environments and online apps has doubled in the last six years) is that studies indicate that the brain processes visual information 60 times faster than text and that the digital game market is now about 10 times the size of the traditional board and card game market. Therefore, teachers have a wide variety of material to choose from and are finding that videos and games are helping students understand abstract concepts and information with greater clarity. Students themselves acknowledged that the use of videos and games helps them revisit concepts many times and learn at home at their own pace. Parents also expressed enthusiasm over the use of the "flipped classroom" model, saying it allows them to understand what their children are seeing and enables them to interact with their kids as well as the teacher about the content. The briefing also highlighted some of the shortcomings in the increased use of online tools and games – the need to curate digital content to verify quality and the fact that excessive use of online learning tools often disadvantages students with poor out-of-school internet access and connectivity. Teachers have responded by creating shared hubs of vetted material and by giving students a weekly plan of assignments so that they can plan the days they may need to stay at school to use the internet for longer periods of time. For more information and an archived webcast of the briefing, please go [here](#).

*[Back to top.](#)*

---

### **3. New Publications**

[Giving Every Child A Fair Shot: Progress under the Obama Administration's Education Agenda](#)  
White House Press Office (May 2016)

**Bringing It All Together: Elementary Principals Are Key to Strong PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classrooms**  
New America (May 2016)

**Teacher Shortages: What We Know**  
Education Commission of the States (May 2016)

**Technology Addiction Among Adolescents: Concern, Controversy, and Finding Balance**  
Common Sense Media (May 2016)

**The Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Learning**  
Brookings Institute (May 2016)

*[Back to top.](#)*

---

#### **4. In the News**

**Many Young Children with ADHD Are Missing Behavior Therapy**  
On Special Education (May 3, 2016)

**Obama White House Reflects on K-12 Legacy**  
Politics K-12 (May 3, 2016)

**Zuckerberg and Chan Hire Education Leader to Run Philanthropic Effort**  
The New York Times (May 4, 2016)

**ED Wants States to Dispel Model Minority Myth with Better AAPI Data**  
Think Progress (May 4, 2016)

**Federal Data Shows Schools See Less Crime, Fewer Students Feel Unsafe**  
Education Week (May 4, 2016)

*[Back to top.](#)*

---

#### **5. About WPLLC**

Washington Partners, LLC is a full service government affairs and public relations consulting firm that has built a reputation for producing results. We partner with clients committed to excellence in education and other social services to achieve policy and advocacy success by:

- leveraging our expertise and passion;
- strategizing intelligent solutions; and,
- creating meaningful impact.

Our team includes long-term insiders in education policy from PreK through higher education, innovative thinkers and savvy strategists that provide a comprehensive array of customized client services. We have the knowledge, skills, and relationships that are necessary for successful advocacy at all levels. From grassroots to grassroots and everything in between, our broad-based legislative practice approaches every project with the same degree of determination and professionalism.

WPLLC provides expertise in a variety of services:

- Government Relations
- Research and Analysis
- Advocacy Training
- Association Management
- Strategic Communications
- Policy Events

For more information, please call us at 202.289.3900 or visit our website at [wpllc.net](http://wpllc.net).

•••

*This publication contains links to Internet sites for the convenience of World Wide Web users. Washington Partners, LLC is not responsible for the availability or content of these external sites, nor does Washington Partners, LLC endorse, warrant or guarantee the information, services, or products described or offered at these other Internet sites.*

*Copyright 2016, Washington Partners, LLC. Redistribution of this memorandum or its content outside the immediate organization of the intended recipient without the express prior permission of Washington Partners, LLC is prohibited. Readers are encouraged to send comments about this publication to [Della Cronin at \[Della.Cronin@wpllc.net\]\(mailto:Della.Cronin@wpllc.net\)](mailto:Della.Cronin@wpllc.net) or call 202.289.3900.*