

CASN News February 2011

CASN News is supported by the Career Academy Support Network. CASN is based in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California Berkeley and works primarily with high schools and districts engaged in high school redesign.

To learn more about CASN and for free, down-loadable resources; videos about academy practices; an academy forms bank; and more, visit <http://casn.berkeley.edu>

We also invite you to visit our College Going Culture/College Access website at <http://collegetools.berkeley.edu>

In this edition:

- [House GOP Looks to Slash Education Spending](#)
- [New York Adopts Adjustments to Common Core Standards](#)
- [N.Y. Educators Collaborate to Inform Teacher Evaluations](#)
- [New Teaching Academy for Students in a Chicago High School](#)
- [Florida Pushes for Instructional Materials to Go Digital](#)
- [Los Angeles Settlement Restricts Teacher Layoffs in Neediest Schools](#)
- [On Line Instruction Allows Oregon Schools to Offer Mandarin](#)
- [Too Many Hours of Part-Time Work Limits Engagement of in School](#)
- [Report: Some Districts Do More With Less](#)
- [Survey Says.... Retaining Teacher Talent](#)
- [Report: When Success is the Only Option \(Competency-Based Education\)](#)
- [ASCD Position Statement on 21st Century Skills](#)
- [Online Course for Mentors from Education Northwest/National Mentoring Center](#)
- [Some On-Line Resources for Students and Teachers](#)
- [Funding Opportunities](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The first two articles in this edition of CASN News are about Federal Funding for Education. This may be a very confusing budget year. Even though we are now looking at the budget for fiscal year 2012, Congress still has not completed spending bills for fiscal 2011, which technically began on October 1, 2010. Most federal agencies, including the Department of Education, have been operating under a series of stopgap measures. This means that while Congress tries to work the budget details

out, it has frozen funding for every program at fiscal 2010 levels. The most recent of the stopgap measures expires on March 4th. Thus the first article that follows is about a Republican proposal for the FY 2011 Education funding AND the second article that follows is about the Obama administration's proposal for FY 2012 Education funding.

HOUSE GOP LOOKS TO SLASH EDUCATION SPENDING

House Republican leaders have proposed a bill that would cut education funding far below current levels and far below what President Obama wanted in his "never enacted" fiscal year 2011 budget request. The measure, which would continue federal funding for the rest of the fiscal year, would cut \$4.9 billion from the U.S. Department of Education's fiscal year 2010 budget of \$63.7 billion. According to Joel Packer of the Raben Group in Washington, "this absolutely would be the largest cuts ever in history for education programs."

16957 16957

The measure, which would continue federal funding for rest of the fiscal year, takes aim at some programs that were previously considered untouchable, including special education spending and Pell Grants to help low-and-moderate income students pay for college.

The bill would cover fiscal year 2011, which technically started in October 2010. Most of the federal government, including the Education Department, has been funded at fiscal year 2010 levels through a series of stop-gap measures, the latest of which expires on March 4.

It is unlikely these measures will get through the Democratically-controlled Senate; however, under the GOP proposal, Title I would be cut by \$693.5 million. Special education would be cut by \$557 million. Head Start would be cut by \$1 billion and Pell grants would be cut by a total of \$17.5 billion. That would mean an \$845 cut to the maximum per-student grant of \$5,550.

GOP lawmakers also didn't find any new money for the administration's top priority, the Race to the Top 2.0. The administration had asked for \$1.35

billion to continue the competitive grant program begun under the economic-stimulus package, and last calendar year, Congress had been poised to provide some of that money. Plus, there would be no money for another round of the Investing in Innovation grant program. The administration had originally asked for \$500 million to continue i3, another stimulus-funded initiative.

The Obama administration in its fiscal 2011 budget had proposed consolidating smaller programs into broader funding streams. For instance, smaller literacy programs would have been combined into a big competitive fund aimed at improving reading and writing.

But, under the House bill, those programs would be scrapped entirely, including:

- Even Start Family Literacy program: \$66.5 million
- Mathematics and Science partnerships: \$180 million
- Striving Readers program: \$250 million
- The Obama administration's \$50 million high school graduation initiative, which is a fairly new program
- Literacy Through School Libraries: \$19 million
- Education Technology State Grants: \$100 million
- Foreign Language Assistance: \$26.9 million
- The National Writing Project: \$25.6 million
- Ready-to-Learn Television: \$27.3 million
- Civic Education: \$35 million
- Elementary and Secondary School Counseling: \$55 million
- Smaller Learning Communities: \$88 million
- Tech Prep State Grants: \$102 million

- Teacher Quality Partnerships: \$43 million

Even some prized education reform programs with deep political connections would be slashed:

- New Leaders for New Schools would be cut by \$5 million.
- Teach for America would lose its \$18 million appropriation.
- The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards would lose its \$10.6 appropriation.

Also on the chopping block:

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers would get cut by \$100 million. And two college access would be cut: TRIO by almost \$25 million, GEARUP by \$19.8 million.

So who would come through unscathed? The Teacher Incentive Fund, which helps districts create pay-for-performance programs, and got \$400 million in fiscal year 2010. Charter schools, which got \$256 million in fiscal 2010. And Teacher Quality State Grants, which got \$2.95 million in fiscal 2010.

The bill is expected to go to the floor of the House within a week. Packer said some GOP lawmakers could introduce amendments making even further cuts.

Editor's note: Again, this Republican budget proposal is for fiscal year 2011, which actually started way back on October 1, 2010. The following article describes the just released Obama administration's budget proposal that will cover fiscal year 2012, which starts on October 1, 2011.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR FY 2012.

The Obama administration just released its spending proposal for fiscal year 2012, which begins October 1. The proposed FY12 budget request:

- Invests almost \$27 billion, representing an almost 7 percent increase, in an improved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that focuses on raising standards, improving assessments, rewarding success, and encouraging innovation.
- Emphasizes competitive funding by providing \$1.4 billion for new competitions modeled on the Race to the Top program and the i3 program to support early childhood education, drive innovation at the district level, and improve higher education outcomes.
- Eliminates 13 programs and consolidates 38 others into 11 more comprehensive grant competitions.

The Obama administration is keeping domestic discretionary spending level, but it is asking for \$77.4 billion in education funding, including \$49 billion excluding Pell Grants, for fiscal year 2012. That's roughly 4% increase in non-Pell discretionary funding over fiscal year 2010. The modest boost the administration is seeking for FY 2012 would include small increases in Title I grants (\$14.8 Billion, a \$300 million increase) and Special Education funding (\$11.7 Billion, a \$200 million increase.)

According to Obama, "Education is an investment that we need to win the future." To make sure the government can afford targeted spending increases, Obama and Ed Secretary Arne Duncan propose to cut ed programs that are "nice to have, but we can do without."

In its FY2012 proposal, the administration also seeks \$600 million (\$54 million increase) for School Improvement Grants, which would get a new name: School Turnaround Grants.

As part of its proposal for revising the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (aka No Child Left Behind), the administration requests \$300 million for a program called Title I Rewards, for schools that are making progress in boosting student achievement. And the administration is proposing a new research initiative called ARPA-ED (\$90 million).

As it did in its FY2011 proposal, the administration is asking Congress to combine 38 programs into 11 broader funding streams. For example, the administration proposes an Excellent Instructional Teams program, which would combine programs such as the Teacher Incentive Fund, Teach for America, and Teacher Quality Partnerships into a single Teacher Quality State Grants program aimed at improving teacher quality. (\$2.5 B, a \$458 million decrease).

The Administration/Ed Department also propose a new Presidential Teaching Fellows Program, offering annual grants of up to \$10,000 to students who attend a high performing teacher prep program and agree to teach in high needs schools for three years. And the budget request includes \$500 million for a competitive program called the "Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund" and \$250 million for a competitive "Teacher and Leader Pathways" program.

Proposed consolidation would also combine programs aimed at literacy, mathematics and science education, student health and safety, choice, assessments, and other areas into broader funding streams.

Not surprisingly, the administration is asking for another round of Race to the Top funding (\$900 million), which would just be for districts and would include a special set-aside for rural districts. Race to the Top funding would also include a new emphasis on productivity ("a focus on cost-effective reforms that improve student achievement in an era of tight budgets.") And the administration requests \$300 million for a new round of the Investing in Innovation grant program, which would include a STEM priority.

To put the Pell Grant program on stronger footing, the administration is proposing a new "Pell Grant Protection Act" that is aimed at keeping the maximum grant at the current level of \$5,500. Note: This would involve some cuts to other Pell Grant services.

In addition, the administration also requests:

- A modest boost to 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which would get an extra \$100 million or \$1.3 billion.
- A small hike to TRIO college access programs, bringing them to \$920 million, or \$67 million more than fiscal 2010. GEAR UP would get the same level as fiscal year 2010, \$323 million.
- \$350 million for the Early Learning Challenge Fund, a new program aimed at helping states improve their early-childhood programs.

Other programs, though, would be cut, including Career and Technical Education, which would get \$1 billion, or \$264 million less than last year.

NEW YORK ADOPTS ADJUSTMENTS TO COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The New York State Board of Regents this week approved new academic standards for students in preschool through 12th grade. The move adjusts the national common standards New York approved in July -- states are allowed to supplement the national standards -- and will significantly change the way math is taught to the youngest students. The changes include more emphasis on math skills, such as number knowledge for kindergarten students, and standards for preschoolers.

NEW YORK EDUCATORS COLLABORATE TO INFORM TEACHER EVALUATIONS

A group of educators in New York City are participating in the VIVA (Vision Idea Voice Action) project, a collaborative Web-based effort to make recommendations to state officials about the best ways to evaluate teachers. With 40% of evaluations being based on student achievement under new state laws, the teachers recommended the remainder be based on five components, including observations by administrators and peers, student progress assessments, student surveys and a self-assessment.

NEW TEACHING ACADEMY FOR STUDENTS IN A CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL

An academy program at a Chicago HS is preparing students for careers in teaching. It is one of several new college and career pathway programs in the city's high schools. The program offers students an education curriculum combined with teaching experience in an elementary classroom. Organizers say they eventually plan to include scholarships tied to in-district teaching opportunities as part of the program. In addition, the new Education Academy is set to be replicated at another school next year.

FLORIDA PUSHES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS TO GO DIGITAL

Florida's Board of Education wants the state to approve only digital instructional materials by the 2014-15 school year and for districts to spend half of their textbook funding on digital resources. The board's proposal is included in its legislative package this year, which also seeks more rigorous standards and development of a merit-pay law for teachers.

LOS ANGELES SETTLEMENT RESTRICTS TEACHER LAYOFFS IN NEEDIEST SCHOOLS

A Los Angeles County Superior Court judge approved an agreement that will restrict the number of teachers who can be laid off in disadvantaged schools, limiting the use of seniority as a factor when teachers are laid off. The settlement will prevent layoffs in as many as 45 Los Angeles schools and will aim to distribute layoffs more fairly in the district's 750 remaining schools. The teachers union will likely appeal the decision.

ONLINE INSTRUCTION ALLOWS OREGON DISTRICTS TO OFFER MANDARIN

A consortium of Oregon school districts plans to offer online Mandarin lessons taught by educators in China through the myChinese360 program, becoming the first in the state to offer virtual Chinese lessons. Many districts have begun offering Mandarin as a foreign language but have found it difficult to find qualified instructors for the courses. "In rural areas like ours, it's very difficult to add options," one superintendent said. "This would be an opportunity for our kids to expand and study globally." (source: The Oregonian)

TOO MUCH PART-TIME WORK RESULTS IN TEENS LESS ENGAGED IN SCHOOL

Data on 1,800 middle-class teens showed that those with part-time jobs who worked more than 20 hours weekly were less likely to engage in school activities or look forward to higher education and more likely to get involved in illegal activities such as stealing and drug use. The study in the journal *Child Development* found insignificant disruptions in academic, psychological or behavioral functioning among teens who worked fewer hours.

REPORT: SOME DISTRICTS DO MORE WITH LESS

A new report from the Center for American Progress is the "first-ever" attempt to evaluate the productivity of nearly every major school district in the country, with "productivity" defined as achievement produced relative to a district's educational spending, controlling for factors such as cost of living and students in poverty. Through this project, the Center hopes to "kick-start" a national conversation about educational productivity; aims to identify districts generating higher-than-average achievement per dollar spent, demonstrating the wide variation within states; and hopes to encourage states and districts to embrace approaches that create and sustain educational efficiencies.

"At a time when states are projecting more than \$100 billion in budget shortfalls, educators need to be able to show that education dollars produce significant outcomes," write the authors. Their findings: low productivity costs the national system as much as \$175 billion a year. Many districts could boost achievement without increased spending by using money more productively -- and without controls on spending, more money does not automatically improve student outcomes. More than a million students are enrolled in highly inefficient districts, and many of these are high-spending; students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be in districts with high inefficiency. The nation's least-productive districts spend more on administration, even as they fail to evaluate their productivity and have poor local education data. Districts that are highly productive tend to focus on improving student outcomes.

A few of the study's most significant findings:

** The least-productive districts across the nation spend 3 percent more of their budgets on administration and operations than better-performing districts.

** Poor students are 12 percent more likely to be attending an unproductive school district than a productive one. More than a million students overall are attending schools the study labeled as unproductive.

** More spending--above a certain threshold--does not guarantee higher productivity. More than half the school districts in the study showed no relationship between the amount of money spent and student achievement. For example, two very similar similar school districts of about 10,000 each in Wisconsin produced students with almost identical average test scores. But one district, Eau Claire, spent about \$800 million more than OshKosh did.

** Especially productive school districts appear to share some traits, according to the study's authors. These districts were often located in "supportive communities" and spent about 3 percent more of their budget on instructional costs--e.g., teacher salaries, curriculum materials--than lower-performing districts did.

The study gauged achievement by fourth-grade, eighth-grade, and high-school reading and math test scores. Boser admits in the report that measuring efficiency is complicated, and that it's impossible for him to fully control for all outside factors in a district that may affect achievement. There are also differences in achievement and spending among individual schools in each district that get masked when the study computes a district-wide average. Still, he says he believes this is the most comprehensive effort to measure school productivity to date.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/educational_productivity_report.html

SURVEY SAYS... RETAINING TEACHER TALENT

The debate continues about the use of test scores to measure school and/or teacher effectiveness. However, according to a recent "Retaining Teacher Talent" survey of teachers, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Joyce Foundation and conducted by Public Agenda and Learning Points Associates, there is actually some agreement among teachers on what would be effective. Nearly all teachers surveyed (92 percent) rated the level of student interest and engagement as an "excellent" or "good" indicator of teacher effectiveness. Over two-thirds of teachers also gave excellent or good ratings their own students learn compared with other students (72 percent); and feedback from principals/administrators (70 percent.)

A majority of teachers (56 percent) said how well students perform on district's standardized tests is an "excellent" or "good" indicator. But their confidence level is much lower here. Only 12 percent said tests were an "excellent" measure, lower than any of the other options.

Contrary to what many reformers may assume, newer teachers are more likely to have concerns about using standardized test scores to measure their performance than those with more experience. Half of all teachers with less than five years of experience gave test scores a "fair" or "poor" rating,

compared with just 32 percent of teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

According to Public Agenda, "it's not that teachers reject test scores entirely - but they do think other measures give a better picture of who's getting the job done and who isn't."

REPORT: WHEN SUCCESS IS THE ONLY OPTION: DESIGNING COMPETENCY-BASED PATHWAYS FOR NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

"When Success is the Only Option..." summarizes the current status of competency-based programs throughout the country. Competency-based programs have the potential to aid in the evolution of education from a time-and-place-based system to a student-centric model of learning that provides students with multiple pathways for mastering competencies and/or standards.

Included in the report is a definition of competency-based programming, descriptions of current programs, a discussion of challenges facing innovators, and a comprehensive list of resources. Although online learning is not specifically addressed in the report, there are substantial implications for competency-based pathways in eLearning. http://www.inacol.org/research/competency/docs/iNACOL_SuccessOnlyOptn_Report011111-lr_000.pdf

ASCD POSITION STATEMENT ON 21st CENTURY SKILLS

Educating Students in a Changing World (ASCD Position Statement 2008)

As educators in the 21st century, we are charged with educating students to be successful in a complex, interconnected world. This responsibility requires schools to prepare students for technological, cultural, economic, informational, and demographic changes.

ASCD supports changes in teaching, learning, and leadership that adequately prepare students for the 21st century who

- Acquire and apply core knowledge and critical-thinking skill sets that are essential in an information age.
- Demonstrate creativity, innovation, and flexibility when partnering with business and community members to advance common goals.
- Make decisions and solve problems ethically and collaboratively.
- Use technology to gather, analyze, and synthesize information for application in a global economy.
- Exhibit positive interpersonal relationships that value multiple languages, cultures, and all persons.
- Display leadership skills that inspire others to achieve, serve, and work together.

ONLINE COURSE FOR MENTORS FROM EDUCATION NORTHWEST/ NATIONAL MENTORING CENTER

Once mentors learn about the complexities of their role, they often wish they were better prepared. A new online course by Education Northwest does just that, through 13 video scenarios that depict common mentoring challenges and how to handle them. The vignettes in [*Talking it Through: Communication Skills for Mentors*](#) are based on the experiences of actual mentoring pairs and feature real youth and real mentors.

The videos, which run 3–7 minutes each, demonstrate how to respond to difficult situations and communicate effectively on the spot. Project Coordinator Amy Cannata points out, “The segments offer guidance on developing key skills such as knowing how to be empathetic and attentive, when to set boundaries, and when to contact program staff for help.” The videos are enhanced with tips and resources, and a printable journal feature keeps users actively engaged in the course.

Talking it Through was created by Education Northwest’s [National Mentoring Center](#), which has been a leader in the mentoring field for more than 13 years. <http://talkingitthrough.educationnorthwest.org/>

SOME ON LINE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Elements of Language Model Bank

The *Elements of Language Model Bank* is designed to support teaching and learning in genres of written expression. Whether students are learning how to write a news article, a descriptive essay, a cause and effect piece, a short story, or just about any type of writing, including research reports, these

online, interactive exemplars are perfect for students to see exactly what an outstanding assignment should look like. There is a link for a printable Writer's Guide at the top of each model that explains exactly what to do and how to do it, with directions and illustrated explanations. Teachers and students will find the framework and information to be both easy to follow and very helpful. <http://go.hrw.com/eolang/modbank/>

Demo Slam

Demo Slam provides a virtual stage for "show and tell" demos of anything "tech-y," particularly any tool created by Google. It is like a how-to for friends, classmates, family, and anyone who is inclined to watch you slam and push the limits of technology and imagination to teach how to use cool new programs, gadgets, and the ever-emerging broad range of Google tools. Although this particular website is for a Demo Slam contest sponsored by Google and open to "slammers" 18 years and older, the broader concept is worthy of exploring with all students as a motivational, creative, and purposeful computer literacy/language arts activity that involves so many of the standards for listening, thinking, speaking, and computer literacy. What a great way to spread the word about technology, help others learn, and become a master/expert yourself while having a lot of fun doing it!

Many of us, teachers and students alike, love poetry slams, so a natural extension might be to try a technology slam. You do not need fancy cameras, equipment, or software to get started. Use this website as a springboard to explain and excite students about *Demo Slam* and project some of the "Champion Slams" on your classroom projector or interactive whiteboard to start their creative juices flowing. Students could create their own demos of tools they like or informational sites that fit your curriculum area, using tools such as *Screenjelly*. Whether you are a participant or audience viewer, the competitive art of performance encourages us to use our imaginations to present ways we may never have thought about using. Encourage students to work individually or collaborate in groups. Set up a rubric for criteria to have students vote on the champion demo. Do you need a Rubric Maker? You can get one.

<http://www.demoslam.com>

[WatchKnow.org](http://www.watchknow.org)

Over 22,000 free teaching videos are now available on <http://www.watchknow.org>. The videos cover nearly every educational topic and are easy to find with an intuitive directory and search feature. All major subject areas are covered as well as staff development. There is even some humor.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Do Something Seed Grants

Do Something Seed Grants can be used towards project ideas and programs that are just getting started, or to jump-start programs and realize ideas for the first time. These grants can also be used towards projects that are already developed and sustainable, towards the next steps of the project and organization to help as the project expands. Maximum award: \$500. Eligibility: U.S. or Canadian citizens aged 25 or under. Deadline: rolling. <http://www.dosomething.org/grants/faq>

Toyota U.S.A. Foundation

Committed to improving K-12 education, the Foundation offers funding to education organizations in support of various programs that focus on the areas of math and science. Applications are reviewed continually (no deadline). The site also lists several affiliates within Toyota that also give grants. NOTE: Apply online only. No mail in applications. http://www.toyota.com/about/philanthropy/education/toyota_USA.com