

January 19, 2013

To: Members of the Board of Directors  
From: Richard Long, Executive Director for Government Relations  
Subject: Board Report January 2013

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During the October Board retreat I provided a review of 2012 activities and have included that in a report to the membership. In this report I am going to update several items, expand on issues that are of concern and make suggestions.

#### Partnership Activities

We have ongoing projects with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the International Society of Technology Education. All three of these projects are moving slower than anticipated. Basically these projects take concentrated time and effort. I am anticipating that the work with the state directors of special education will be moving more quickly in February of this year as we have scheduled several discussion points. The same is true for the work on early childhood education with the elementary school principals. An added incentive is that early childhood is going to be one of the areas of congressional action this year. The CoSN project is looking for funding and will be moving ahead with once we find support.

In addition to these projects, I would anticipate that the Association will be forming a partnership with First Book. While this effort will not be time intensive to support, it has taken time to bring to this point.

Another group that looks to be promising is the Coalition for Community Schools. They have several models of parent involvement that look to be innovative and producing results. Both Gayle Pauley and Bernell Cook have agreed to meet with the leader of that organization when they come next to Washington, DC.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the International Reading Association have both been discussing with members of the NASTID leadership different joint activities. Both organizations will have presentations at the NASTID annual meeting.

#### Government Policy

The Congress is going to be starting its session focused on the rewriting of the Higher Education Act and the early childhood programs (at least the child care block grant and perhaps Head Start). While ESEA is always on the list, it is politically charged. The Administration is pushing its agenda through the waivers, the House is pushing its agenda on a reduced federal role and the Senate seems to be in flux with new staff and a new ranking member.

As a part of our reauthorization process an outline of our position has been generated. Basically it has many principles in it that could be, and I recommend be used to create specific recommendations for the other legislative vehicles that are being reauthorized. For example, in the Higher Education Act that we look to push for increased attention for teacher training for Title I schools. For the early childhood programs we seek to increase connections to them (and when the material is finalized in the early childhood project we are working on with the National Association of Elementary School Principals that we include those points in our "position."

The other area of concern is funding. While the sequester doesn't seem to be as much of a threat to us right now (the reason being that with the shift in categories from defense to security in the fiscal cliff deal, the category we are in has a higher allocation than what is in the Continuing Resolution that expires on March 27<sup>th</sup>). However, as we know we are not out of the woods. The Republicans are pushing for a dollar for dollar cut in spending for increasing the debt ceiling. I suggest that we continue our main effort by working with the Committee for Education Funding and informing our membership.

2013

The year will see several challenges beyond the traditional issues of reauthorization(s) and funding. The US Department of Education will be somewhat more of an independent player as they will continue to expand its interpretation of its authority to make decisions. I would anticipate that we will see many of their ideas on how to change low functioning schools be a part of how USED will change monitoring of Title I (and other programs) to be more outcome based. In addition, we are likely to see the Department to continue to use competitive grants process in place of other processes to assert its interpretation of effective system building.

Waivers are another area of change that we will need to monitor. Specifically how will the waivers be managed, as states compliance will be wide ranging? What will USED do? In addition, how will the Congress respond to essentially these non-legislatively condoned policy interventions? How will any transition phase to a new ESEA be managed? These issues are going to have to be discussed with the Congress.

Both of these issues (monitoring and waivers) also tie into the historic emphasis of Title I. In many ways the federal role is changing from its traditional role of helping states and local school districts to improve access to instruction for economically disadvantaged children, disabled children and language minority to focusing more on general systems. Will the traditional emphasis become a second tier priority? This is an open question that we need to monitor.

A fourth area of concern is the implementation of the career- and college-ready standards. The standards have significant differences in emphasis and as a result instruction will undergo a massive change. Most teachers will not have been taught

how to teach with these new more demanding goals. One of the results will be that all schools will produce assessment results that will place them lower in the achievement category. For Title I schools, the achievement gap will seem even greater. As we look at the reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act and different sections of ESEA (especially what is now Title II-A, but also the LEARN Act, and STEM) we will need to advocate for more attention to be directed towards those teachers who will be working with Title I schools and high need students.

To help to create a stronger emphasis on these topics, the following suggestions are made:

- Create a Congressional Caucus
  - Formal and public
  - Sharing ideas and materials
  - Place to direct reporters' questions
- Create a formal coalition of groups
  - Coordinate activities
  - Public activity
- Information program – research on website – more on quality (ideas such as the searchable distinguished schools are an excellent idea).

In reality these are not modest suggestions. Setting up both a Congressional caucus and a formal coalition are time intensive but there is a need to formalize the community around supporting education programs for students living in areas that are economically disadvantaged.