

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE 9
November 11, 2007

REAUTHORIZATION WILL NOT HAPPEN IN 2007

1. In the Legislative Update on October 3, I reported that I was looking for positive reauthorization information to share with you. On October 16, 2007, I reported that it appeared the House was slowing down. If anyone wants NCLB reauthorized this year, I do not have good news to share.
2. The Senate Bill will not be introduced until 2008 – if then. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV) reported that the bill will not be on the floor this year, but may be next year. Note the word may. Chairman Kennedy and Minority Leader Enzi of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) have said that when the bill for reauthorization of NCLB is introduced, it will be all or nothing. What this means is that there will be no short term fixes. If that is the case, we may have the same law as it stands until possibly 2010 or beyond. States will continue to implement a law that virtually everyone considers flawed until we have a new President.
3. The negotiations between the Republican and Democratic Leadership on the Education and Labor Committee plod along in the house without sufficient consensus to bring the bill to a full Committee vote. Sticking points for the Republicans remain no substantial changes to accountability and more flexibility with use of funding.
4. House and Senate Conferees approved the Fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill which was sent to the President. The Conferees' bill has 4.5 billion more for education than the President's request and he carried through on his promised veto. In the Conferees' bill Title I receives a substantial increase, Title V is eliminated and Reading First would go from 32 million to 12 million in Pa. Until negotiations begin, I am not sure if anyone knows how much money will be where.
5. As Bruce Hunter, American Association of School Administrators, points out, this situation is similar to what happened in 2000. The reauthorization of NCLB started with Clinton's Administration and ended being reauthorized by President Bush with the guidance and help from Senator Kennedy. The new President may be the person to determine what NCLB will be. Based on what the presidential candidates are saying, if they have anything to do with the new law, it will not be what we have.