

The Stimulus Package – A Growth Opportunity for Community Schools?

The federal investment in education, through the stimulus package, doubles the education budget set forth by the previous Administration and promises to transform the federal government's role in education. Recently, Secretary Arne Duncan commented that the size of the stimulus bill makes it a once-in-a-lifetime chance to put lasting reforms in place, suggesting that now the federal role in education can help shape thinking to "... move from being about compliance with bureaucracy to really the engine of innovation and change." Duncan and his team of advisers have until Oct 1, 2009 to think about ways to distribute the money. In the interim, it is up to community school advocates to provide convincing arguments for placing this funding in community schools.

The stimulus package has within it a number of opportunities for expanding and supporting community schools and we have found these opportunities in the obvious and not so obvious places. In the weeks ahead, the details of the plan will be fleshed out and we should seek every opportunity from within the Department of Education and across other federal departments to offer input that will expand the community school movement.

Dept of Education

Title I - \$13B

Title I will receive an additional \$13 billion through a formula grant, sending resources to the local school districts for a number of activities supporting the education of disadvantaged youth. Within this allotment there is \$3 billion specifically dedicated to school improvement, targeting not making Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB. Forty percent of this funding is to be used to support middle and high schools, and some of the funding is expected to be used for early childhood programs and activities.

Because Title I is flexible, it provides opportunity for community schools to receive funding for enrichment programming for students and parents, site coordinators, integration of curriculum, before and after schooling, and more. Title I funding can be used to help students improve their achievement in core academic subjects and to provide professional development for teachers; support for additional teacher and classroom aides; improve curriculum; enhance parental involvement; extend learning time for students who need extra help; and provide other activities that are tied to raising academic achievement.

Special Education - \$12.2B

Special education funding will come through a formula grant flowing through states to local school districts. At the local level, resources are to be **used to fulfill the unmet federal contribution to special education**. By providing this funding over the next two years, on top of the regular appropriations other money may be available that was previously not available absent the federal funding.

Special education funding could be used to hire more specialty staff who can reach children who need help with learning and reduce the teacher to student ratio so the students can receive more individual attention. Hire staff to develop cooperation between parents and the schools so academic programs that are stressed in school are not lost when the child is not in school. And also to make parents aware of services available to them and their children. Buy additional instructional materials and support tools such as transportation and computers to help teachers with ongoing professional development and training. Bring more services in from the community to assist teachers in meeting the needs of students.

Student Financial Assistance – Work-Study - \$200M

Some community schools that have developed a partnership with local universities and colleges benefit from college students who are paid for with work-study funds. The stimulus plan expands this opportunity for college students and community schools should position themselves to reach out to offer job opportunities.

State Stabilization Fund - \$53.6B

- \$40 billion for states to restore cuts to school districts and higher education institutions. State formula grants may be used for any activity under ESEA, IDEA, and Perkins *or* for school modernization and repair. **Opportunity at the local level for community school coordinators to receive resources.** These funds are available upon the enactment of the bill. The following two programs are included in the program.
- **State Incentive Grant program** - \$5 billion in discretionary dollars for the **State Incentive Grant program** which awards bonus grants to states for meeting key education reform measures. The grants are awarded to states that have made significant progress in any of the following four areas:
 - achieving equity in distribution of highly-qualified teachers;
 - **establishing longitudinal data systems;**
 - **enhancing assessments for children with disabilities or those who are English language learners; and**
 - **ensuring low-performing schools in corrective-action stage are in compliance.**
- **Innovation Fund** - \$650 million in discretionary funding through the Innovation Fund provides resources for LEAs **or partnerships between a nonprofit organization and a local education agency that have made significant progress in closing the achievement gap** This could include charter schools or other programs with a track record of boosting achievement. To be eligible there must be a clear track record of improvement. Community schools that have kept clear records of academic achievement gains, attendance, and other results are in a good position to reach for these funds.
- \$8.8 billion may be used by governors for public safety or other government services that **may include education services** and/or higher education modernization, renovation and repair. For community schools working with university-based partnerships, this may be a venue to explore. This is a huge pot of funding that will go towards construction of buildings that could be designed to serve as parent education centers or community school sites.

Other Opportunities

In other federal departments possible connections for community schools may be mined. The following list highlights stimulus funding that may yield possibilities.

Health and Human Services

Child Care and Development Block Grant - \$2B

Estimated state allocations for a \$2 B increase in Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) discretionary funding under the H.R. 1 Conference Agreement through September 2010. These funds are to be **used to supplement state funding spent on child care assistance.** Through the CCDBG, low-income parents receive vouchers or other reimbursement for child care costs to enable them to work or participate in education or training activities. Approximately \$225 M is reserved for activities designed to 1) provide comprehensive consumer education to parents and the public; 2) increase parental choice; and 3) improve quality and availability of child care such as resource and referral services. This grant can provide opportunities for after school and before school programs that are common among community schools.

Health Resources and Services Administration -- \$1B

Funds (\$500M) are provided at community health centers to be used to support new sites and service areas, to increase services at existing sites. Grants for new sites and service areas are to be two years in length as startup is phased in. \$500M in addition is provided for health professions training programs. School-based health care centers would seem to be eligible and should seek funding. *Note:* School-based Healthcare Centers were defined in the SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) reauthorization. This is a major victory!

Administration for Children Youth and Families

Child and Family Services - \$2.1B

- Funding for **Head Start** (\$1B) and **Early Head Start** (\$1.1B) for competitive grants that provide comprehensive development services for low-income preschool children, infants and toddlers. This will expand early education opportunities for additional children and create early education jobs.

Community Services Block Grant - \$1B

- For Community Action Agencies serving low-income families. Partnerships with CAP agencies can help support community schools

Public Health Service Act - \$650M

- To carry out evidence-based clinical and community-based prevention and wellness strategies authorized by the Public Health Services Act.

Corporation for National and Community Service - \$201M

Including funding for grants under subtitle C of title 1 of the 1990 Act.

- \$89 million for AmeriCorps State and National
- \$65 million for AmeriCorps VISTA

Dept of Agriculture

Rural Community Facilities Program Account

The conference agreement includes \$130M for loans and grants for rural community facilities including hospitals, **health clinics, health and safety vehicles and equipment, public buildings, and child and elder care facilities**. Could these center be build next to schools or included in a community school partnership?

Dept of Justice

Byrne Competitive Grants - \$225M

For competitive, peer-reviewed grants to units of state, local and tribal government, and to national, regional, and local non-profit organizations to prevent crime, improve the administration of justice, provide services to victims of crime, **support critical nurturing and mentoring of at-risk children and youth, and for other similar activities**.

Dept of Labor

Community Service Employment for Older Americans - \$120M

To be distributed to current grantees to **support additional employment opportunities for low income seniors**. Wages will provide a direct stimulus to the economies of local communities, which will also benefit from the **community service work** performed by participants.

Bureau of Indian Affairs - \$450M

Encouraged facility improvement and repair, restoration of roads, school replacement, **school improvement** and repair, and detention center maintenance and repair.

From AASA, the consolidation of final figures for **education and training** in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act include:

- \$53.6 billion for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, including:
 - \$39.5 billion for local school districts using existing funding formulas, which can be used for preventing cutbacks and layoffs, school modernization or other purposes;
 - \$5 billion to states as bonus grants for meeting key performance measures in education, including \$650 million for innovation grants to school districts; and
 - **\$8.8 billion to states for high-priority needs such as public safety and other critical services, which may include education, and for modernization, renovation and repairs of public school facilities and institutions of higher education facilities.**
- \$10 billion for Title I State Grants to help close the achievement gap and enable disadvantaged students to reach their potential.
- \$3 billion for Title I School Improvement Grants to help build capacity to assist schools identified as in need of improvement.
- \$11.3 billion for Special Education/IDEA, Part B Grants to States to improve educational outcomes for disabled children. This level of funding will increase the federal share of special education services to its highest level ever.
- **\$400 million for special education services for children ages 3 to 5 under Section 619 of IDEA.**
- **\$500 million for special education services for children ages birth to 3 under Part C of IDEA.**
- **\$650 million for Enhancing Education Through Technology, Title II, Part D of ESEA to increase access to technology within classrooms and increase use of technology by teachers.**
- **\$70 million for the McKinney Vento Homeless Act to recognize the increasing number of students now homeless due to the economic downturn.**
- \$200 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund to allow for grants to school districts for creative teacher compensation plans.
- \$250 million for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems to increase the capacity of the state to develop and maintain the comprehensive student data systems required to implement growth models.
- \$100 million for food service equipment under the National School Lunch Program.
- \$15.6 billion to increase the maximum Pell Grant by \$500. This aid will help seven million students pursue postsecondary education.

In addition, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes the following tax provisions for education:

- \$2.8 billion to extend the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds to provide no-interest loans for renovation, repairs and technology, distributed to states based on population and within states based on need.
- \$22 billion in Tax Credit Bonds for new construction. This is a new school bond program distributed to states based on the Title I formula. Forty percent of these bonds are directed toward the 100 largest school districts by number of children below the poverty line, and the remainder for other school districts.