

Notes from WSA Conference Call 1/18/08

We were expecting Michael McGrady, the acting head of NHSA to join us, but he couldn't make it. Instead we did a brief legislative update.

Head Start Budget

Head Start received a 10k cut. It passed as part of the final budget bill before congress adjourned. Head Start was cut, Child care flat funded, and other programs were cut as well.

The Democratic leaders decided they didn't have enough votes to override, so they decided to go with the President's spending levels.

The 10m will not fall on local programs, but will impact the regional offices, so you may not see Region X staff traveling to many programs, meetings or conferences.

There is an **economic stimulus package** being considered in congress, that may also include low income fuel assistance, food stamps, and unemployment. Joel has been talking to congressional staff, but they will not put money in for Head Start. At the same time, however, they are working on a **supplemental appropriations bill** for war funding, and we may be able to include funds for Head Start. This may happen in March.

The **president's budget** will come out soon. Last year he proposed \$100k cut, this year he will probably propose cuts to HS, community action agencies, etc.

As the election approaches the dynamic shifts a bit. There could be more deadlocks on these issues, and potentially they won't finish funding us until after the election in November. Another possibility is that certain more moderate Republicans may feel some pressure to do the right thing.

We'll have to make the case to Patty Murray & Norm Dicks as to why we need funding. We'll probably have to give more examples of the effects of budget cuts. We're going to have to start talking to more of the Democratic leaders. NHSA is planning to do an event about budget cuts next week. We'd need a billion dollars to be at the same place we were in 2002.

Regulations

You may have also received a notice about the competition panel. The Bush Administration through OHS has put out a request for applications for a number of those positions. If you can, it would be great if someone from Washington could sit on that panel. The panel will meet and make recommendations to the secretary.

We'll have to wait to weigh in on a lot of the regulatory items. It may take up to 2 years for all the regulations to shake out. You'll have to wait for guidance on a lot of the items in the new reauthorization.

At the February WSA meeting Joel will look at the impact of Reauthorization, looking at what we might try to comment on.

State Legislative Session

Some of the early learning legislation in Olympia:

- Poison toys
- Collective bargaining – union would negotiate with the state to increase child care subsidies.
- Increase home visiting money by \$5
- Washington Head Start

Washington Head Start – There will be a bill this year, it will provide about half of the amount needed to move ECEAP to HS funding level, and would have a phased-in process for achieving HS performance standards and eligibility. DEL will work with an advisory committee to figure out how to make it work. It looks like we may be able to do this to about 3300 ECEAP slots. DEL will probably ask programs to apply if they think they're ready and willing to proceed. Rep. Roger Goodman of Kirkland has agreed to be the prime sponsor. Joel thinks people will be pretty happy with the flexibility that has been incorporated into the bill, and Early HS component, training, etc.

WSA will have a Hill Day January 24th, 10am for briefing and training, then meet with legislators. Katy will send out information.

If you know of people who would be willing to testify for Washington Head Start, let Joel know. There may be some hearings next week.

Q. Will there be money set aside for capital funds, portables, etc?

Joel will have to talk to them about that concern. We've talked about the HS method of expansion, to use the first few months of a grant for start-up costs.

John Naegele commented that one thing that happened with the initial Head Start is that they had a year of planning time before we had to be fully enrolled.

Other Updates

Janet Anderson - Higher Ed Roundtable will be happening next week. It should support the broader DEL professional development effort.

Outcomes – Meeting at the end of January. Joe Egan from DEL will be involved, and they are very supportive of the idea.