

**2010 Washington Policy Seminar Readings**  
***A Nation 'Racing to the Top': Are We On the Right Track?***

**Wednesday, April 14**

1. [\*Developing an Elevator Speech\*](#), by Stacy Jones, *Philanthropy Journal*, February 6, 2009.

This article will help you prepare to share your elevator speech – “[a] short well-crafted statement [that] should be concise but detailed enough to inform a potential supporter about the organization in the amount of time it takes to ride in an elevator” – during our opening networking activity.

2. [\*What Failure Would Cost the Democrats\*](#), by Norm Ornstein and Thomas Mann, *The New Republic*, March 15, 2010.

This commentary provides an up-to-the minute look at the potential consequences for the Democratic party and the Administration should the health care reform measure not pass. A question for consideration as you read: How might action or inaction on health care reform influence the possibilities for ESEA reauthorization and/or for action on other federal education initiatives?

3. [\*A Public Policy Primer: How to Get Off the Sidelines and Into the Game\*](#), by David C. Hollister, Institute for Educational Leadership, 2007.

This Primer (co-published with the Michigan EPFP) presents—in a practical, readable manner—the policy framework within which our political system operates and describes the people and the organizations that drive our multi-faceted democratic system. It elaborates on different kinds of policy and the diverse styles of elected officials and on how politics intersects with these factors. The three arenas in which policy is made – elected bodies, courts, and the “streets” – are discussed as are the varied ways elected bodies make policies as diverse sets of actors interact with the political system.

4. [\*ESEA Blueprint for Reform\*](#), U.S. Department of Education, Released March 15, 2010.

This document is an outline of the Obama administration’s plan for ESEA reauthorization. According to the Department’s press release, the document:

*...builds off of practices and programs that have been demonstrated to work in local schools and districts and seeks to expand upon them. The Blueprint recognizes the work of our nation’s governors and state chiefs to develop college- and career-ready standards. It aims to remedy current ESEA provisions seen as ineffective at the local level, while maintaining a strong focus on raising academic achievement for all students and closing achievement gaps that have persisted for far too long. Our proposed accountability system seeks to better measure and reward growth and excellence, and emphasizes local control and flexibility to achieve higher goals. Of course, we will not reach those goals without great teachers and leaders, and this plan makes a huge investment in both.*

## **Thursday, April 15**

5. [\*Conductor, schoolmarm, or struggling substitute teacher? Explaining the changing federal role in education\*](#), by Paul Manna, Presented at the Policy History Conference, June, 2006.

In summarizing the ESEA's developments since the 1960s, this paper argues that even as federal involvement in education has grown, one should not overestimate Washington's influence nor underestimate the power of the states. In short, even today the federal-state relationship in education remains dynamic, as it has always been, and empowers policy entrepreneurs at both levels of government to advance their policy agendas.

6. [\*The End of the Education Debate\*](#), by Chester E. Finn, Jr., National Affairs, 2009.

This article is a thought-provoking look back at the decades since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and an attempt to draw lessons learned from those years for today's education reformers.

7. [\*"Being a Member of Congress," in Congressional Desk Book: The Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Congress \(Fifth Edition\)\*](#), by Michael L. Koempel and Judy Schneider, TheCapitol.Net, 2007.

(Look for the excerpt from chapter 1 at the bottom of the page.)

It is easy to lose perspective on the daily lives of Congress when mired in daily toil and daily headlines. We often focus, as the media often do, on who is "up" and who is "down" on a given day or political topic, as though each day of policymaking in Congress is part of a baseball season rather than an ongoing constitutional activity. This informative chapter outlines the professional and personal implications of being a member of the Legislative Branch.

## **Friday, April 16**

8. [\*Health Care Debate Makes New Budget More Likely This Year\*](#), by Stan Collender, Contributing Writer, Roll Call and Managing Director, Qorvis Communications, March 2, 2010.

This article describes how the use of the budget reconciliation process to pass health care reform would make it more likely for 1) the process to be used for the passage of other legislation in a contentious election year, 2) the passage of a budget resolution, and 3) the extension of tax cuts set to expire at the end of this calendar year.

9. [\*One in Five and Growing Fast: A Profile of Hispanic Public School Students\*](#), by Rick Fry and Felisa Gonzalez, Pew Hispanic Center, August 26, 2008.

The number of Hispanic students in the nation's public schools nearly doubled from 1990 to 2006, accounting for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollments over that period. Strong growth in Hispanic enrollment is expected to continue for decades, according to the U.S. Census Bureau population projection. The bureau projects that the Hispanic school-age population will increase by 166% by 2050 (to 28 million from 11 million in 2006), while the non-Hispanic school-age population will grow by just 4% (to 45 million from 43 million) over this same period.<sup>1</sup> In 2050, there will be more school-age Hispanic children than school-age non-Hispanic white children.

10. [\*An Early Look at the Economic Stimulus Package and the Public Schools\*](#), Center on Education Policy, December 2009.

This report looks at the early efforts of states to implement the elementary and secondary education provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The findings are drawn from a survey of officials in state education agencies and governors' offices in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Key findings concern the financial condition of state education budgets, progress toward meeting the reform assurances, interest in national content standards and the Race to the Top Funds, and requests by the states for financial and regulatory relief.

11. [\*Interest Turns to ESEA Plan's Chances of Passing\*](#), by Alyson Klein, Education Week, March 15, 2010.

This article describes how the Administration's blueprint for replacing NCLB has drawn support from some—but sharp criticism from the national teachers' unions. It illuminates some of the political opportunities and hurdles to securing passage in the current session.

### **Saturday, April 17**

12. [\*Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce \(Executive Summary\)\*](#), National Center on Education and the Economy, December 14, 2006.

The first Commission never dreamed that we would end up competing with countries that could offer large numbers of highly educated workers willing to work for low wages. Whereas for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the United States could take pride in having the best-educated workforce in the world, that is no longer true. Over the past 30 years, one country after another has surpassed us in the proportion of their entering workforce with the equivalent of a high school diploma, and many more are on the verge of doing so. Thirty years ago, the United States could lay claim to having 30 percent of the world's population of college students. Today that proportion has fallen to 14 percent and is continuing to fall.

13. [\*A Conversation with quest host Bill Blakemore, Freeman Hrabowski, III and Anthony Marx\*](#), The Charlie Rose Show, June 26, 2006.

This is a television interview with our closing plenary speaker, Freeman A. Hrabowski, III. He is a prominent African American educator. He has served as president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County since May, 1992, and is co-author of the books, "Beating the Odds", "Raising Academically Successful African American Males" and "Overcoming the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Young Women".