The release of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) report on the impact of sequestration on all agencies and programs within the federal government last Friday reverberated throughout Capitol Hill this week. The “bad news” outlined in the report that reinforced what advocates had been shouting about for months to what seemed to be the deaf ears of Senators and Representatives, finally was heard. There were several closed door meetings between and among Finance Committee Members and other leadership groups and key fiscal policy gurus such as Ben Bernake and Tim Geithner. Reporters who studied the document over the weekend published in depth stories about the devastation the cuts would cause to education, healthcare and other domestic safety net programs. Armies of advocates circled Capitol Hill to make their case against the threat to federal spending.

In spite of all this activity, the 112th Congress is determined to be in recess by week’s end without addressing the sequester or the tsunami of issues that are referred to as the fiscal cliff. The one “must pass” piece of legislation is the continuing resolution that will keep the government operating through the month of March. It made it through the House on Wednesday and is set for a final vote in the Senate early Saturday morning. The $1.2 trillion sequester, the expiration of the so-called Bush tax cuts, the necessary raising of the debt ceiling and a decision about continuing or ending the 2 percent payroll tax deduction will have to be addressed during the lame duck session, set to begin on November 14th. The outcome of those negotiations are hard to predict and of course very much dependent on the election results.

The fiscal cliff wasn’t the only issue Congress left unfinished. Last minute efforts to pass a jobs bill for veterans, a bill that would provide permanent green cards to foreign-born STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) graduates of US colleges and universities and a farm bill all failed despite broad bipartisan support. Members of the 112th Congress instead shouted “surrender” and went home to campaign for the opportunity to become part of the 113th Congress that will convene in January. You have to ask yourself why they would want to come.

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2. In Brief
AFTERSCHOOL SUPPORTERS DISCUSS PARTNERSHIPS WITH CBOS

On Wednesday, the Senate Afterschool Caucus, the Afterschool Alliance and the National Writing Project (NWP) hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill to explore how partnerships with community-based organizations in the hours after school support student success. The presenters featured at the event were education experts and corporate leaders who discussed how to create and maintain successful partnerships that improve student engagement in learning. Jen Rinehart, Vice President of Policy and Research at the Afterschool Alliance, joined Dr. Sharon J. Washington, Executive Director of the NWP, in offering welcoming remarks to attendees. To set the stage, a compelling video was shared featuring Omaha, Nebraska’s Morton Middle School’s afterschool expanded learning opportunities that are made possible by strong community partnerships. Dr. Diane Waff, Director of the Philadelphia Writing Project, and Elizabeth Colby, Afterschool Director for the Newfound Area School District in New Hampshire, followed by offering successful examples of the local partnerships they have been involved with between school districts and community organizations like museums, the National Park Service, churches, local businesses and afterschool programs to offer kids high quality programs after the school day ends that complement and enrich their school day lessons and allow them to explore their interests as well as their communities. In addition, Waff shared a professional development partnership model between NWP Teacher Consultants and afterschool program staff. Offering a corporate perspective, Regina Schofield, Director of Corporate Engagement and Education Outreach at Batelle, stressed the importance of building and sustaining strong public/private partnerships as the force to drive education innovation. She noted that out-of-school time enhances learning by helping students build a passion for knowledge; develop persistence; and understand options available to them outside the classroom. The resounding message from these experts was that preparing youth for success in tomorrow’s workforce is critical for our nation and our local communities. However, this preparation does not have to be delivered exclusively by teachers during the school day. Afterschool programs have the flexibility to work with educators in the broadest sense by connecting schools and communities while preparing youth for success in the 21st Century workplace. They do it by helping schools move beyond the constraints of the traditional school day and by embracing the surrounding community and capitalizing on the resources, assets and perspectives of organizations and individuals outside the school. For more information, go to: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolsnack/ASnack.cfm?idBlog=E484CB66-AF60-899B-8AE6E6BBB7C67657.

ED AWARDS GRANTS TO ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

On Wednesday, the Department of Education (ED) announced that the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will receive a $6.6 million grant to expand its national efforts to improve arts education opportunities. The grant is funded under the Arts in Education National Program, based in ED’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. The goal of the funds is to provide arts education to K-12 students, particularly targeting low income students. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, “The study of the arts can significantly boost student achievement, reduce discipline problems, and increase the odds that students will go on to graduate from college. Arts education is essential to stimulating the creativity and innovation that will prove critical to young Americans competing in a knowledge-based, global economy.” Funding will be dispersed among four primary arts education programs at the Kennedy Center: Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA); Partners in Education (PIE); Any Given Child (AGC); and the Very

AEI AND NAF DISCUSS TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER ED
On Wednesday, the American Enterprise Institute and the New America Foundation held a briefing on the “Student Right to Know Before You Go Act” sponsored by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Marco Rubio (R-FL). The two Senators briefly responded to questions from the moderator and were followed by a panel of experts consisting of Mark Schneider of the American Institutes for Research, Amy Jones of the Republican staff of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Anthony Carnevale of Georgetown University, and Pauline Abernathy of the Institute for College Access and Success. Senator Wyden was asked whether the belief that a college degree was worth approximately $1 million in additional earnings over a lifetime remained true. Wyden responded by noting that while it was still true, that perspective is “at the 35,000 foot level” and more useful information was needed—such as comparing institutions and specific majors. Senator Wyden was asked what information his bill calls for and why the federal government should be charged with its collection and distribution. Wyden responded that states have different definitions for things like “graduation” and there is a need to put the useful information “all in one place.” Wyden also commented that by putting all of the information in one place, his bill may actually save schools administrative funds rather than placing a costly new burden on them. Senator Rubio commented that the federal government should be involved because of the federal funds spent on student aid. He commented as an aside that the increased information may help free schools from some marketing efforts which would make them more efficient. He added that the bill would contribute to a more vibrant, highly trained workforce that will contribute to a better US economy. Senator Wyden agreed, noting that without a trained workforce, growth is impossible. For more information, go to: http://www.aei.org/events/2012/09/19/a-conversation-with-senator-wyden-and-senator-rubio-holding-higher-education-accountable/.

SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE EXAMINES STATUS AND RESULTS OF COMPETES
On Wednesday, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation hearing held a hearing to examine the results of the 2007 enactment and 2010 reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act, which will be due for reauthorization again in 2013. The hearing, titled, "Five Years of the America COMPETES Act: Progress, Challenges, and Next Steps," featured witnesses from government and industry who discussed what challenges remain since enactment of the legislation meant to address the diminished status of the United States in terms of global competitiveness, innovation and achievement in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education and research. Committee Chairman John Rockefeller (D-WV) said of the legislation, "It has been just over five years since the original America COMPETES Act became law and less than two years since the reauthorization was enacted…Both COMPETES Acts have focused on three main goals: 1) Increasing science and research investments, 2) Strengthening STEM education, and 3) Developing an innovation infrastructure.” He noted that the original goals of the legislation have been stymied by Congressional spending decisions, saying, “The 2007 act authorized the doubling of funding for the National Science Foundation, major research accounts at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy’s Office of Science within seven years. Unfortunately, Congress did not follow its own direction with appropriations, slowing the doubling period to 15 years. The 2010 reauthorization attempted to find some middle ground with an 11-year doubling path, but, again, appropriations and the President’s request levels have not followed, pushing the doubling out to
18-years.” Witnesses included Dr. Carl Wieman, former Associate Director for Science at the Office of Science and Technology Policy and a Nobel Laureate in Physics; Dr. Jeff Furman, an Associate Professor of Strategy and Innovation at Boston University and Research Associate with the National Bureau of Economic Research; Dr. Peter Lee from Microsoft Research; Norm Augustine, retired Chairman and CEO of Lockheed Martin Corporation; and, John Winn, Chief Program Officer at the National Math and Science Initiative. Some of the most pointed comments came from Dr. Wieman, who said that there has been very little change in the level of interest in STEM or the mastery of STEM subjects among students in the US over “the past few decades.” He said much of this stagnation is due to the way most teachers are trained and most students are taught and told the panel that “powerful, vested interests” on college campuses discourage the adoption of new ways to teach science and train future science teachers. He also questioned the value of federally funded scholarship programs for students hoping to become STEM teachers, saying they reinforce ineffective teaching practices, and suggested that professional development for teachers already in the classroom is based on the flawed premise that teachers who do not acquire the needed skills during their undergraduate studies can subsequently get them through "voluntary, intermittent, after-hours activity." His comments provoked exchanges with Members about the value of federal investments in STEM education in these fiscal times, and Wieman did say he thought current investments could be spent “better.” For more information on the hearing, including testimony and a recording, visit: http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=Hearings&ContentRecord_id=cb59b16e-886e-4622-8d41-613e8c1167a6&ContentType_id=14f995b9-dfa5-407a-9d35-56cc7152a7ed&Group_id=b06c39af-e033-4cbe-9221-de668ca1978a.

CASEL HOSTS BRIEFING ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

On Thursday, the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) hosted a briefing to release a new guide, “2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs- Preschool and Elementary School Edition,” that identifies highly effective classroom curriculum designed to teach children social and emotional competencies. Representatives Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Tim Ryan (D-OH) attended the event and expressed strong support for CASEL and the importance of integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) into the classroom as an effective strategy to improve academic achievement. Biggert, who is the primary sponsor of H.R 2437, The Academic, Social and Emotional Learning Act of 2011, said, “Bright students struggle every day to reach their full potential because they don’t have the interpersonal and communication skills needed to excel in an academic environment.”

According to both Biggert and Ryan, adding instruction in skills such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, responsible decision making and relationship building helps ensure future success for students after graduation. The panel discussion that followed was moderated by Tim Shriver, Chairman of the Board of CASEL. Presenters included Roger Weissberg, the leading researcher in the field of social and emotional learning and the Executive Director of CASEL. He was joined by two teachers from Downers Grove, IL who have successfully integrated a SEL curriculum called Responsive Classroom into their 6th grade classes. Dr. Weissberg explained that the 2013 Guide had examined the efficacy of over 200 SEL curriculums and found approximately 22 to be highly effective. The purpose of the guide, according to Dr. Weissberg, is to help school districts and teachers select programs that are evidence-based for implementation. Research has demonstrated that in classrooms where teachers consistently implement these programs, academic performance improves, at times dramatically. The two teacher panelists—Lindsay Shea and Tricia Incrocci—showed videos where they were teaching SEL lessons to students and then described the overall effect this instruction has had on student behavior, engagement and academic performance. Their enthusiasm, and the obvious eagerness

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and interest in learning that their students both demonstrated and expressed were strong testaments to the value of the program. For more information, go to: http://casel.org/guide./

3. New Publications

“The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2011” (September 2012)

“E Pluribus...Separation: Deepening Double Segregation for More Students” (September 2012)

“The Stealth Inequities of School Funding” (September 2012)


4. In the News

“Nation's Report Card: Writing Test Shows Gender Gap” CNN (9/17/2012)

“Arizona Immigration Law Spurs Education Campaign” ABC News (9/18/2012)

“More Colleges Team With For-Profit Web-Based Educator” Wall Street Journal (9/19/12)
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443720204578004633113103170.html?KEYWORDS=More+Colleges+Team+With+For-Profit+Web-Based+Educator

“Next School Crisis for Chicago: Pension Fund Is Running Dry” New York Times (9/20/12)

“Segregation Prominent in Schools, Study Finds” New York Times (9/20/12)

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“Parents Seen Less Involved In Schools” Wall Street Journal (9/20/12)
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444620104578008643997428504.html?KEYWORDS=education

“Rethinking the Classroom: Obama’s Overhaul of Public Education” Washington Post (9/20/12)

5. About WPLLC

For over 30 years, the principals and staff at WPLLC have specialized in the field of education, making sure the voices of associations and nonprofit organizations are heard—on Capitol Hill and in the media. As a full service government affairs and public relations firm, we work in strong partnership with our clients to position them for the greatest success now and in the future. Working as a team, relationships are structured to maximize the strengths of each client; the client’s mission is our driving force as we help them clarify needs, set goals and craft and implement successful strategies. WPLLC provides expertise in a variety of services:

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• Strategic Planning
• Grassroots Activities
• Association Management
• Meeting and Conference Planning

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