

**IRA Legislative Update  
December 19, 2007**

**Funding**

The Congress is still in session; it is finalizing the funding bill for the current fiscal year. The Labor/Health and Human Services/Education appropriations bill was passed by the Congress, vetoed by the president, and the veto was sustained. This has resulted in education funding program that is now part of the FY08 Omnibus Spending Bill. The following chart is of selected education programs and comes from the IRA supported Committee for Education Funding. Within the spending bill is also language that is intended to put into law several of the ethnical procedural issues outlined in the Inspector General's reports pertaining to Reading First.

Selected Education Programs	FY07 Enacted	President's FY08 Request	LHHSED HR 3043 Conference Report passed 11/2007	FY2008 Amended Omnibus Bill	FY08 Omnibus above/below FY07 Enacted	% Change FY08 Omnibus above/below FY07 Enacted
Title I (Basic Grants)	\$ 6,808.40	\$ 6,808.40	\$ 6,808.90	\$ 6,726.93	\$ (81.47)	-1.20%
Title I (Concentration Grants)	\$ 1,365.03	\$ 1,365.03	\$ 1,365.00	\$ 1,365.03	\$ -	0.00%
Title I (Targeted Grants)	\$ 2,332.00	\$ 3,466.62	\$ 3,068.60	\$ 2,967.94	\$ 635.94	27.27%
Title I (Education Finance Incentive Grants)	\$ 2,332.00	\$ 2,269.84	\$ 3,068.60	\$ 2,967.94	\$ 635.94	27.27%
Reading First State Grants	\$ 1,029.20	\$ 1,018.69	\$ 400.00	\$ 393.01	\$ (636.19)	-61.81%
Early Reading First	\$ 117.66	\$ 117.66	\$ 114.55	\$ 112.54	\$ (5.12)	-4.35%
Striving Readers: High and Middle school program	\$ 31.87	\$ 100.00	\$ 36.00	\$ 35.37	\$ 3.50	10.98%
Even Start	\$ 82.28	\$ -	\$ 62.64	\$ 66.45	\$ (15.83)	-19.24%
Literacy through School Libraries	\$ 19.49	\$ 19.49	\$ 21.24	\$ 19.14	\$ (0.34)	-1.77%
School Improvement Grants	\$ 125.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 491.26	\$ 366.26	293.01%

All figures in thousands of dollars. Chart taken from Committee for Education Funding chart of December 17, 2007

**Head Start Reauthorization signed – changes impacting literacy**

On Wednesday, December 13, President Bush signed into law a renewal of Head Start through 2012. The Head Start Reauthorization will help more children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed by raising the eligibility ceiling, setting clear standards and

measures for Head Start programs, improving coordination with other early childhood education programs and strengthening program accountability. The controversial assessment, the Head Start National Reporting System, has been eliminated.

Key points of interest to IRA in the law include:

- Improvement of teacher qualifications by requiring half of all Head Start teachers to hold bachelor's degrees by 2013, but it would not penalize any program that did not meet that goal.
- Requirement of Head Start agencies to implement research-based early childhood curricula that promote young children's school readiness in the areas of language and early reading.
- Requirement that each Head Start agency ensure that all of its teachers receive ongoing training in language and emergent literacy. Adds language detailing use of training funds to support enhanced early language and preliteracy development of children in Head Start programs.

For a summary description of the changes go to:

[http://www.reading.org/downloads/resources/071218\\_HeadStartReauth.pdf](http://www.reading.org/downloads/resources/071218_HeadStartReauth.pdf)

### **Higher Education Reauthorization: House HR 4137 Senate S 1642**

A provision in the House version (HR 4137) of the Higher education Reauthorization Act will allow state partnership grants for developing and implementing a program to strengthen content knowledge and teaching skills of elementary and secondary school literacy coaches. The grants will, if enacted,

- provide teacher training in reading instruction for literacy;
- develop reading curricula that are aligned with State academic content standards;
- provides opportunities for teachers to plan and assess instruction with other teachers; school leaders, and faculty at institutions of higher education; and
- provide training and professional development for principals to prepare them to understand the teaching of reading, guide instruction, and foster school improvement, and establish an evaluation and accountability plan for activities.

HR 4137 is expected to be brought to the House floor for a vote and passed in early 2008. IRA will lead an effort to retain the House provision through lobbying efforts, coalition building and grassroots advocacy.

### **Looking ahead**

2008 will open with the House and Senate education committees focused on No Child Left Behind, the Congressional funding committees expecting less allocations for the upcoming year, the US Department of Education continuing to make regulatory changes on NCLB; a continued push to implement Response to Intervention new literacy requirements being implemented for Head Start a new panel to look at reading research still waiting to be announced and many states having smaller budgets to work with as the impact of the sub prime mortgage market continues to impact the US economy.