Politics and Policy Report
October 28 – November 4, 2013

Due to scheduling issues, we will not be holding a call tomorrow. The next Federal Relations Network conference call **is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12th, at 2pm Eastern Time**. Dial-in information: Conference Number: 866-290-3067, Conference Code: 9437098830.

In the meantime, please submit individual comments to the FCC on E-Rate. NAESP has filed comments, but we are encouraging every district, school and the principal to comment – the numbers matter! A sample comment template is below, along with instructions. Please make it a priority to file a personal comment by November 8th – every comment helps!

Comment Template —Please Personalize and Send to the FCC - November 8 Deadline!

I am writing to provide comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. E-Rate has been a critically important program in my (district/school) because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to online resources needed to succeed academically. A high quality education must provide students with 21st century skills and the technological abilities that a global competitive workforce demands. Our (district/school) utilizes funds provided by the E-Rate program to build the technology infrastructure needed to serve our students. However, E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with my (school/district's) (current/future) bandwidth needs. I urge the Commission to consider raising the E-rate funding level to at least $5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years.

As a (my title/school/district) in (state), I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the school curriculum is a pre-requisite for students to graduate from school with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's global economy. Access to high speed broadband is the key for modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country.

(In my school/district/state) we use digital learning to (personalize learning, provide online classes, meet common core state standards, administer online assessments, make data driven decisions etc). An example of digital learning (in my classroom/school/district) is:

The E-rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing Internet access to almost every classroom in America. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program.

How to File Comments:

To send your comments directly to the FCC, please follow the instructions below:
1. Go to FCC Comment Web Page: http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/.
2. Select **Submit a Filing.**
3. Insert **Proceeding Number: 13-184** .

4. Fill out ***Contact Info.***
While you only have to fill out sections with an asterisk (*), you may want to include an email address for a receipt.
5. Under ***Details***, indicate that you are filing a ***COMMENT.***
6. Under ***Address***, fill out information marked with an asterisk (*).
7. Under ***Documents***, upload your comment.
8. Also under ***Documents***, insert short ***Custom Description: sample: ___ District/School Comment on E-Rate NPRM***.
9. Hit ***Continue*** to formally file.
If you entered your email address under Contact Information, you will receive a receipt.

Congressional Update

Early Childhood Education Legislation: On Tuesday, Representatives Grace Meng (D-NY) and Jared Polis (D-CO) introduced the *Early Childhood Education Professional Improvement Act* (H.R. 3357). If passed, this bill would provide assistance to states to improve the knowledge, credentials, compensation, and professional development of early childhood educators working with children in early childhood education programs. Meng asserted that, "Further strengthening our country's preschool workforce is essential to providing our kids with a solid foundation for success and the first rate childhood education they deserve." The bill was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and has received no further legislative action. Click here to read the full bill.

Budget Update

The House and Senate-appointed Budget Committee conferees are still working on a budget agreement that will include a final spending plan for FY 2014, and, if possible, modifications to the cuts in spending required by the sequester as part of the Budget Control Act. The Senate sent all 23 members of the committee to negotiate while the House sent seven. Republicans are holding the position to keep new taxes off the table, and Democrats are equally against entitlement reform. We will keep you informed of any developments.

Other Topics of Interest for Principals

NCTQ Releases State of the States Report: The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a new report, "State of the States 2013: Connecting the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice," outlining state teacher evaluation policy as it stands in 2013.
Overall, the findings indicate that many states have adopted rigorous teacher evaluation policies—35 states and the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) now require the inclusion of student achievement when measuring teacher effectiveness. The report pointed out that most states have yet to develop ways to utilize the newly collected information to inform policy or improve student achievement. Key findings include that 27 states require teacher ratings to encompass multiple measures, along with requiring annual teacher evaluations. This is an increase from only 15 states in 2009. Furthermore, only 10 states lack policy requiring teacher ratings to include some form of objective measure of student achievement, compared to 2009 when only four states required such reporting. To read the full report, click here.

Best Practices in Accessing the Common Core: Last week, the Brookings Institution hosted an event, "Common Core Aligned Assessments: You Get What You Pay For?" to discuss the increase in per student testing costs for states to implement the Common Core assessments. Matt Chingos, a Fellow at the Brookings Institution, began the discussion by outlining the difference in cost between Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), ACT and other regional consortia

that resulted in Common Core aligned tests costing $20-$30 per student per test. Chingos concluded from his analysis that the cost of the test is not what matters, but the quality of the test is the true difference that school districts should consider when choosing to implement assessments. In Chingos' closing remarks, he outlined four criteria that school administrators should use when deciding what assessment to choose: 1) What are the tasks involved with the tests; 2) Does the assessment cover the full range of Common Core State Standards; 3) Is there evidence to prove that the test makes students college and career ready; and 4) What are the post-test reporting parameters. Tom Loveless, Senior Fellow of Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution, began the panel discussion stating that school districts should not be apprehensive about how the increased cost of assessments affects their annual budget. School districts should instead focus on investing in teacher professional development programs that will improve classroom instruction, thus leading to improved student achievement that is effectively measured by the new assessments. The panel discussion included panelists stating their optimism for the future of education due to the accountability measures that are built into the new post-test reports in the Common Core assessments. For more information about the event, click. here.

Leadership and Technology in Schools: The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) hosted a panel discussion entitled, "Breakthrough Leadership in the Digital Age: Using Learning Science to Reboot Schooling," to discuss how school districts are incorporating technology in education. Bror Saxberg, Chief Learning Officer at Kaplan Inc., began the discussion with an analogy that summarized the common misconceptions of implementing technology in the classroom: "Technology is to education as FedEx is to nutrition. Although FedEx makes shipping food quicker and easier, it does not mean that every food product that is shipped through FedEx is good for you. The same goes for technology and education." He noted that technology can be an effective resource for schools, but it must be well utilized. Rosa Atkins, Superintendent of Charlottesville City Schools, asserted that the primary focus of education is still on student learning and not the technology that students are using. She emphasized that teachers must remain effective in their ability to explain course work and give personal instructions in ways that technology cannot. She also pointed out that technology assists in keeping school subjects relevant to students and connects course work to life lessons. Mark Edwards, Superintendent of Mooresville Graded School District, explained that the school culture created around technology in education can establish equity among students by offering the ability to learn both inside and outside of the classroom. The panel unanimously agreed that technology in the classroom allows for more one-on-one instruction for students, and it also allows for teachers to give more timely and personal feedback to individual students by analyzing student data reports and using methods of instant communication, such as emails and discussion boards. For more information, click here.

What We Are Reading
- **Common Core: How are Books Judged?** (Washington Post)
- **Feds Post Food Allergy Guidelines for Schools** (Huffington Post)
- **For Teachers, Wired Classrooms Pose New Management Concerns** (Education Week)
- **What if Finland's Great Teachers Taught in U.S. Schools** (Washington Post)
- **State of the States 2013: Connecting the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice** (National Council on Teacher Quality)
- **Expert Perspectives: Future of Teacher Preparation in the Digital Age** (Alliance for Excellent Education)
- **Standardized Testing and the Common Core Standards: You Get What You Pay For?** (Brookings Institute)