House and Senate Negotiators Have Reached Preliminary ESEA Deal

By Alyson Klein for Education Week

Christmas seems to have come early this year for education advocates. After weeks of long and hard negotiations, House and Senate lawmakers have reached preliminary agreement on a bill for the long-stalled reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, multiple sources say.

The agreement will set the stage for an official conference committee, which would likely kick off next week. The legislation could be on the floor of the House and Senate by the end of this month, or early next, sources say. (Nothing set in stone on timing just yet.)

So far, the word isn’t official. Neither the House nor the Senate Education Committee has confirmed.

No hard-and-fast details are available yet, although those are likely to trickle out in coming days. But if I were a betting woman, I’d put money down that there will be some language asking states to intervene in the bottom five percent of their schools and schools with high drop-out rates.

No provision for so-called Title I “portability,” smart money says. (School choice fans might have something to cheer about anyway.) And many smaller programs may have been rolled into a big giant block grant, according to folks familiar with earlier drafts of the proposal.

Sources familiar with previous versions of the agreement also say the odds are good that a new program for early childhood education made it into the compromise.

Some of the biggest sticking points toward the end of negotiations were said to be secretarial authority, authorizations, and accountability. So where did things end up?

We’ll find out soon enough for sure. But the accountability provisions in earlier drafts were said to be pretty complicated, which makes sense given the nature of bipartisan compromise.

“Based on what I’ve seen, for the next secretary, interpreting the new law will be like looking at a Rorschach with one eye closed and with both hands tied behind their back,” said Charlie Barone, the policy director at Democrats for Education Reform, who served as an aide to Rep. George Miller of California, the top Democrat on the House Education Committee, when NCLB was written.

But that complexity could actually be a boon to state and local control, especially since the compromise includes nearly all of the restrictions on the secretary’s authority that were in the House and Senate versions, a GOP aide said.

“The complexity helps,” said a GOP aide. The agreement “leaves a lot of this to states to figure out and the secretary’s ability to interfere with those state decisions is astonishingly limited.”

Resolutions Passed by NDSBA Delegate Assembly

The Delegate Assembly voted on proposed resolutions during this year’s Annual Convention. Below are resolutions adopted by delegates at the business meeting on October 30. A complete list of NDSBA’s Standing Resolutions and Beliefs and Policies can be found at http://www.ndsba.org/legislation/standing_resolutions.asp.

RESOLUTIONS READOPTED AS WRITTEN

Federal Impact Aid Funding
NDSBA shall support full funding by the federal government for federally impacted schools.

Non-Education Funds to Provide for Safety Issues Including School Resource Officers and Health and Nursing Services
NDSBA shall seek legislation that commits additional non-education resources to provision of these necessary services so school districts may continue to provide for educational needs of students and receive support necessary to continue these very important non-educational services necessary to ensure safety and health of all students in the state of North Dakota.

Sales and Use Tax Exemptions of School Construction Supplies and Materials
NDSBA will support the state making supplies and materials purchased by school districts through contracts with
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contractors for construction projects exempt from sales and use tax.

Curriculum Content
NDSBA shall oppose state or national efforts to further define and mandate specific curriculum content.

Removing Compensation from Negotiations
NDSBA shall support legislation amending the collective bargaining law to exclude compensation.

Publishing Minutes
NDSBA will support legislation and seek sponsorship for legislation which would amend the requirement that school boards pay to publish minutes as defined in NDCC 15.1-09-31.

RESOLUTION READOPTED AS AMENDED

K-12 Funding Adequacy
NDSBA will take a lead role in discussions on continuing the commitment to “adequate funding” that the state has made to K-12 education.

Updates from the ND Department of Public Instruction

In her November 10, 2015, letter to educators, Laurie Matzke, Division Manager of Student Support and Instruction at the Department of Public Instruction, provides a couple important updates. First, President Obama signed a two-year budget deal on November 3, 2015. The bill sets overall spending limits, increases the debt ceiling, and eliminates the sequester for two years. However, it does not replace the 2016 appropriation bill. We are currently operating under a Continuing Resolution which expires on December 11, 2015. The 2016 appropriation bill, when passed, will determine funding levels for specific education programs for the 2016-2017 school year.

Second, Laurie highlights creation of a school board professional development series. This is a collaborative project among the Department of Public Instruction, the Regional Education Associations, and the North Dakota School Boards Association.

The series provides school board members with information and training on a variety of educational topics in a format that is short, easy-to-access, and includes a PowerPoint. This concept allows school boards the ability to review one training video per school board meeting. These trainings would also be beneficial for administrators to use with staff to provide updates and information on key topics. All trainings can be accessed on the NDDPI website at www.nd.gov/dpi/about/schoolboardPDseries.

If you have questions, contact Laurie at lmatzke@nd.gov or call 701-328-2284.

Patti Stedman Receives Barb Norby Scholarship

West Fargo School Board member Patti Stedman received the 2015 Barb Norby Scholarship Award at the North Dakota School Boards Association’s Annual Convention on October 29, 2015.

Stedman was recognized for her work on the school board as well as her commitment to personal growth by attending NDSBA conferences during her years on the West Fargo School Board. In addition to serving as president of her local board, Patti has served on the Policy Committee, Planning and Development Committee, Communications Committee, and Negotiations Committee over the past six years. She represents the West Fargo School Board as a governing board member of the South East Education Cooperative (REA).

At the state level, Patti serves as NDSBA’s representative on the North Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors.

The Barb Norby Scholarship Award was created by the North Dakota School Boards Association Board of Directors in tribute to Barb Norby’s valuable service to the association and honors a board member each year who demonstrates admirable leadership at the local and state level. The scholarship provides registration and an expense allowance to attend the National School Boards Association’s Advocacy Institute in Washington, D.C., or the Annual Conference held each spring.

Valley City School District
Contact: Jon Martinson
(701)255-4127
Email: jon.martinson@ndsba.org
Position begins: July 1, 2016
Application: www.ndsba.org
Deadline: January 15, 2016

(1 to r) Barb Norby and Patti Stedman.
Election Results
At the election held on Friday, October 30, the following members were elected to serve on the NDSBA Board of Directors:

Jim Rostad (Minot) – President
Ben Auch (Mott/Regent) – Vice President
Lawrence King (Bismarck) – Southwest Director
Holly Stromsodt (Finley-Sharon) – Northeast Director
NDSBA recognizes board members for their professional development and service on two levels: Veteran Board Member and Master Board Member. A point system has been adopted whereby each opportunity carries a specific value. When a board member has earned 100 points, a certificate is awarded designating the individual as a Veteran Board Member. When 200 points are earned, the designation is Master Board Member and a certificate and lapel pin are awarded. Board Members who participate in national meetings earn their certificate “with distinction.”

**2015 NDSBA SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**VETERAN BOARD MEMBER with Distinction**
- Daniel Billing, Enderlin Area School District
- Leslie Ross, Dickinson School District
- John Strand, Fargo School District

**MASTER BOARD MEMBER with Distinction**
- Kris Fehr, Dickinson School District

Pictured left to right: Leslie Ross, President Jim Rostad and Kris Fehr.

From Alyssa, Anita, Jon, Julie, Linnae, and Patty

**2016 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar**
February 11-12, 2016
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

**2016 NSBA Annual Conference**
April 9-11, 2016
Boston, MA

**2016 NDSBA Annual Convention**
October 27-28, 2016
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck