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Public Education Policy And Progress



BOEHNER BOMBSHELL: Resignation of House Speaker Greatly Complicates Work to Pass No Child Left Behind Rewrite, Wise Says

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) abruptly resigned on September 25, injecting “turmoil” into the Republican Party and greatly complicating work to rewrite the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), currently known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), according to **Alliance for Excellent Education President Bob Wise**.

“I can’t say strongly enough the turmoil that this creates, both in the House of Representatives and with the legislative process but particularly in the Republican party,” said Wise, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives for eighteen years, including 1989—the last time a speaker resigned. “There are now shifting alliances. The pro-Boehner people are going dark, the anti-Boehner people are jockeying for position, and even if a so-called moderate becomes the next Speaker of the House, he or she is going to have to depend upon the very forces that brought the Speaker down. For education and for ESEA, I believe that this greatly shifts the deck.”

Appearing in the [September 25 episode of “Federal Flash,”](#) the Alliance’s five-minute video series on important developments in education policy in Washington, DC, Wise explained Boehner’s deep familiarity with ESEA based on his prior experience as chairman of the House education committee responsible for passing NCLB, and how his resignation made rewriting the law a “much more difficult situation.” “Remember this,” Wise said, “it is the Speaker of the House who decides what legislation goes to the floor and under what conditions it’s going to be considered. With Boehner’s resignation, [**House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline’s (R-MN)**] ability to secure Republican votes for a bill that will have to satisfy both House Democrats and President Obama becomes slim to none.”

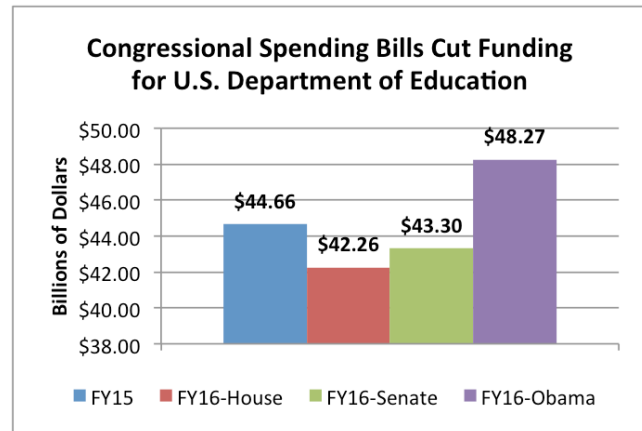
Noting that the new speaker will need to “flex his or her conservative muscles,” Wise said that the new speaker is unlikely to strike a deal with House Democrats and President Obama to pass ESEA even though it will likely take votes from Democrats to pass a bill that can receive approval from the U.S. Senate and President Obama.

Regarding the annual appropriations work that must be completed by the end of the fiscal year on September 30, Boehner’s resignation has cleared the way for a short-term funding measure, called a continuing resolution (CR), that will keep the government open through December 11. Still, congressional Republicans and President Obama remain far apart on spending priorities for various federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Earlier this year, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee and the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee passed Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 spending bills that would cut discretionary funding—

excluding Pell Grants—for ED by \$2.4 billion and \$1.36 billion, respectively, compared to FY15. Under President Obama’s FY16 budget request, funding would increase by \$3.61 billion.

The Republican spending bills are based on levels set by the 2011 budget deal, also known as sequestration, and locked in by the budget plan that the U.S. Congress adopted in May. Under the plan, overall discretionary spending for FY16 can rise by less than 1 percent, creating a scenario in which a funding increase for one program often translates into a funding cut for another program.



According to the [Washington Post](#), the temporary funding fix will provide Republicans with more time to “rewrite the stakes of coming budget negotiations to create a potentially explosive fight in December.” The article notes that House Republicans have been “infuriated” with Boehner’s and **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s (R-KY)** willingness to negotiate with Democrats on a long-term budget deal that would increase domestic and military spending above existing sequestration caps. Without a budget deal, Congress may have to enact a year-long CR that would keep funding for federal programs at the previous year’s level.

“It appears that Boehner’s sacrifice means that the government will stay open,” Wise said. “This is a short-term legislative gain, but it ultimately creates even more long-term turmoil around pressing issues such as the debt ceiling, a transportation deal, and a long-term budget deal—not to mention ESEA.”



GETTING BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THEIR FRIENDS: Social Support Helps Youth Overcome Life’s Barriers to High School Graduation, According to America’s Promise Alliance

Can a single person prevent a student from dropping out of high school? Maybe not on his or her own, but teens who have a stable and trusting relationship with a caring nonfamily adult are more likely to finish high school. That finding comes from *Don’t Quit on Me: What Young People Who Left School Say About the Power of Relationships*, a new report from America’s Promise Alliance. The report examines the roles that relationships and social support play in students’ decisions to stay in, leave, and return to high school. Researchers surveyed more than 2,800 young people and interviewed more than 120 others to determine what prevents youth from graduating from high school, or graduating on time, and the types and sources of support students need to overcome those obstacles.

“Relationships are powerful vehicles for growth, particularly for young people living in challenging circumstances,” **John Gomperts, president and chief executive officer of America’s Promise Alliance**, says in the foreword to the report. “And yet, too many young

people don't have enough relationships with stable, caring adults who can help them get what they need to stay on track toward graduation and career."

Young people who leave high school before graduating report twice as many "adverse life experiences"—such as becoming a parent, being suspended or expelled, having a mental health issue, or being homeless—as youth who graduate on time, according to the report. In fact, more than 50 percent of young people who leave high school endure five or more adverse life experiences between the ages of 14 and 18. Such experiences become powerful predictors of a student's likelihood of dropping out of high school. Students who are suspended or expelled even once, for example, are almost two and one-half times more likely to leave high school before graduating, the report notes.

Fortunately, relationships with parents, adults in and out of school, and peers can mitigate the impacts of certain adverse life events; but whether those relationships get teens to graduation day depends on the type, source, and intensity of the support young people receive.

According to *Don't Quit on Me*, emotional support (expressions of comfort and caring) and instrumental support (offers of tangible resources or services) from parents, adults in school, and adults outside of school have the greatest impact on students' decisions to remain in school. Teens who receive overall support from adults at their schools are 25 percent less likely to leave high school before graduating, while those who receive instrumental and emotional support from adults in school and their parents are 20 percent less likely to leave, the report says.

Additionally, a young person needs a strong relationship with a trusted nonfamily adult who provides unconditional support and serves as an "anchor" or stabilizing force in the student's life, the report says. Such relationships are especially crucial for helping dropouts reengage with school and graduate, the report adds. But that single relationship is not enough to sustain a student. According to the report, young people also need a more comprehensive "web of support" that includes multiple individuals, both within and outside of family, who provide varying levels and types of support.

Unfortunately, for young people facing the greatest challenges—typically those encountering five or more adverse life experiences—social support alone often is not enough to keep them on track, the report notes. Relationships still matter to such young people, but they also need targeted resources to resolve issues of trauma, housing, food insecurity, and other social and economic barriers standing between them and their diplomas, the report says.

"Without social support, young people facing many risks are all too likely to leave school before graduating," the report says. "Social supports from multiple sources partially buffer the effects of adverse life experiences for most young people. But those facing the greatest adversity often need more intensive support than family, school and friends can provide."

Don't Quit on Me: What Young People Who Left School Say About the Power of Relationships is available at <http://gradnation.org/report/dont-quit-me>.



THE STATE OF TEACHER DIVERSITY: Educators of Color Join—and Leave—the Teaching Profession at Higher Rates than White Teachers, Says New Report

[Students of color now represent more than half of all public school students.](#) Despite this increasing diversity of the K–12 population—and the nation as a whole—the teaching workforce remains predominantly white, according to a new report from the Albert Shanker Institute.

Between 1987 and 2012, the share of the teaching force represented by teachers of color increased from 12 percent to 17 percent nationwide, according to *The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education*. Although teachers of color still represent a relatively small share of the overall educator workforce, the growth rate for teachers of color was more than twice the growth rate for white teachers during the twenty-five years analyzed in the report.

Growth in the number of teachers of color also exceeded growth in the number of students of color as well. Between 1987 and 2008, for instance, the share of students of color in the K–12 population increased by 77 percent, while the share of teachers of color in public schools increased by 97 percent. Latino students and teachers experienced the greatest percentage increases during that time; the share of Latino students increased by 159 percent, while the share of Latino teachers increased by 245 percent.

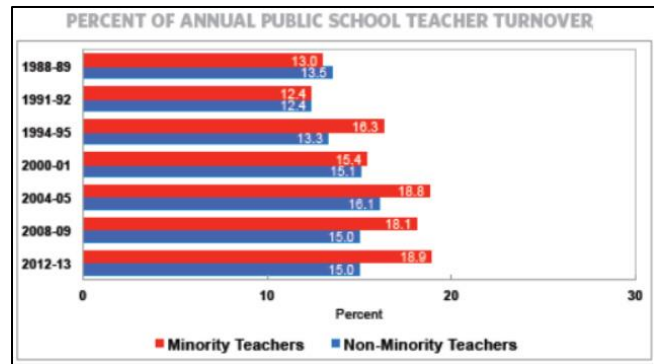
Although teachers of color gained ground in the workforce, they still “remain significantly underrepresented relative to the students they serve,” according to the report. During School Year (SY) 2011–12, African Americans represented 14.4 percent of public school students, but only 6.4 percent of public school teachers. Similarly, Latinos represented 21.1 percent of all students, but only 7.5 percent of all educators.

Moreover, “[w]hile there has been a dramatic increase in [the number of] minority teachers, this growth has not been equally distributed across different types of schools,” the report continues. On average, teachers of color work primarily in schools that serve high percentages of students of color and students from low-income families. During SY 2011–12, nearly two-thirds of teachers of color worked in schools where three-quarters or more of students also were of color, the report says. Similarly, 62 percent of teachers of color worked in schools where at least 60 percent of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.

Even though teachers of color worked in high-need schools at disproportionate rates, they still represented only 31 percent of all teachers working in high-poverty schools and 40 percent of teachers in schools that serve mostly students of color, the report notes. So while “efforts over recent decades to recruit more minority teachers and place them in schools serving disadvantaged and minority students have been very successful,” the report states, “there continues to be a persistent racial-ethnic parity gap between the percentage of minority students and the percentage of minority teachers in the U.S. school system.”

That gap, however, is not a result of districts failing to recruit teachers of color. Instead, the teacher-student parity gap is a result of attrition. Although teachers of color joined the profession at higher rates than white teachers during the years analyzed in the report, they also left schools at higher rates too, as the graph from the report shows below.

The attrition rate is particularly profound for African American teachers. In addition to analyzing national trend data, the Shanker Institute report examines teacher diversity in nine urban school districts: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. The report finds that the proportion of African American teachers declined in each city between 2002 and 2012, from a decline of 1 percentage point in Cleveland to a decline of nearly 28 percentage points in Washington, DC.



Although teachers' reasons for changing schools or leaving the profession vary, nationwide more than half of teachers of color said they departed their schools because of job dissatisfaction or a desire to pursue other career opportunities either in or out of education, the report says. Specifically, teachers who reported having less classroom autonomy and lower levels of collective faculty input in school decisions were more likely to leave their schools, the report states.

"While there is reason to believe that Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students would be the greatest beneficiaries of a diverse teaching force, there is evidence that all students—and our democracy at large—would benefit from a teaching force that reflects the full diversity of the U.S. population," the report says. "But recruitment alone has not solved the problem of minority teacher shortages Improving the retention of minority teachers recruited into teaching, by addressing the factors that drive them out, could prevent the loss of recruitment resources invested and lessen the need for more recruitment initiatives."

The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education is available at <http://www.shankerinstitute.org/resource/teacherdiversity>.



HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW?: New Research Tracks Retention Rates of Novice Educators in Teaching Residency Programs

Beginning educators who participate in teaching residency programs (TRPs) are more likely to remain in the same school district than teachers trained through other programs, according to research from the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

A new report from ED's National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) examines the retention rates of new teachers enrolled in TRPs funded through ED's Teacher Quality Partnership grants. Teachers trained through TRPs pursue graduate-level course work while completing supervised year-long fieldwork experiences in high-need districts where the prospective teachers will work after graduation. Teaching residents work under experienced full-time classroom teachers during their field placements and receive additional on-the-job induction support during their first two years as certified classroom teachers.

NCEE tracked 377 TRP teachers and a comparison group of 376 non-TRP beginning educators who all were first- or second-year teachers during School Year (SY) 2011–12. By fall 2013, 82 percent of TRP teachers remained in the same school district, compared to 72 percent of other novice teachers, according to the report *New Findings on the Retention of Novice Teachers from Teaching Residency Programs*. The greatest difference in retention rates occurred among those who were first-year teachers during SY 2011–12, the report notes. Among that cohort, 81 percent of TRP teachers remained in their original districts by 2013, compared to only 66 percent of non-TRP educators.

Meanwhile, TRP and non-TRP educators are equally likely to remain in their original schools three to four years into their teaching careers, the report finds. By fall 2013, 62 percent of TRP teachers and 60 percent of non-TRP teachers still worked at the same school, a difference that is not statistically significant, according to the report. The report does not find any statistically significant differences in school retention rates within the specific cohorts either.

Residency program teachers who changed schools generally joined schools that had similar proportions of Latino students and students from low-income families as their original schools, the report finds. But the new schools that TRP educators joined typically had lower percentages of African American students and demonstrated higher academic achievement than their previous schools. Among TRP teachers who changed schools, 86 percent moved to schools that qualified as “high need” based on family income guidelines outlined in ED’s Teacher Quality Partnership grant requirements. In fact, on average, TRP teachers moved from schools where 82 percent of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch to schools where roughly 79 percent of students qualified for the federal lunch program, not a statistically significant difference, the report notes.

The differences in other school characteristics, however, were more profound. The average percentage of African American students was 9 percentage points lower in the TRP teachers’ new schools than in their previous ones, the report finds. Furthermore, the new schools generally had higher percentages of students who excelled on state tests. In the TRP teachers’ new schools, the average share of students scoring proficient or better on state math tests was about 9 percentage points higher and the proportion reaching that level on state reading tests was about 10 percentage points higher than in their old schools, the report states. The report does not find any statistically significant differences between the schools non-TRP teachers left and the ones they joined.

“Since racial/ethnic composition, student performance, and lower family income are all factors associated with high need in schools, we are left to conclude that whether mobile TRP teachers moved to schools that were more or less needy depends on how one chooses to measure need,” the report states.

Although the results from the NCEE study show promising retention rates for educators enrolled in TRPs, the study’s overall sample size is small. Furthermore, factors beyond the scope of the study’s analysis also potentially could have impacted whether a TRP or non-TRP teacher left a given district or classroom, the report notes. Consequently, the researchers caution against drawing any direct conclusions from their findings about the effectiveness of TRPs. “TRP and

non-TRP teachers' working conditions may differ in ways not captured by variables in our analyses," the report says. "Comparisons between TRP and non-TRP teachers are therefore provided for context, and do not represent estimates of the impact of TRPs on teacher retention rates."

As *Straight A's* [reported](#) earlier this year, only 17 percent of new teachers nationally leave the profession within five years—a much lower attrition rate than previously believed. Nonetheless, [more than half a million teachers](#) across all experience levels still changed schools or left the profession during SY 2012–13, the most recent year for which data is available. Teacher turnover costs the nation as much as [\\$2.2 billion](#) in recruitment and replacement costs each year as well as losses of institutional knowledge and stability in the teacher workforce, particularly in schools serving students with the highest needs. Whether TRPs impact new teacher retention directly is not clear from the NCEE study. But as an [Alliance report](#) notes, research shows a positive effect on retention among new teachers who experience comprehensive induction programs. Furthermore, programs that provide novice educators with multiple supports, including high-quality mentoring, common planning time with other teachers, intense professional development, and support from school leaders, show the greatest impact.

The NCEE report *New Findings on the Retention of Novice Teachers from Teaching Residency Programs* is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20154015/>.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Alliance Accepting Applications for Models of Secondary School Success

The Alliance for Excellent Education is pleased to announce the [2015–16 Call for Submissions](#) to identify models of secondary school success. With a particular emphasis on schools and school districts that are making a difference for students in socioeconomically disadvantaged and traditionally underserved communities, the Alliance seeks to identify exemplars in personalized learning; project- and work-based learning; data-informed instruction; deeper learning; strategic technology integration; and innovative uses of time.

Educators and leaders selected from these high schools and/or school districts will receive national recognition and opportunities to participate in online and in-person events throughout the coming year, such as the national [Digital Learning Day](#) and [Future Ready Schools](#) efforts. In addition, exemplars will be featured in video profiles, case studies, webinars, and other opportunities to share their secondary school success stories. Recent exemplars include the [Houston Independent School District \(TX\)](#), [Saint Paul High School \(AR\)](#), [Porterville Unified School District \(CA\)](#), and [City Arts and Technology High School \(CA\)](#), among others.

To be considered, applications from [high schools](#) and [school districts](#) must be submitted [by 5:00 p.m. \(ET\) on Monday, October 5, 2015](#). Finalists will be invited to advance to the next round of the submission process on or by Friday, October 9.

Straight A's: Public Education Policy and Progress is a free biweekly newsletter that focuses on education news and events in Washington, DC, and around the country. The format makes information on federal education policy accessible to everyone from elected officials and policymakers to parents and community leaders. Contributors include Jason Amos, editor; Kristen Loschert; and Kate Bradley.

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a Washington, DC–based national policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. For more information, visit www.all4ed.org. Follow the Alliance on Twitter (www.twitter.com/all4ed), Facebook (www.facebook.com/all4ed), and the Alliance's "High School Soup" blog (www.all4ed.org/blog).