From the OEP

We are excited to provide you with our latest policy brief this week, **How Does the 2007 Seattle Decision Affect Arkansas?** The recent Supreme Court decision regarding racial integration in Seattle schools brings into question the constitutionally of the current form of Arkansas’ school choice law. Therefore, it is likely that the general assembly will have to deal with this in the upcoming 2009 session. To provide some background info for lawmakers who will have to wrestle with this important issue, OEP provides this policy brief to provide some useful context and suggest a possible course of action. We hope you find this policy brief useful…Enjoy reading! And be sure to watch for more releases the next few weeks.

News from Around the Natural State

**Ark. Lawmakers Wary of Setbacks on Schools**
Entering their first regular session of the post-Lake View era, lawmakers say they want to avoid backsliding into another lengthy school funding battle.

**Proposed Amendment Would Undo Annual Sessions**
Voters overwhelmingly approved annual legislative sessions during last month’s general election. Now a lawmaker wants colleagues to consider putting things back the way they were.

**Halter Encouraged by Lawmakers’ Belated Enthusiasm for Lottery**
Last year, state lawmakers spurned Lt. Gov. Bill Halter’s overtures to refer a state lottery amendment to voters, forcing Halter to gather signatures to place the measure on the ballot.

News from Around the Nation

**Applicants Flock to Teacher Corps for Needy Areas**
In its 18th year, Teach for America has emerged as the most popular nonprofit service organization among college seniors in the United States.
Study of Voluntary Merit pay Program Shows High Participation, But its effectiveness Still Unclear
It remains unclear whether the merit pay program for teachers in Texas is yielding the results its proponents have advocated – higher student achievement.

Gates Urges U.S. to be Educational Change Agent
Bill Gates, the co-founder of the world's largest philanthropy, this week called on President-elect Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress to expand support for education and make the federal government "a dynamic agent of school reform," even as the nation struggles through grim economic times.

Site Seeing
An article in The Wall Street Journal highlights the use of the Internet for education commentators and analysts in Education Blogs Provide Platform for New Voices in National Education Debate. Our very own Jay P. Greene at the University of Arkansas is listed as one of the top 10 blogs.

Mark Your Calendar
Meetings at the Capitol:
   Monday, December 15th at 1:30 – Joint Auditing, Educational Institutions
   Wednesday, December 17th at 10:00 – Education Committee Meeting

For more details about these events and others coming up in Arkansas, visit the OEP calendar.

Final Thoughts
Once you do adequacy, the extras you would like to do have to be viewed and weighted in the total economic picture the world is in. Once you look at that, yeah, we’re not doing as much as we would like but we certainly did adequacy first. – Governor Mike Beebe

Thanks for reading! See you next week!

The Office for Education Policy
University of Arkansas
Director: Gary W. Ritter
Research Associates:
Nathan Jensen
Caleb Rose
Bentley Seal
Rachel Duncan

If you would like to be added or removed from this list, please send an e-mail to oep@uark.edu.