BIG NEWS: Be sure to read the articles below about the recently signed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) which is distributing $100 billion to education. We are trying to keep up with the latest events around the nation and in Arkansas and have covered some of the highlights here. However, you can always find a more detailed list on our website by visiting the OEP In the News section to view more education related news.

News from Around the Natural State

Legislators Roll Out Bill to Govern Lottery
Legislative leaders unveiled to a standing-room-only crowd Wednesday a 50-page draft lottery-structure bill containing provisions with the stated goal of creating public confidence.

Challenging the Myths About Merit Pay for Teachers
In this article, the authors present some of the common criticisms of merit pay, as well as ways of addressing and avoiding those concerns.

News from Around the Nation

Duncan Hails Passage of President's Stimulus Package, Cites "Historic Opportunity to Create Jobs and Advance Reform"
This press release at the U.S. Department of Education breaks down the $100 billion that the ARRA provides in education funding.

Stimulus Aid to Schools a Management Challenge
The $787 billion economic-stimulus bill that President Barack Obama signed into law presents an unprecedented opportunity—and an unprecedented management challenge—for new U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. In this article, an informative chart is presented that outlines how the money targeted for education will be spent.

The Accountability Illusion
This study examines the No Child Left Behind Act system and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) rules. There were 36 real schools selected and
evaluated under different AYP rules of various states to determine the consistency of AYP standards. The analysis revealed that the same school might meet AYP standards in one state and fail in another, thus highlighting clear inconsistencies in standards across states.

**Layoff Policies Said to Hurt Teacher Effectiveness**
With the growing financial strain on districts putting more novices in Mr. Nicolas' unenviable position, researchers and policymakers have begun to question the human-capital costs of "last hired, first fired" layoff policies.

**Can Merit Pay for Michigan Teachers Boost Student Performance?**
Teacher pay has been based almost entirely on seniority and education for the last 80 years. But at least three Michigan school districts have some form of merit pay, and report mostly positive results -- although they all shy away from using the term "merit pay."

**Site Seeing**

We have two “site seeing” sites to point out to you this week. The first is found on the Arkansas Department of Education website. The ADE is keeping a running list of the education acts that have been signed so that you can stay up to date with the latest education legislation activities in Arkansas.

Our second site is found at the U.S. Department of Education. With the creation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the USDOE has created a website where you will find a fact sheet and other related news regarding the $100 billion education portion of the stimulus.

**Mark Your Calendar**

On Friday, February 20th and Monday, February 23rd, there will be a Senate Education Committee meeting at the Capitol in room 207.

**Final Thoughts**

“These investments are the surest way to provide long-term stability into our economy. With these funds, we will educate our way to a stronger economy.” – Education Secretary Arne Duncan

**Thanks for reading! See you next week!**

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