From the OEP

We’re sorry that the OWL is arriving a day late this week. We have been staying busy and are looking forward to next week – Spring Break! So we will take a week off, and the OWL will be back in your inbox on March 26th.

On Tuesday, President Obama delivered his first major education speech at a meeting of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The President proposed five pillars of education reform:
1. “Investing in early childhood initiatives” like Early Head Start and Head Start;
2. “Encouraging better standards and assessments” by using testing itineraries that better fit students and the world they live in;
3. “Recruiting, preparing, and rewarding outstanding teachers” with incentives for a new generation of teachers and for new levels of excellence among all teachers;
4. “Promoting innovation and excellence in America’s schools” by modernizing the school calendar and the structure of the school day and supporting effective charter schools;
5. “Providing every American with a quality higher education – whether it’s college or technical training.”

*From the U.S. Department of Education, Ed Review

News from Around the Natural State

Lottery Bill Rolled Out for Legislators
The revamped lottery legislation, unveiled Thursday by legislative leaders, makes some changes in reaction to comments by Lt. Gov. Bill Halter and sets the potential pay of the state lottery director at nearly $500,000, higher than any state employee other than coaches and doctors.

News from Around the Nation

President Obama Outlines Plan for Education Overhaul
President Obama called for sweeping changes in American education on Tuesday, urging states to lift limits on charter schools and improve the quality of early childhood education while also signaling that he intends to make good on his campaign promise of linking teacher pay to performance.
U.S. to Nation’s Schools: Spend Fast, Keep Receipts
Arne Duncan, the secretary of education, sent a message to the nation’s school officials last week: Heads up! We’ll be sending you billions of dollars by month’s end. Spend the money quickly but wisely. And keep receipts; we’ll be asking.

Effect of Stimulus on NCLB Renewal Mulled
Even as states and school districts prepare to absorb billions of dollars in economic-stimulus aid for education, policymakers and analysts are quietly discussing whether the infusion of federal cash may reshape the landscape around reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Substitute Teaching Applications Surge
As unemployment continues to rise, school districts nationwide are being flooded with applications for substitute teaching jobs.

What to Learn: ‘Core Knowledge’ or ‘21st Century Skills’?
A small group of outspoken education scholars is challenging that assumption, saying the push for 21st-century skills is taking a dangerous bite out of precious classroom time that could be better spent learning deep, essential content.

1 in 50 American Children Experiences Homelessness
One of every 50 American children experiences homelessness, according to a new report that says most states have inadequate plans to address the worsening and often-overlooked problem. The report being released Tuesday by the National Center on Family Homelessness gives Connecticut the best ranking. At the bottom were Texas, Georgia, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Louisiana.

Site Seeing
This week we would like to highlight a useful resource, especially for school performance information. The National Office for Research on Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) is a research office here at the University of Arkansas, and on the site they have made data available by school level, district level, and state level. To view these reports, click here.

Mark Your Calendar
The next State Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16th. For more information, visit the OEP Calendar.

Final Thoughts
“The source of America’s prosperity has never been merely how ably we accumulate wealth but how well we educate our people.” – President
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
Stuart Buck
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.