

ARRA Webinar I

March 17, 2009

The Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWRCC) conducted an online webinar for SEA staff in the region (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming) on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The purpose of the webinar was to provide an opportunity for SEA leaders to discuss and share plans, strategies, questions, and insights regarding the use of the education-related funding in the stimulus package, particularly as it relates to Title I and School Improvement. The webinar allowed participants to learn from their colleagues in other states and thus better formulate state plans and strategies for administering the funds received through this legislation.

The following transcript was made from the WebEx webinar recording which is available for viewing on the NWRCC website.

Moderator: Seymour Hanfling

Participants

Idaho

Marcia Beckman, NCLB director for Idaho
Susan Hanson, Grants Coordinator
Steve Underwood , Title I Coordinator for Student Achievement & School Accountability Division

Montana

B. J. Granbery, Division Administrator, Title I director, federal liaison

Washington

Bob Harmon, Assistant Superintendent for Special Programs in Federal Accountability
Janell Newman, Assistant Superintendent for District and School Improvement
Gayle Pauley, Title I Director

Wyoming

Christine Steele, Unit Director for Federal Programs

Oregon

Janet Bugle, Title I Lead
Linda Dunn, Administrative Assistant
Susan Hawkins, fiscal responsibility
Tryna Luton, ODE Director of School Improvement and Accountability
Jan McCoy, School Improvement Specialist
Cathy Ogilvie, fiscal responsibility
Baron Rodriguez, Longitudinal Data Systems

NWRCC Staff

Cathryn Gardner
Karen Hahn
Rita Hale
Lynnette Thompson
Dave Weaver

Start of ARRA Webinar I (Audio= 74:30, 23 pages)

Seymour Hanfling: I'm going to talk a little bit about our purpose and just, but before that we're going to do the introductions. And I just wanted to point out that again, there is the chat box so if you have questions, please open that up. It's down, I think for Bob and Gayle, it will appear in your little toolbox in the bottom right corner and you'll be able to enter questions if you would like us to sort of keep track of them.

Let's go around and do introductions and so briefly tell, as I call on you, what state you're from and what your role is, and sort of who is with you in the room.

So, Marcia, since you were on first, we'll start with you.

Marcia Beckman: Marcia Beckman, I'm the NCLB director for Idaho, and I have two other folks with me. I'll let them introduce themselves.

Steve Underwood: I'm the Title I Coordinator for Student Achievement & School Accountability Division.

Susan Hanson: I'm the Grants Manager for the state.

Seymour Hanfling: I'm sorry, I didn't catch either of your names.

Marcia Beckman: Steve Underwood, the Title I coordinator, and then Susan Hanson, our Grants Coordinator.

Seymour Hanfling: Thanks very much. Why don't we move east to Montana, B.J.?

B.J. Granbery: Hi, this is B.J. Granbery, and I'm a Division Administrator here with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and with that I get to be Title I director, and now federal liaison.

Seymour Hanfling: So when you're successful, B.J., you get more work?

B.J. Granbery: That's right, your reward.

Seymour Hanfling: Great, thanks very much. Let's go up to Washington.

Bob Harman: Bob Harmon, Assistant Superintendent for Special Programs in Federal Accountability. One of those federal programs is Title I. And with me is Gayle Pauley, our state Title I Director.

Seymour Hanfling: Welcome, we're glad you're both here. Christine, how are things in Wyoming?

Christine Steele: Doing well, hi. It's Christine Steele and I'm the Unit Director for Federal Programs. And I am here by myself. A lot of my staff is out monitoring. So, I'll take copious notes.

Seymour Hanfling: And Oregon, can we find out who is with us from Oregon?

Tryna Luton: Hi, this is Tryna Luton, and I'm an ODE Director of School Improvement and Accountability and have quite a list of title programs to be responsible for, plus continuous improvement. And I have several people with me today. Linda Dunn, Administrative Assistant for our team. And I have Kathy Ogilvie and Susan Hawkins, who are Fiscal people with us. Baron Rodriguez, will have to tell you what he does.

Baron Rodriguez: Longitudinal Data Systems, federal reporting, longitudinal data for (**inaudible**) taskforce which will help distribute those innovation funds. So, all of those things.

Tryna Luton: And Janet Bugle, who is our Title I Lead, and Jan McCoy, a School Improvement Specialist.

Seymour Hanfling: Wonderful. We're really glad that all of you were able to take some time to join us.

Again, our focus today is to look at the opportunities that the states have in relation to using the stimulus package. And really sort of focusing on school improvements.

We know that some of you have had some questions about guidance, but at the same time, we're all waiting for the Department of Ed to produce some guidance documents. In fact, just before this meeting I went to see if any guidance had come out, sort of hoping that I could walk in and say, oh, by the way, our friends in Washington have given us guidance.

But they hadn't and the only thing that I did find was that tonight at 8:00, well, 5:00 p.m. Eastern, so that would be 8:00 p.m. Pacific, and 7:00 p.m. Mountain, the US Department of Ed is producing a television show that will be on some PBS stations, some cable networks, taking a look at Ed Reform, and the title is "Saving Jobs: the Education Reform Focus."

And part of the reason I'm mentioning this is that Susan Castillo, the Superintendent here in Oregon, is going to be on the program. So we have a local celebrity, she's going to be on this program. It will also be webcast and be available on the department website.

On that I'd like to go to the next slide and we're going to take a look at the principles in the areas which we're focusing. I'm not going to read these to you, you've all seen them before. But it's sort of a reminder of what most of you are working with and what the department is very concerned with, and what this funding could be spent on.

(05:13) slide one?:

At this point what I'd like to do is introduce Rita Hale. And Rita is going to be moderating the rest of our discussion. So, Rita, I'm going to turn this over to you.

Rita Hale: Thank you. Before we begin I thought you'd like to know who is in the room joining me. So we have:

Lynnette Thompson
Karen Hahn
Cathryn Gardner
Dave Weaver

Rita Hale: We're all here listening to what you have to say. We're very excited to hear some of your ideas. So the first question, oh, first of all, to allow for all the states to talk, we're going to start the discussion in a round-robin process. So each state will have about five minutes to respond to our first question.

If you have questions for that particular state, would you please wait until all the states have had a chance to talk about that question, and then we'll open it up for cross-state discussions before we go to the next question.

You can use the chat box for those, and during the cross-state discussion, if you are having trouble getting a chance to talk, you can use the 'raise your hand' option and then we'll make sure that we call on you before we go to the next question.

After we've had time to discuss the first two questions that you received in our email, we'll be posting some of the questions that we have received from you earlier this week, or that you have put in the chat box during the discussion. Then we'll save the last few minutes to look at next steps for the states and for the comprehensive center.

So, the first question: I would like to do this state by state, we'll go alphabetical order. So, Marcia, can you respond to that in any way?

(7:01) Marcia Beckman: Yes, the first question, which is, how is that going to allow projects at the state and district level?

You know, without guidance, plus without any idea of whether or not there is any state-level administrative funds which we are assuming there is not going to be, although it did talk about a possible waiver for that, we're not expecting to be able to do that.

We have sent out some information to our districts about possible one-time expenditures at the district levels. And so what we're going to try to do is work together with some of our other state-wide initiatives. We have a MAP initiative, we have some things that our Title 2A folks are doing with (audio skipped) for teacher leaders, and our RTI initiative. And trying to sort of package, if you will, some of things that are already in place, that don't require additional funding.

And I guess maybe we're calling it, making them, you know, an offer they can't refuse. Sort of things that they could institute in their schools, just sort of pulling things together.

The other thing is really kind of getting them to look at things where they use their professional development dollars, given the fact they're going, I assume, have to set aside more professional development dollars at the LEA and school levels, for things that would be sustainable, for example, moving it to response intervention, getting a school really fully implemented.

Or, we're talking about calling it Revitalizing RTI, because we have had that in our state for quite a while, but some of it's really languished, if you will. Some schools that trained in that are not really implementing that anymore, the folks are gone that originally did that. So that kind of revitalizing it or doing that, which fits very well with really school-wide plans, instead of a target assisted plan.

Also encouraging them to look at things like summer schools, other extended-day types of opportunities, credit recovery programs, things that they might be able to institute by doing—because a lot of our districts have been calling, asking about just expanding their offering, making more of their eligible Title schools, Title I schools, actually served.

So that's sort of what we're looking at in that level. I think our level—our involvement at the state has more to do with facilitating, connecting, providing that kind of information for folks, that we are already seeing that is there. Trying to build a little bit better system of coordinating our own profession development efforts here, that are already in place.

(10:05) Rita Hale: Thank you. Oregon? Would you please—oh, I'm sorry, I skipped over Montana. Oh, my gosh, B.J., I'm sorry, Montana? B.J., can you share?

B.J. Granbery: Oh, that is quite all right. I would have gone in any order.

Some of the same things that Marcia has mentioned, we have had some conversation about, as far as helping districts to find ways to use their additional dollars under Title I and IDEA. And also the Ed Tech Title 2D funds will have a little more in Homeless but not a lot.

Now we are kind of assuming that we will get that waiver on the cap on State Admin, so we're kind of assuming that we will have that to work with at the state level, plus an additional amount, for us it's I think about \$468,000 in the 5% off the top School Improvement grant money, the Section 1003G money.

With that, we would like to expand our state-wide system of support to interface more with our RTI initiative and take our Reading First specialists, who will be out of funding, incorporate them into the system to focus on some high-priority schools in a Reading First-RPI, if you will, blended approach, and oversee some instructional coaching that we currently are just piloting.

So those are some state-level ideas that we have and thinking that we will at least have those funds to work with if we do get that waiver to the state admin in particular—in addition to the school improvement set aside.

I think at the district level what we've been talking with folks about are rather one-time events, if you will. Not necessarily events but efforts, I guess, is a better word, to enhance the programs they already have. Perhaps serve a school that they couldn't, although that would possibly be for just one year, maybe two, in the eligible list, but not served. Taking more students in their targeted assisted programs than they've previously been able to include.

Some schools have been in the process of school-wide planning or have delayed that and we're going to urge them to go ahead and get their planning finished, so that they can become school-wide for this next school year and have more options of how they use all of their federal, and state, and local dollars. But to put the additional dollars in Title I in particular, to good use. I guess that's it for now.

(13:05) Rita Hale: Thank you, B.J. We know that Oregon is having problems seeing the right screen and so they have just recently received a question. So Oregon, we're going to give you a couple minutes to process it and we'll skip over you, talk with Washington, Wyoming, and then get back to you. Is that all right? I'm assuming it will be all right.

So, Washington, what are your ideas on this question?

(13:36) Bob Harmon: Hi, Rita, this is Bob Harmon. We are I guess cautiously optimistic about the waiver of the 1% cap on state administration, so although we are hopeful, we have not made a lot of state-level plans. The school improvement set-aside goes through our office but does not rest with us. We have a separate school improvement, district improvement, and accountability division. And so they are working on some things but specifically with regard to Title I, we're sort of hanging back until we get some greater guidance.

But we are wrestling with the concepts, the dual concepts or even the dichotomous concepts of being quick, and also being thoughtful. In terms of the stimulus aspect of the ARRA, we're looking at saving jobs as the first priority. And in terms of the investment side of it, we're looking at professional development and looking at ways where we can increase endorsements in those high-need areas like math and science.

So that's kind of where we are at this point.

(15:10) Rita Hale: Okay, thank you, Washington. Wyoming, Christine?

(15:15) Christine Steele: Yes, we're, I'm sort of the same as the other states, really, about being cautiously optimistic about getting the cap so we can have some more administrative funds. We are putting the application for the district, for their extra Title I funds, on our E-grant system. We're building a separate application for that, so that, mainly because of the complexity of the accountability, the quarterly reporting, everything we're hearing about being able to account for those funds.

And so we're just—we're going to pretty much design something similar to our consolidated grant application that we currently have, but it will be specifically for the ARRA funds.

And that way, when the second set of money comes in, in the fall, then we can also put that in the same application, so that that will always be kept separate, so districts can pull down reports and things. Because our concern is the tremendous amount of work for the districts that this is going to cause, you know, when we do put the separate set of money out.

At the state level, we're hoping that of course our administration money will fund some of the extra costs on the E-grant system, because it will be expensive. And we also—we are looking at using that same system to develop any of the other applications that, you know, as more guidance comes out, that we might do, such as some of the competitive grants, the teacher incentive fund, the innovative fund. To the extent possible, we want to keep it one system, so that, you know, the clarity is there so when we have to put things up on websites and stuff we can get it quickly.

The other thing is, we know that if we have some administrative money we may need some help in the monitoring and the technical assistance piece on all this for the district, at the state level.

What we've been telling our districts is that, we're going through pretty much the same things that your other states have talked about, you know, the ones that are out in the guidance so far. We have been talking about the extended learning opportunities, the summer school, the Saturday school, things like that. Family Literacy Services, parent involvement, sustainable

and professional development. Pretty much what you've talked about, because we are concerned about two years, you know, having the money for two years and then all of a sudden not having that level of funding.

So we're trying to figure out what they can do to make current programs that they have, either to expand it maybe to other grade spans, like you had talked about for other eligible grade spans that they didn't have enough money for.

Or, also we're looking at classroom informative assessments that can be used to inform instruction in the classrooms. We're working at the district for, you know, assessment systems clearer and, you know, assessment systems that can be used across the districts. So those are some of our ideas.

(18:26) Rita Hale: Thank you, Christine. Oregon, you're back on. Do you see the correct slide?

SLIDE?

Oregon: I believe so, we're on, how is this funding going to allow, etc?

Rita Hale: Exactly. And I'm sorry we didn't realize you couldn't see the slides.

So we skipped over you, and now you have an opportunity to respond to this question.

Oregon: Okay, Tryna will address this.

Tryna Luton: We, for Title I, some of the ideas that we've come up with, at least on the district side, we want to make sure that we encourage districts to not be afraid to hire back or save personnel, you know, changing their duties to be allowable for Title I expenses possibly, so that we're showing, well, somewhat I guess, proving to the Federal Government that we're using these funds as they are intended, because we've heard that this funding would most likely continue, if they see that it has that kind of impact.

Adding targeted, assisted middle schools and high schools, to take Title I status so they can use Title I funds for those types of things. And then, because Reading First is going to be, not have funding, it looks like we could, at least in some schools, especially school-wide schools, be able to encourage districts to use similar funding for continuing Reading First and services, and focusing on K through 3 literacy, building that capacity for sustainability of those programs.

On the SEA side, we've talked a little bit about a program we used to have here, running in Oregon, the Regional Distinguished Educator program, and possibly taking some of those funds and contracting with educators across the state, to consult with and provide assistance to districts and schools that are at risk of falling into school improvement.

And then an evaluation, a more comprehensive evaluation than we've been able to do, of not only the Distinguished Educator program, but also professional development, and the—with the school improvement funds we definitely want to make our statewide system of support more comprehensive, include ELL and more Special Ed, in what we call our Oregon School

Improvement Facilitators program. That's part of what we've talked about with school improvement funds.

(21:29) Rita Hale: Thank you very much.

All the states have had a chance to share, so now I'm going to open up for about 5 or 7 minutes, for discussion. You can ask each other questions, expand on what you've talked about. I know that, Bob, you had a question.

(21:48) Bob Harmon: I do. Actually a request, that I'm hoping the question I ask about it will be answered 'yes.' I'm real interested in Wyoming's early work on putting together their e-application for the Title I Recovery Act funds. If that could be shared that might keep some of us from, you know, having to reinvent the wheel.

(22:16) Christine Steele: Sure, you know, Brian pretty much is the lead on that and I can let him know that whatever he can share, if it's, you know, the items that he's putting in there. I do know some of the basic building that we're doing so far, you know, we're going to—they're going to have to tie it to goals, objectives, but it's going to be more of a summary where they're going to, you know, talk about, it has to be tied to a plan, such as their school-wide plan or the current plan they have in their consolidated grant application. It has to show strategic planning in some way, so it will be like a narrative that they can put in the program there.

The budget pages will be similar to our consolidated grant pages, where they have to budget by series. Draw-downs will be the same. But certainly Brian, I'll just have him, would you like me to have him like share what work they've done so far in narrative form or something with you? Because we really don't have it in test environment yet.

Bob Harmon: Oh, we wouldn't need the electronic version in terms of access to the system or anything like that. Just whatever he could send in an email that sort of outlines what your thinking is, would be great.

Christine Steele: Right, because there are kinds of issues like the carryovers and what if, you know, we're also dealing with the waivers. And I know a lot of you have been talking about, where if we submit one waiver package from our agency there are options that we can put in there, such as to waive the 20% for SES and choice. And of course waive the cap so we can have some admin money.

But some of those things would be tricky to build into the new application because, the old one, we'd have all the set-asides and everything built in, so it triggers certain things on the budget pages.

Well, on this one if we didn't have any set-asides, you know, it would be a different setup as far as decision rules, you know, on things when you're actually in the testing environment.

So I can have, he and Dan Carrier have talked quite a bit about how, you know, some of the nuances of this like the accountability piece. How are we going to show building MOE, and how can we build something in there so that, and, you know, there's no comparability so, you know, that doesn't matter, on this application.

So there's a lot of those little discussions of things I don't think about that he and Dan have been talking about. So I could just have him email to, you know, to like Rita, or Bob, or how would you like me to do that?

Bob Harmon: If you could just have Brian send us an email, and there may be others on this call that are interested as well. I don't know if Seymour Hanfling could, you know, be conduit of that or not, but probably he could.

Christine Steele: Okay, I'll just tell Brian when he's, he can go back maybe and look at our—we haven't always had, pretty much it's been this week that we pretty much locked the work order in. They've had email conversations and I can have him take a look at some of the triggers in the conversations they've had in, you know, like the, oh, we forgot about this, or how are we going to tie this to this? You know what I mean? He does more of that stuff.

Bob Harmon: I don't want to add any more work to his plate but if there is something that he could easily share that would be nice.

Christine Steele: Right, I certainly will.

Bob Harmon: Thank you.

Christine Steele: Uh-huh.

(25:55) Seymour Hanfling: This is Seymour. Please, you can send any information to me that you would like distributed and I'll make sure it gets out to everyone on the call.

Christine Steele: Okay.

Rita Hale: Are there any more questions?

Marcia Beckman: Yes, this is Marcia from Idaho. And we actually also have an electronic, or online grant application, for all of our titles. And with the, we've actually devised a spreadsheet that we can show you that we could send out, too, that really goes into that selection in funding of the eligible Title I schools.

And essentially we just, when you see it, we added another column. So there is the Title 1A allocation column, where we have all the set-asides. Then there is a second column that is just the ARRA allocation column. And we of course don't know about the waivers on some of the set-asides yet.

Then when we go down to the allocation to schools, where it also shows the actual Title I allocation, the PPE, and the school set-asides for professional development, if they're in improvement, then we just added three more columns that were just the same thing for ARRA which then totaled, so the district can see their total.

The mismatch is a budget page that goes for just the regular allocation, which is what we already have, and then under each of the budget line items, like salaries and benefits, they have a brief description box, where they describe what their—how many FTE's and so on.

But we'll do the same thing for the ARRA budget, will have its own budget page with the same line items: salaries, benefits, purchased services, administration, that kind of, travel, those kinds of things.

And then they can also explain how many FTE's, because we're hoping that will be one way for us to track jobs that we've been able to save or create, if you will. Then this is all tied to, again, their actual district or plan, where they write, they match up goals and objectives to then flesh out exactly how they're using those funds in a program.

So, we're willing to share that as well.

(28:20) Rita Hale: Any more discussion on this question?

Christine Steele: This is Christine, I think one of the things that, you know, that might be difficult is keeping in mind, especially for district, is that the poverty data used for the ERA, is the 2007 poverty data. And I'm thinking when they come into 2009, there is—there is a different poverty data. Has anyone heard that?

B.J. Granbery: What are you talking about 2007 poverty data for ARRA funds, Christine? (**inaudible**).

Christine Steele: The poverty data to base your proportionality of your Title I schools.

B.J. Granbery: I still don't know what you're talking about.

Christine Steele: The census data.

B.J. Granbery: The census data that will be used for the allocations?

Christine Steele: Yes.

B.J. Granbery: Okay, and it's supposed to be the newest batch, which is the 2007?

Christine Steele: Right.

B.J. Granbery: What is the question you have about it?

Christine Steele: Isn't there something about the 2009, I mean, the money we're getting this July, having a different—having updates in it. And then the second part of the ARRA that comes in the fall will be, would that be the 2007 data, or the revised?

I've been hearing some conversations about, because everything is split that the census data may not be the same for everything. Has anyone heard that?

B.J. Granbery: I have not heard that and I don't see why that would be, because this year's allocations were based on 2005 census data, and the preliminary counts that they sent out 12 months ago or whatever, were what was going to be used when it's finalized, for the upcoming allocations. And that's 2007 data. I don't think they would be switching again for the regular allocation cycle.

The only thing I can think of is to get this ARRA money out, by the end of March as they have said, maybe they're going to keep it at this year's poverty, which would have been the 2005.

Christine Steele: Okay, that may be it. I just heard quips of that because I hadn't heard anything official, that it seemed to me there were conversations about, because it's split, the first set, there would be two sets of poverty data at some point in time. And maybe I'm wrong on that, but I just to keep an ear open for it.

B.J. Granbery: But even if that were true, I don't think, it shouldn't cause us any problems, I don't think at our level.

Christine Steele: No, except the districts need to understand that.

B.J. Granbery: Yeah, but I think sometimes the less they know about census data, the better.

Christine Steele: Maybe so.

B.J. Granbery: It's too confusing.

Christine Steele: I know, thanks, okay.

QUESTION 3

(31:15) Rita Hale: Thank you, we're going to go to the next question that we have. This is the discussion question about some issues and challenges. What are the issues or challenges in your state regarding the use of the ARRA fund? And this time we'll start with Wyoming and go backward.

Christine Steele: Hmm, okay, I think that the issues and challenges right now that we've had in some of our oversight, just our committee meetings and trying to get word out, is the uncertainty of the kinds of accounting and reporting things, and the templates and what they would look like, as far as accountability for the money. To show job increases, you know, FTE's, we certainly could probably do something like that. But I think it's the vagueness of landing on a template for things.

For districts, I think it's really challenging to understand the magnitude of ARRA in March, you know, the 2000 money—the 2009 money in July, and then ARRA in the fall, and then the next set of your Title I money in October. Understanding, and then let alone, the 1003G money.

I think the communication of understanding that kind of money and planning for it appropriately. We're also going to have a superintendents meeting in Casper with all of our state-wide superintendents, in which our oversight committee and then people like Brian and our Title 2D technology person will be there to field some questions from superintendents.

I think it's going to be hard to keep them understanding about, you know, about not using it for salary. About the issue of the long-term. I mean, I know they understand it right now or they talk about it, but I think that's going to be something that we'll have to help them with.

The other thing is, if they have teachers retiring within the next couple of years and they know that, then creating a job which, you know, will be sustainable after the two year money is gone, then that person could still be kept on staff with state money if they have someone retiring. Or if they have some special situations like that, helping them understand some unique ways in which they can do that.

(33:44) Rita Hale: Thank you, Christine. Washington.

Bob Harmon: This is Bob Harmon. I would amend Christine's thinking in terms of salaries and benefits for employees. In almost every budget we have, not just in Washington but across the country, 85% to 90% is spent in salary and benefits of employees, personnel.

And while I would absolutely agree with not putting all of the money into salary and benefits, because we don't want to, you know, expand programs only to have them fall after a two-year and sort of that cliff effect that we've heard people talk about.

I would see it very useful in terms of preventing the layoff of staff members, either certified or para-educators, because we could postpone some of the pain for two years, and in that length of time perhaps the economy, and the world, will be in better shape, hopefully.

But in any case we are, you know, putting in a delay which would allow folks to continue to work, continue to support their family, continue to put funds into the economy. So I think it's not really a one or the other, but there is a balance that can be achieved there, and we would be working toward that.

I think some of the challenges that we are facing are rumors. In the absence of information, people make it up. And maybe they don't make it up, but they put their best thinking out and it may or may not be accurate.

And we've heard across the country from various educational associations and stakeholder groups, and they're all well-intended and they're wanting to get out in front of the curve and be the authority on what's really happening, when really the only authority is the Department of Education. And we all need to really think of that.

And our friends in the Department I know are working their hardest to get information out to us in as accurate and timely manner as possible, and this is just unprecedented. So I think the timeline, the uniquely fast timeline, coupled with trying to dispel rumors, are some of the challenges that we're facing.

(36:32) Janell Newman: This is Janell Newman and if could add to that, particularly around school improvement, is really needing to have some of the guidance around, to what extent the parameters might change with the additional 1003G funds. And also if we can anticipate any flexibility for these funds that are for two years' usage.

And I see that as being particularly important, because there are so many initiatives that could be done state-wide, that there has never been the resources to do that would establish, could establish, a really strong foundation for moving forward in the future.

And in our state that particular issue was mathematics. We have districts using, districts who don't have any money or resources now to invest in formative assessments or instructional

materials, that if we were able to have additional flexibility during these two years, we could actually have many of our Title I schools or districts, using the same materials, getting aligned professional development, having aligned formative assessments.

So trying to figure out and know if there is going to be any flexibility, so that we can really use this money in a way that we've never been able to use it before, but would continue, I think to support growth across the entire state.

(37:55) Rita Hale: Thank you, Janell. Oregon.

?: Some of the things that come to mind as far as challenges, obviously what's already been mentioned is the lack of guidance and it just seems like every session that we go to there are more questions than answers on most things. We're hoping that on Monday, the 23rd, 9am Pacific time, noon Eastern time, they're supposed to have an audio conference that, Zollie Stevenson and Rich Long will be conducting.

And they say that many answers will come at that time, so we're looking forward to that. But until we see published guidance on some of these things, we're not even going to guess as far as, you know, how many waivers need to—whether waivers need to come from each district, or whether they can come from the state. Whether—how we're supposed to report these things, that's the other thing is, we would like to get started on our electronic reporting, the budget narrative system, etc, but we can't really do a lot until we have what we're supposed to be, what data we're supposed to gather and what reporting that we need to do.

It's beyond us as to why in the world that 1%, the 1% from Title I for admins was not built in. We have a lot of work to do and it's going to take some money to do that because of these ARRA funds and yet, we don't know whether we get that 1% to be able to do that work or not, and that's pretty frustrating. So we really need to know that.

And I think, too, and it was already mentioned, fighting the rumor mill. When districts call up and say, oh, but I heard this and so we're deciding this, etc, and we have to back them up and say, wait a minute, we don't know yet.

And we're working here with several different departments within even our own agency, and so we have to continually communicate, thoroughly communicate so that we're not going off of different information and giving different information out to the field.

(40:27) Rita Hale: How true that is, thank you. B.J.

B.J. Granbery: Well, I would echo some of, most of what I've heard already from the other states. We're anxiously awaiting the guidance. I know the department people are working furiously to get that done. The reporting I think has us somewhat concerned, what format that will take, what exactly will need to be reported and how often.

I know our Special Ed folks had a conference with OSEP and they were referring to section 1512 of the Recovery Act. So we did take a look at that and it will be quite daunting and a challenge, I think if that is what we're going to be following and expected to adhere to.

So that's one of the major concerns right now. We have the same contractor as Christine and Brian in Wyoming do for our E-grants, and I'm hoping that the states are working together

and that our contractor is going to come up with somewhat of a common solution. We've had a few initial emails and I think we had even one conference call with states that use that company. So that we have that set up and ready to go once we're ready to receive, or we do receive the recovery funds under Title I and IDEA so that we can get those flowing as soon as possible, and then parallel the regular system, keeping those separate. That's always a concern.

I think that the admin, you know, is something that they are going to look favorably on, I don't want to take it for granted. But from what I've read, one of the things we have to do, for example, before we receive the second half of our recovery funds, the Title I recovery, one idea as well is address (**inaudible**) plan either a revision or however they're going to handle that, about how we will maintain all the reporting and meet those requirements.

So I have a feeling that they recognize that it is quite daunting and that we will need additional staff, for example, and will look favorably upon those. That is our hope anyway.

(42:54) Rita Hale: Thank you, B.J. Marcia?

Marcia Beckman: Yes, again, I guess I just want to kind of echo again what Bob said about salaries, I mean, we kind of went through that sort of neurotic discussion here in this state as well, oh, we can't use it for salaries, and I had a lot of districts very confused because the other concern I have is I think in district's minds, I've sat in on some of the conference calls that our superintendent has done, in an effort to keep people informed, and he's done a very nice job of that.

But stabilization funds and formula funds in the minds of superintendents, and patrons in districts are very unclear. They aren't differentiating between the two. And so if your governor says something about he doesn't want it used for salaries, then that got confusing. So I think you're right, we need to be careful about that.

I think our challenge is, though, not knowing going forward, how much money Title I will have, whether or not this is the beginning of a new level of funding for us or not. We're kind of looking at districts and trying to promote the thought that, if it takes two years to get into AYP, it takes two years to get out.

So look at programs and look where your quick-wins and your sure-wins, if you will, as to where you're going to establish new programs. Where you're going to see about moving folks from a target assisted to a school-wide with an emphasis, like I said, on Response to Intervention, which is something here in Idaho we need to do a better job of.

One of our, and the other question is that full funding going forward, that level, I mean, my understanding is with IDEA, the idea was supposed to be the state paid 60 of the cost of educating a special ed child, and the federal government would pay 40. And I know, I ask our IDEA folks, and their grant manager, and he said, well, maybe we're close to 24% and the district can make up the difference. So this is seen as sort of filling that gap in.

And I shared that, you know, we have, most of our districts have to be very careful with the money. They cannot fund adequately programs in all of the eligible schools. So this is a way to look at doing that, but trying to blend that.

The challenge we're facing and our accountant has asked us to think about how we are going to have districts draw down these funds. We have the quarterly cash balance, the way we do it, but actually we fund a little bit ahead and in this, he's thinking this is the time to move everybody to where it might even have to be more like monthly, so that they don't—districts aren't in a cash flow problem. So I don't know what anybody else is doing about that.

Also, we're excited about the G funds, and we are really excited about the second year of what we call Idaho Building Capacity, which coaches two administrators, both at the district level and school levels, to help them meet AYP and make those changes in their schools.

But we can't grow that as fast as this amount of money, so we're trying to figure out other ways that we can, in a sense, make something that might be looked at as a statewide initiative, or a statewide activity. In other words, if you apply for their grant, you're applying for one of these three menu options, shall we say. You can get this, or this, or this.

Because we've certainly learned from the past that just giving them an amount of \$50,000 does not guarantee or really provide us with any level of measurable effectiveness. Not to say some of those things haven't been very helpful.

So I think those are the things they really feel challenged with.

(46:47) Rita Hale: Thank you, Marcia. Would any states like to respond to another state, based on what they just heard?

B.J. Granbery: This is B.J. And I thought I just heard Marcia say something about \$50,000 for those school improvement grants. And, you know, you can go higher, it can go up to \$500,000 per school.

Marcia Beckman: Thank you, B.J. Actually I did know that but I was just meaning it as a minimum, to give them \$50,000. Yes, you're right, we've given larger amounts depending on what their request was in the past.

B.J. Granbery: Yes, I was just thinking, a larger amount might ensure more success, at least theoretically.

Marcia Beckman: And the last time we did it, just our school improvement, just as a competitive grant, and that was a number of years back, what we did find is the larger grants did have some impact. On the other hand we really had to re-think how we were setting those up so that there was a way to measure outcomes, other than just looking at whether they made AYP, other things.

So we're looking at a combination of things as well.

(48:01) Rita Hale: Any other comments?

Okay, we have time for one, maybe two questions. So is there a question in field, any of you, that you'd like to bring up?

Marcia Beckman: This is Marcia again. I was just wondering if anyone has the most recent—or know anything about whether or not we will hear exactly what our districts are

going to, you know, what the allocation is to the state. Does anybody know the timeline on that at this point?

Right now we've coursed out those estimated tables that many of our districts have access to and are calling us about, but I wondered when we will know what that is. Will that be March 30 when we actually get that number?

B.J. Granbery: That's what we've heard. I haven't heard anything since that. This is B.J.

(49:04) Rita Hale: Any others? We have one that we received earlier this week but I don't want to go to that until you've all had a chance to ask your questions.

All right, then. On the screen you'll see a question that Pat Burk sent in earlier. So I'm going to give everyone a chance to read it.

QUESTION 4

(49:50) Rita Hale: All right, for this one, rather than go round-robin, if someone would like to address the first or second one, feel free to.

(50:07) Marcia Beckman: This is Marcia. I was just wondering if Pat could maybe give a little bit more detail to that first question.

Rita Hale: He probably could, but he's not here.

Seymour Hanfling: Tryna, this is Seymour. Do you have an idea of where Pat was, or where Oregon is thinking about going with this?

Tryna Luton: All I have is the email. I can read to you what he originally wrote to you, Seymour (she is reading)

"We are interested in assisting districts to think creatively about the four goals, that's the four main goals of the ARRA funds from US DOE. And especially the second one, which is Improved Student Achievement through School Improvement and Reform. It is our belief that demonstrating that additional funds can positively impact student achievement will make the long-term prospects for additional federal funding more likely. This was the clear message from Secretary Duncan in a meeting with chief state school officers two weeks ago. We are interested in how other states are approaching this task of leveraging their funds within a school improvement plan that increases student achievement and closes the gap.

(**inaudible**) that can assist state agencies to work with districts on projects that do this, focusing on teacher quality, for example, mentoring, professional development, instructional coaches, language development programs for ELL and migrant students, etc, are all the kind of things we would like to encourage. Likewise, extended day and extended year opportunities are also excellent uses of the fund, even though some of these projects imply hiring, and we are all concerned about what happens after the stimulus ends. We would still have multiple years to demonstrate that these strategies work. We would not waste—we should not waste this opportunity. This gives us invaluable data and information to secure sustainable funding later."

That's what he has.

(52:16) Rob: Seymour, this is Rob. Can you hear me?

Seymour Hanfling: Yes, I can, Rob.

Rob: (**inaudible**) meeting was really, these are things we really fundamentally don't have the answers to yet, because we haven't received more detail yet, but the Secretary is really trying to balance out this notion of creating and saving jobs, along with reform. That is very clear by the top of our priority there.

So, you know, I think the ideas that Pat has mentioned, and we've talked about this, are ideas that are probably going to be useable and approvable, because what we don't want to have happen is that we don't want to have what's referred to now affectionately as the 'funding clique'. We just use these funds to go out and hire a bunch of staff and then in the two years that it's over, then they've all got to be released or absorbed some other way.

And so those other kinds of strategies like after school programs and augmenting programs with current staff, I think that those are probably going to be things that are going to be an acceptable use of funds.

And I had a conversation, a lengthy conversation with Alexa Posi, who is now the chief in Kansas, formerly in the LSEP office at US DOE. And she felt the same way, even though we were both kind of trying to package this together and try to figure this out, that those kinds of uses of funds are going to be most likely permissible, and encouraged.

But until we get the bucket of funds to come out here, and also until we get more guidance on this from the department, we won't know that. There were a lot of chiefs in that meeting, because I was in that meeting, who also brought up issues about early childhood education, say we'll use these dollars to kind of (**inaudible**) to help support early childhood education. And those were things that the Secretary took notes on, he was amenable to.

And I think the thing that I walked away from (**inaudible**) listening and I was asking in that meeting, was the Secretary wants innovation, but its tempered by job creation and job savings. And also tempered with his comments by transparency and accountability.

(54:29) Seymour Hanfling: Thanks, Rob.

I would just like to follow on your question which is, there is an underlying assumption that there will be data beyond just the accountability of where the money went. But there will be data that will show that there has been impact with these funds.

So, was there discussion about ways in which to get that impact data?

Rob: They are working on that. Tony Miller, I believe his name, the head of Operations in the Secretary's office, you know, he's structuring that accountability system right now. And it's going to have to get down to details about how many jobs did you (**inaudible**)?

Seymour Hanfling: Okay. I'd just like to turn it over to the states. What is your reaction to these comments, or what are things—some of you have already mentioned things that you're doing, but have you been thinking about, are you taking it further along the school improvement line? Some of you have mentioned parts of this.

(55:33) Marcia Beckman: This is Marcia from Idaho. And I think as far as the Title I dollars, you know, we have to understand the biggest thing we do is, we tell them what they can't use it for. I mean, there are allowable things but I think it's just, the fact is, unless there are major changes and that would be to the law, and I doubt that's going to happen between now and March 30th, there are things that are allowable and we can say can't, but we can't say you have to use it for one or the other.

I know my superintendent asked those kinds of questions after that meeting, but we were pretty clear that we don't, we aren't able to do that. However, I think we do have some kind of influence, if you will, when it comes to use of our school improvement funds. I think that is where we might be able to make those kinds of grant applications that are for, like I said earlier, maybe some of these menu of things that we'd like to see happen in our district.

But then of course, you know, we do that in some ways with—one piece of our statewide system of support is a capacity building project, we call it Idaho Building Capacity, which puts a coach in each building that is in school improvement. But it's an application, it's not something all schools in improvement have to do at this point. But they have to show both that they are a district in need, this is a needy school and also that it is a school that has what we call Readiness to Benefit, so that it really works there.

So I think the school improvement dollars are the place we're going to have to look to for making that kind of impact and yes, I agree.

(57:20) Christine Steele: This is Christine. I heard a couple of things in the summary just a few minutes ago. There was a concern about closing, you know, we should be thinking about closing achievement gap. But also, you know, looking forward to funding and what we can do to show that there is data in other areas not just necessarily closing the achievement gap.

And one of the things that we haven't talked about, I think that, I know some of our districts have asked Brian for a little bit is, increasing technology for certain specific things. In other words, in some cases, data systems to better track student projects for actual classroom assessments, and things that will impact, you know, classroom assessment, formative assessments, truly at the classroom level, working with that. And use of technology where, maybe some of the technology is lacking, so that more information, we can find out more information about students and what works with them. Of course that all ties into RTI also.

The other thing is, closing the achievement gap, you know, looking at the English Language Learner programs, one of the discussions I've had with my Title III director is really looking at using some of this money to develop district-types of assessments specifically for English Language Learners, especially in rural areas when you have classroom teachers, not necessarily an ESL teacher in all your classrooms and things like that, where you can really drive, you know, better information about working with ELL students through some types of classroom assessments or things like that.

Those are just a couple of topics that we've talked about, but I think the technology piece, if we look at that in classrooms, additional, you know, things for student progress, to track it, especially for the reporting and things that's going to be required. Those are just a couple of ideas that I know we've had some initial discussions about.

(59:37) Rita Hale: Any other comments? Any other questions you want to ask your colleagues? It sounded like there was somebody ready to ask a question.

(60:05) Marcia Beckman: I did want to know, Marcia again from Idaho. Has anybody thought about the drawdown process for the ARRA funds, whether they're going to do anything different or whether they think what they have will work for districts?

(60:20) Gayle Pauley: Marcia, this is Gayle Pauley. Right now what we are planning on doing is a separate application, pretty much like what I've heard people talk about. And we already have monthly drawdowns, so we're not going to change that.

Marcia Beckman: Thank you, Gayle.

QUESTION 5

(60:48) Rita Hale: All right, we have one question that we'd like to pose and hear discussion about. And it deals with relationships with the governor's office. Keep going. It's coming up, they will have it up. The question reads "How is your state department of Education working with the governor's office regarding the use of the state fiscal Stabilization funds?"

B.J. Granbery: Could you say the question again, Rita?

Rita Hale: The last one, Dave. This one, there it is.

"How is the state department of Education working with the governor's office regarding the use of the state fiscal Stabilization funds?"

(61:36) B.J. Granbery: This is B.J. And we have a really interesting situation going on with the legislature taking action as we speak, on all of the funding bills and how they see the state's—state fiscal stabilization funds fitting into the overall picture.

Currently it looks like K12 may not get any of the stabilization funds. It may all go to Higher Ed. So this is a really interesting development.

(62:12) Seymour Hanfling: How about in some of our other states? That's really interesting, B.J.

Christine Steele: This is Christine. We basically are probably doing what all the rest of you are doing. We have an oversight committee that meets every week and we have, you know, all of us, because of the different kinds of information coming out at every corner right now, we bring in any list serve information and all of the materials that we have are conference calls, and we kind of review that with each other.

And then two of those people on the oversight committee meet weekly with the governor. The governor has a stimulus package task force. We have just completed our legislative session so all this came down, you know, kind of at the end of our legislative session.

So there has been some talk that they may reconvene because of, you know, all the money and things like that but I kind of doubt it. We just, the taskforce at the governor's office is pretty much in communication with us and it also looks like he is going to use most of it for

the, you know, for the shortfall. I don't foresee large amounts of stimulus money coming over to, you know, to the districts.

They have asked, or we've had some conversation about putting another application on our E-grant system that would be for the stimulus package money that would be separate from the ARRA title money, because, you know, if the stimulus package money comes down, you know, it's also used for, the intent and purposes of ESEA.

But there was kind of an interesting comment made on the Bruce Emanasovich webinar the other day, when they were saying that, and I'm not familiar with Title VIII, No Child Left Behind. But there is, you know, in the impact part of Title VIII, which is a part of ESEA, you know. That if a district gets the stimulus package money and uses it for the intent and purposes of Title VIII, it comes pretty much like general fund money at that point.

So there was some conversation about, well, we understand the intent of ESEA is for, you know, programs for at-risk students and professional development, Title II and Title III and all of that. But if a district says that they're going to use it under Title VIII, it opens it up to a very general use. I haven't really looked at that, but that was just an interesting comment.

(64:58) Seymour Hanfling: Thanks, Christine.

Marcia Beckman: In Idaho, we of course have an elected official as our superintendent of schools, and then our governor, of course. And there has been, first of all an oversight committee established by the governor for the state stabilization fund money. And they ask a lot of questions about Title I and IDEA and what we were going to do, and how could we use that.

And there was even comments made by our governor that he didn't know if he was going to accept any of the money and, you know, that all had to go on. And I think he was trying to demonstrate fiscal responsibility to folks in the state, that it wasn't just going to go out there and then they'd be on his doorstep in two years looking for jobs.

So, you know, I understand that. Then I think it was established, other than funding authority for the additional money, which the legislature grants our department, his purview really was over that state stabilization fund. And of course, 82% of that is supposed to be split between the two. And we did have, we did not have a shortfall during this year because we had an education rainy day fund, so we were able to plug holes this year, for 2008–2009.

But for next year our superintendent has proposed some significant cuts and his proposal, our superintendent's proposal is to use part of the stabilization money this coming year, 2009–2010, to continue to have those cuts but to fill the holes that would be created in addition to that, and leave the remainder that is still in our other rainy day fund there, in case we do find, you know, income projections are still low enough that we would have to make cuts in the middle of next year.

And then using the remainder of the stabilization K12 money, that is, for the following year, with possible, holding that other rainy day fund available. Our governor, however, proposed deeper cuts than that, using none of the stabilization funds that go to K12, but holding them into a rainy day account. And just thinking it's going to get worse before it gets better.

Our legislature is now discussing that as we speak, across the street, so we have not heard yet, just what they're going to accept. And I'm a little confused as to whether the governor has the authority to make those decisions, or whether the legislature can make those decisions. Obviously they can do some impacting through the decisions by what they set as the actual budget for schools.

So it's been a very, very interesting couple of weeks.

(67:51) Rita Hale: Washington, Janell or Bob, do you have any comments about how you're working with the governor's office?

Bob Harmon: I can take a stab at it. Our communication with the governor's office has been happening through our governmental relations unit. And we do have a person here at the agency assigned to each one of the five assurances that the governor's office needs to make in their application. So the Standards and Assessment, and Assistance to Schools, In-School Improvement, Corrective Action and Restructuring, and so forth.

But our state legislature is still very much in session. Neither House had developed a budget yet at this time, and so in terms of proportionate shortfall between K12 and Higher Ed, we don't know how that's going to pan out exactly. So there's—we have more questions by far than answers.

(68:55) Rita Hale: Thank you, Bob. In Oregon, my son is looking at a four-day week next year. What is Oregon doing with the governor's office?

Speaker?: That's so sad.

Rita Hale: Oregon?

Seymour Hanfling: Oregon, are you mute?

(69:30) (audio starts suddenly) Speaker?: To K12 to help balance out the immediate budget, and then some that will be used at a later date, but obviously before the end date of it, for K12. And other than that, we're not sure.

(69:57) Rita Hale: Okay, thank you. Well, our time is just about up and I did save a couple last minutes just to look at next steps. So our questions to all of you, what would be some things that might be helpful for you as a region or state that we might be able to assist with?

(70:24) B.J. Granbery: This is B.J. in Montana. And I would think the opportunity to have a discussion and compare notes and questions, and discuss some of the finer points of information we do receive, would be helpful.

Seymour Hanfling: B.J., for you, would a webinar, this kind of conversation or a phone call work well?

(70:48) B.J. Granbery: Yes, this works very well for me.

Seymour Hanfling: We'd also be interested in hearing from others. You could send us emails and let us know what works, as well as telling us now. But we're just interested, thanks. Rita?

Rita Hale: Are there other ideas out there that you would like to put down for next steps that might be helpful?

(71:31) Speaker?: If we decided to do, if you think it was appropriate to do another one of these discussions, should we wait, at what point would the timing be appropriate?

(71:45) Gayle Pauley: After we get the FAQ's and some guidance, it would be more appropriate, I think. This is Gayle.

Seymour Hanfling: Thanks, Gayle.

Christine Steele: This is Christine. I agree. I think until we get FAQ's or some more guidance toward the end of the month, then we're probably going to know what issues we're facing with the reporting and the data collection.

(72:18) Rita Hale: Any other ones?

Marcia Beckman: This is Marcia. Would the Comp Center consider some kind of electronic dialogue opportunity for states to log into and just ask our questions and share ideas in the meantime, or after that guidance comes in?

(72:45) Rita Hale: So you're thinking like an open chat room?

Marcia Beckman: Sort of, yes.

(73:03) Rita Hale: That is something we can certainly look into, absolutely. Any more? Okay, well our time is up and so we want to thank you very much for participating. At the end of the webinar you'll automatically get an evaluation that's put out by the WebEx And we would appreciate any feedback on that, it helps us to look at how we're doing things and make them more effective, more useful for you.

If you have anything specifically, Seymour's contact information is there. Again, if you're sending anything that you'd like to be shared with other states, send it to Seymour and he will make sure that all participants get a copy of it.

So here from Portland. We're still hoping for the sunshine. And thank you so much for joining us.

All: Thank you.

End of ARRA Webinar I (audio = 74:30 minutes)

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