**Washington Monitor**

**Duncan Offers Governors Flexibility on NCLB**

On February 21, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan met with the nation’s governors while they were in Washington for meetings of the National Governors Association (NGA). Duncan spoke about the impending reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Duncan praised the governors for their efforts to raise education standards on a voluntary basis, asserting that it was exactly the type of leadership our country needs. He also said that he envisions the NCLB reauthorization providing incentives for the states to “adopt college- and career-ready standards” for learning.

Importantly, Duncan told the governors that he wants to be “tight on the goals, loose on how you get there,” meaning that the revised NCLB program should ideally give the states great flexibility in designing their K-12 education systems. And he said that he wants to focus much of his efforts on the lowest performing schools – as the nation has been “too passive” in attempts to improve these institutions.

The AAG has been active and engaged in efforts to promote attention to the funding of geography education through the NCLB reauthorization process in Congress. We have also worked closely with state administrators as part of our education outreach efforts. These initiatives have positioned geography well as U.S. education policy continues to evolve and take shape – through the work of federal policymakers and state administrators alike.

**Groves Updates House on Census**

On February 24, U.S. Census Bureau Director Robert Groves appeared before a House Subcommittee to provide an update on the 2010 decennial census. At the outset, Groves made clear that the communications plan – which has been under development since 2007 – was based on scientific data and has been designed to reach the communities and socio-demographic groups with the lowest response rates from recent past censuses. The Director told the members of Congress that the methodologists on the Census communications team relied in part on undercount estimates in determining which groups to focus on in 2010.

Groves also told members of the panel that the Census Bureau used an outside contractor to identify the ideal media markets for outreach – and that much more focus has been placed on local markets, in-language media, and that messaging is being done in print, broadcast, and digital media depending on the intended target. He indicated that the groups being most heavily targeted include “inner-city communities, young and mobile populations, and those less inclined to respond.”

The Census communications plan is being rolled out in three phases: an “awareness and education” phase that is going on now, a “motivation” phase that will begin soon and is designed to encourage Americans to return their form, and a “non-response-follow up” campaign that will begin in mid-April and run through June.

Finally, Groves told the Subcommittee that the total media campaign budget is $140 million. Of that total, $60.8 million is allocated for mass media buy, $72.2 million is designated to reach out to target audiences, and $7.4 million is being held back to reach unresponsive populations in a later phase of the process. Advertising will be carried out in 28 languages.

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**Grants and Competitions**

**Leopold Fellowships**

The Leopold Leadership Program is accepting applications for the 2011 Leopold Leadership Fellowships. Deadline is Monday, April 12, 2010. Support for the Program is provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The mission of the Program is to advance environmental decision making by providing academic environmental scientists with the skills and connections they need to be effective leaders and communicators. Through a competitive process, the Leopold Leadership Program selects up to 20 Fellows annually to participate in an intensive training program designed to build and enhance their skills in communicating with policy makers, media representatives, business leaders, nonprofit organizations, and the general public. Training is offered in English and focuses on U.S.-based institutions, audiences, and policy making.

Applications for 2011 must be received in the AGS offices by October 15, 2010. They are to consist of the candidate’s curriculum vitae; a covering letter of no more than three pages that describes a) the proposed trip, b) the reasons for selecting that itinerary, and c) the candidate’s particular competence for doing fieldwork there; and a statement of the sum requested. Samples of writing similar to the style of FOCUS on Geography may be included. Only submissions by hard copy will be accepted.

Applications should be sent to McColl Family Fellowship Committee, The American Geographical Society, 120 Wall Street, Suite 100, New York, NY 10005-3904. For further information contact Mary Lynne Bird. Voice: (212) 422-5456. Fax: (212) 422-5480. Email: fMLBird@amergeo.org (for information only). See the AGS website at http://www.amergeo.org.

**McColl Family Fellowship**

Applications are currently being accepted for the McColl Family Fellowship, given by Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. McColl. Selection is by a committee chosen by the American Geographical Society Council. The award consists of round trip air fare to any place in the world of the candidate's choosing. The candidate must secure funding for other expenses from other sources. The Fellow must submit, within six months upon return from the trip, an article based on the visit abroad that is suitable for publication in FOCUS on Geography magazine.

Applications for 2011 must be received in the AGS offices by October 15, 2010. They are available online at: http://leopoldleadership.stanford.edu.

Full details and application documents are www.aag.org