

White House hosts 2014 Science Fair - 'Gainful' comment period comes to a close - Oooklahoma, where the Common Core gets swept away (maybe)

By [CAITLIN EMMA](#) | 05/27/14 10:00 AM EDT

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PUT YOUR THINKING CAPS ON: The White House is hosting its 2014 Science Fair today, celebrating students who have won science, technology, engineering and math competitions across the country. In conjunction with the event, software developer Esri is pledging \$1 billion in cloud-based STEM software for more than 100,000 elementary, middle and high schools. The free mapping software will run in the cloud, provided by Amazon Web Services. The pledge builds upon the \$1 billion already committed by private businesses to Obama's ConnectED initiative, aimed at connecting almost all schools and libraries to high-speed broadband. "Geographic Information System technology gives students powerful tools for understanding our planet and teaches them to become problem solvers," said Esri President Jack Dangermond. "It is a perfect complement to STEM courses and many other classroom activities, while preparing students for further education and expanding career opportunities in fields that can help better manage our world, build better lives for more people and design a better future."

— **The White House hosted the first science fair in 2010.** President Barack Obama will also announce new steps today for his Educate to Innovate campaign, meant to inspire more children to take on the STEM fields. This year's science fair will focus specially on women and girls who excel in STEM and whose work can inspire the next generation. Education Secretary Arne Duncan is expected to attend the science fair, which begins at 11:50 a.m. Eastern in the White House East Room. Watch via livestream: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/live>

'GAINFUL' COMMENT PERIOD COMES TO CLOSE: The public comment period for the Education Department's proposed "gainful employment" rule closes today. As of Monday night, the department had received more than 1,400 comments [<http://1.usa.gov/1kFBFKK>]. Critics and proponents of the controversial regulation, which could severely impact the operation of for-profit colleges, have until 4:59 p.m. Eastern to submit their comments in person, or 11:59 p.m. to do so online.

— **The regulation could hit for-profits so hard** that up to 44 percent of students could lose federal financial aid, according to a study commissioned by the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities. Inside Higher Ed: <http://bit.ly/1jVdqbi>

— **In other higher education news**, the Education Department is seeking comment on Federal Direct Loan Program, forms and Federal Family Education Loan Program and Teacher Loan Forgiveness forms. The Federal Register: <http://1.usa.gov/1jVKvp3>

— **Also, Republican Rep. Bob Goodlatte** recently sent a Dear Colleague email saying that he's working "to prohibit the use of funds to develop, implement, or administer" the Obama administration's college ratings system in the appropriations process. College and university presidents are concerned about the proposal, he writes. "The questions from college and universities range from the specific to the 30,000 foot level: How do we deal with transfer rates for community colleges? How do you measure the value of a college education in general? And, is this even the role of the federal government? I share all of these concerns." Read the letter:<http://politico.pro/TO4wDh>

WELCOME BACK! IT'S TUESDAY, MAY 27. I hope your long weekend was as good as mine.

Three days of pool time and grilling reminded me that we could all use a little more relaxation

[<http://bit.ly/1kyaBhJ>]. Send chill vibes, tips and amusing GIFs to cemma@politico.com or

@caitlinzemma. Events: educalendar@politicopro.com. And follow us on Twitter: @Morning_Edu and @POLITICOPro.

A message from **POWERJobs: Planned Parenthood is seeking a **Manager of Political Research** for its Washington, D.C. office. See below for details or visit POWERJobs.com.**

OOO-KLAHOMA, WHERE THE COMMON CORE GETS SWEEP AWAY (MAYBE): An Oklahoma bill repealing the Common Core is headed to Gov. Mary Fallin's desk after lawmakers passed [<http://politico.pro/1psvPgh>] it before the long weekend. The state Legislature adjourned one week early on Friday and Fallin has 15 days after the end of the legislative session to decide what to do — which, as of now, is pretty unclear. "The governor has said she will review the bill and is receiving input from educators and parents," a spokesman said.

— **She's getting pressure from all sides.** The American Principles Project notes that numerous groups and more than 6,000 people signed a letter [<http://bit.ly/1jVoExQ>] urging Fallin to end the Common Core. "The citizens of Oklahoma have achieved an astounding victory. Armed with the facts, they demanded that their legislators defend their rights and the constitutional structure that protects those rights," said Emmett McGroarty, American Principles Project's education director. "They did so in the face of an aggressive federal government, the elitists in both parties, and the powerful education industrial complex hellbent on exploiting our children."

— **On Friday during floor debate**, state Sen. Jim Halligan said his district is already deep into Common Core implementation. "This is hitting the pause button," he said. Fordham Institute

Executive Vice President Mike Petrilli agreed. "Gov. Fallin has an opportunity to do what's right for kids and maintain Oklahoma's momentum toward high standards. In this case, veto is not a four letter word."

TITLE IX TAKES TRANSPARENCY UP A NOTCH: The Obama administration's recent decision to shine a public spotlight on universities under investigation for their sexual assault policies could set a game-changing precedent when it comes to the fight over government transparency, POLITICO's Josh Gerstein reports. On his first full day in office, Obama vowed to oversee the most transparent administration in history. But radical acts of administration-driven transparency have come few and far between, with tech-savvy leakers behind the biggest stories. "I do think this suggests a potential new model," said Gary Bass of the Bauman Foundation. "If you're doing it here, why not do it more broadly?" Women's rights advocates have been told the Education Department's model will extend beyond the list of colleges being reviewed over their sexual violence and harassment policies to all investigations on complaints of discrimination, including probes alleging unfair treatment of women's sports programs. More: <http://politico.pro/1wazkfY>

MORE TIME FOR THE OLD LINE STATE: Maryland will get some extra time to spend Race to the Top cash and implement programs, according to a letter issued by the Education Department. The state can shift \$865,338 in unspent funds from year three of implementation to years four and five "to continue and extend the completion of enrichment and instructional intervention modules for teachers and students as part of Maryland's online instructional improvement system." The state also has conditional approval to shift \$830,586 of unspent year three funds from other projects to years four and five to support the Governor's Principal Pipeline initiative. That project will create a year-long leadership development program for principals with the goal of sustaining Maryland's reform agenda. The pipeline also supports a summer "Governor's Principal Academy." The state has a few steps to take in order to get the extra time. For example, officials must outline their objectives and desired outcomes for the academy by Friday. <http://1.usa.gov/1gw2m56>

WANTED: CHARTER APPLICANTS: Applications are now available for non-state education agencies interested in pursuing a grant from the Charter Schools Program. The available grant applications are two-fold: One grant will cover planning, program design and initial implementation. The other grant will cover dissemination. More information in the Federal Register: <http://1.usa.gov/1tHtMYf>

FIRST LADY'S LATEST SCHOOL NUTRITION PUSH: First lady Michelle Obama will join an event at 2 p.m. Eastern today with school leaders and other experts to discuss "issues surrounding school nutrition," the White House said. "This meeting will be an opportunity for the first lady to hear directly from them about the work they are doing to improve school nutrition in their local districts," according to the press guidance. "Mrs. Obama will stress the importance of students, parents, school officials,

community leaders and health advocates coming together to protect and advance the tremendous progress that has been made in schools across our country.”

— **The event follows the first lady’s push for some last minute compromises** to protect school nutrition standards for children as food safety spending bills cleared the Senate Appropriations Committee last week. Get the recap from POLITICO’s David Rodgers:<http://politi.co/1tqcr64>

‘RED FLAGS CAME TOO LATE’: The start of Memorial Day weekend was interrupted by tragedy late Friday when 22-year-old Elliot Rodger killed six people and wounded 13 before killing himself near the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Los Angeles Times reports on the warning signs: “According to interviews with Rodger’s acquaintances, law enforcement officials and mental health professionals, all that was known about the 22-year-old college student was that he was terribly sad. And being sad is not a crime, nor the sort of mental state that would, alone, cross a legal threshold requiring official response.” <http://lat.ms/1jQUNFA>

— **Education Secretary Arne Duncan said,** “Instead of celebrating the end of the semester and the upcoming commencement ceremony, the campus is grieving. My heart particularly goes out to the families affected by the shooting, who sent their children to college expecting they would return home safely. Gun violence has no place anywhere, least of all at our nation’s schools and college campuses, and we must do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands and increase access to mental health services.”