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## Educators benefit most from stimulus funds

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More than 6,000 educators in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia can credit their paycheck to stimulus funds, according to a report released Monday by the U.S. Department of Education.

Virginia has seen the biggest bump, with more than 4,500 positions "saved or created" by last winter's massive influx of dollars, including almost 3,000 teachers. The remaining jobs range from bus drivers to psychologists.

Maryland reported more than 1,900 positions, in addition to nearly 900 education-related "government service" jobs, such as parole officers. The District reported 141 jobs saved or created, but at the time of reporting had spent less than 1 percent of its total funds.

While governments touted the news as evidence of economic recovery, some saw inefficient spending.

"Study after study have shown no correlation between spending, staffing and achievement," said Cato Institute researcher Neal McCluskey. "We don't need to save and create jobs, we need to eliminate some and return that money to the taxpayers."

Officials said that February's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will salvage about 325,000 education jobs nationwide. The department used state-reported data collected over the past month and expects new calculations in early 2010 as states draw down more of their allotted federal dollars.

Maryland has written checks for about 17 percent of its allotted \$865 million directed specifically for education. Virginia has spent about 10 percent of its amount of just over \$1 billion. In both states, the departments of education were the top recipients of stimulus dollars.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan emphasized on Monday that states would be shortsighted not to plan for 2011, when stimulus funds are no longer available.

"We should absolutely be concerned," he said, adding that districts are better at adding new programs than they are about cutting unsuccessful ones.

"This forces you to make ... determinations of where you're actually changing students' lives," he said.

The government's accounting of overall stimulus funding was released Friday, and shows estimations of where money went within states. In Virginia, the three congressional districts making up the state's D.C. suburbs saw about 1,650 jobs saved or created overall, compared with nearly 6,000 in the 3rd District's Hampton Roads area.

In Maryland, the 4th and the 8th districts making up most of Montgomery and Prince George's counties saw about 1,500 jobs, compared with more than 2,000 in the 7th District comprising parts of Baltimore City and Baltimore and Howard counties.

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