



## ED REVIEW

March 11, 2005

*...a bi-weekly update on U.S. Department of Education activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community and other stakeholders*

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### NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

On February 26 and 27, the nation's governors, educators, and business leaders gathered in Washington, D.C., to discuss strategies to transform America's high schools and restore the value of a high school diploma. The summit (<http://www.2005summit.org/>), sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and Achieve, Inc., featured major addresses by Secretary Spellings (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/02/02272005.html>) and Microsoft's Bill Gates and resulted in two concrete initiatives. First, six foundations (Carnegie, Dell, Gates, Prudential, State Farm, and Wallace) announced a \$42 million initiative to help states raise high school graduation and college-readiness rates. The NGA's Center for Best Practices will award and administer the grants through a competitive process open to all states. Second, 13 states (AR, GA, IN, KY, LA, MA, MI, NJ, OH, OR, PA, RI, and TX), which educate more than one-third of U.S. students, formed a new coalition committed to "significantly raising the rigor of high school standards, assessments, and curriculum to better align them with the demands of higher education and work." Achieve will report regularly on the states' progress. "Change is hard," the Secretary declared. "Getting every child to graduate high school -- is one of the biggest challenges our country faces. It's never been done. That's why there is push-back from both sides of the political spectrum. In Washington, when both sides attack you, it means that you are doing something right.... I look forward to working with you, the governors, and Congress to reach a solution together for our kids." FOR AUDIO/VIDEO FILES, PLEASE GO TO [http://www.nga.org/nga/legislativeUpdate/1,1169,C\\_ISSUE\\_BRIEF^D\\_7957,00.html](http://www.nga.org/nga/legislativeUpdate/1,1169,C_ISSUE_BRIEF^D_7957,00.html).

Also, the summit produced a plethora of deliverables, including:

- The official briefing book ([http://www.2005summit.org/en\\_US/pdf/briefingbook.pdf](http://www.2005summit.org/en_US/pdf/briefingbook.pdf)).

- "America's High Schools: The Front Line in the Battle of Our Economic Future" ([http://www.2005summit.org/en\\_US/pdf/economicbackground.pdf](http://www.2005summit.org/en_US/pdf/economicbackground.pdf)), investigating the relationship between America's high schools and challenges to our economy.
- "Rising to the Challenge" ([http://www.2005summit.org/en\\_US/pdf/pollreport.pdf](http://www.2005summit.org/en_US/pdf/pollreport.pdf)), a survey of college students, high school graduates who went directly into the workforce, professors, and employers. (Nearly two in five college students say there are gaps between the education they received in high school and the "overall skills, abilities, and work habits that are expected of them today in college and in the workforce.")

A day later, Secretary Spellings praised the contribution Catholic schools have made to educating students across the country and encouraged them to become providers of supplemental educational services under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Incidentally, Spellings is the first U.S. Secretary of Education to have a child currently attending Catholic school. (Her other daughter attends a public school.) FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/02/02282005a.html>.



## ED REORGANIZATION

In a March 4 memorandum to Department employees, Secretary Spellings announced a new coordinating structure that focuses the resources of the agency on "the people we primarily serve and aligns our leadership with the results we all seek..." The details are still being worked out, but, in terms of the "big picture," several changes are underway. One change involves the portfolios of the Deputy Secretary, who will oversee all K-12 education policy (the *No Child Left Behind Act*, high school initiative, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, etc.), and the Undersecretary, who will oversee all higher and adult education policy (federal student aid, the *Higher Education Act*, etc.). Another change will create two new offices: Communications and Outreach and Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, each led by an Assistant Secretary who will report directly to the Secretary. The Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs' functions will be divided between the new Office of Communications and Outreach and the existing Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs.



## ARTS EDUCATION

Next week's "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast (March 15, 8:00-9:00 ET) will feature teachers and community leaders who are dedicated to ensuring that all children have a chance to learn and explore the arts. Research shows that when students study the arts -- whether dance, drama, music, or the visual arts -- academic performance improves in core subjects such as reading, math, and writing. This is especially true for students who are most at risk of struggling with their school work or of dropping out, including students with physical or learning disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. In addition, recent studies point to a direct connection between music and spatial reasoning and spatial temporal skills, which are key to understanding and using mathematical concepts. Ultimately, the arts help schools and school districts achieve their mission: to shape a nation of compassionate, creative, and productive citizens prepared to participate in a global economy. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>. (You can watch live and archived webcasts at <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>.)

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## ESTEME WEEK

The Education Department is partnering with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and other federal agencies and scientific societies to sponsor activities for this year's Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (ESTEME) Week (April 11-16). Activities during ESTEME Week are an opportunity for the nation's schools to focus on improving math and science by:

- drawing attention to the many ways our lives are enhanced by scientific and technological advances;
- stressing how students can apply science and technology to benefit their community, their country, and their planet;
- emphasizing the importance of math and science education in this era of globalization; and
- highlighting how U.S. citizens benefit from scientists of diverse backgrounds and cultures working together to solve the complex problems of today.

The web site offers a list of specific activities for schools; colleges and universities; libraries; museums, parks, and zoos; business and industry; professionals; and other public agencies and community groups. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.esteme.org/>.

Note: ESTEME sponsors are partnering with the Newspapers in Education Institute to develop a special print supplement on ESTEME Week. The supplement will be published in several regional newspapers (including, locally, *The Washington Times*) and delivered to partner schools for classroom use.

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## EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

The Department is re-competing its 10 regional Equity Assistance Centers (EACs). EACs offer technical assistance to states, school districts, and schools who seek to resolve civil rights conflicts and promote equity and social justice. More recently, they provide resources and training in the areas of bullying, hate crimes, and racial prejudice. All public agencies -- other than state education agencies or school boards -- and private, non-profit organizations are eligible to apply; proposals will be read based on the region they represent (for a list of regions, see <http://www.edgateway.net/pub/docs/eacn/home.html>), with one award in each region. The deadline for applications is April 29. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/>.

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## EDUCATION FOR ALL

"We can all agree on the goals for Education for All," Secretary Spellings said during remarks at UNESCO's "Calling Higher Education to a Higher Calling" conference at Georgetown University. UNESCO's education campaign calls for, among other things, universal primary education by 2015; a 50 percent expansion in adult literacy; improved quality as well as access; and opportunity for "excluded and marginalized" populations. "[But] those objectives have special resonance to Americans," the Secretary continued, in light of our own education reform effort, *No Child Left Behind*. Its goals complement UNESCO's good work." Then, eluding to both NCLB's expansion into high schools and the international effort to reach the more than 800 million adults (one in seven world-

wide) who still cannot read or write, the Secretary said, "I believe our higher education community is ready to make a real difference. [Colleges and universities] are our greatest ambassadors to the world. Half a million foreign students come...each year to study. They return home, passing their knowledge and experiences on to their families and countries. Many become leaders in their nations." "Like freedom, a quality education is worth fighting for," Secretary Spellings concluded. "In [UNESCO] Director-General [Koichiro] Matsuura's words, literacy 'enables [people] to make choices, to participate and to exercise their rights; in other words, to be free.'" FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/02/02282005.html>.

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## K-12 DISTANCE LEARNING

The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) "Distance Education Courses for Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts: 2002-03," the first national survey to explore K-12 distance learning, provides nationwide estimates of the number of school districts and schools with students enrolled in distance education courses, as well as the number of enrollments in those courses. Moreover, it examines the reasons for having distance education courses, the instructional level of populations served, entities delivering the courses to students, and data pertaining to online courses. Some teasers: one-third (36 percent) of districts and nine percent of schools had students enrolled in distance education courses in 2002-03; approximately 45,300 students were enrolled in Advanced Placement or college-level courses through distance education in 2002-03; and a larger proportion of districts located in rural areas (46 percent) than in urban or suburban areas (23 and 28 percent, respectively) indicated that they had students enrolled in distance education courses. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005010>.

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## QUOTE TO NOTE

"Education and literacy are necessities in a world devoid of certainty but abundant with opportunity. Lives can be transformed -- lifted over time from poverty and chaos to dignity and independence. Education offers a ladder on which to climb and a foundation

upon which to stand."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (2/28/05)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Today, at 3:00 p.m. ET, the Technology in Education Programs Office is hosting, online, a technical assistance workshop to give potential applicants an overview of the focus and priorities of the Fiscal Year 2005 Ready to Learn, Ready to Teach, and Star Schools competitions. There will be a live Q&A session. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.kidzonline.org/tepwebcast/>.

NCES is sponsoring seven advanced studies seminars to demonstrate the richness of NCES databases and provide hands-on instruction on how to use the data properly and effectively. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/conferences/>.

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**Please feel free to contact the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs with any questions:**

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