



ED REVIEW

February 25, 2005

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



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

Soon, the Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) will release "Choosing a School for Your Child." This booklet is a type of "decision tool" that can help parents choose where they really want their child to learn. It explains some of the public school choices that are now available in many communities (charter, magnet, virtual, etc.), as well as private school options. It also outlines steps parents can follow to make a thoughtful choice and includes questions that parents might want to ask when going through the process. In addition, the booklet spotlights new options for education provided in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, from allowing low-income parents whose children are in public schools that need improvement to choose other public schools or take advantage of free tutoring to mandating that states and school districts provide a wealth of public information. "School choice is part of the strategy to give every child an excellent education," Secretary Spellings declares in a letter to parents that opens the booklet. "I offer you [this resource]...to help you make informed decisions..." FOR MORE INFORMATION UPON RELEASE, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/>. (Copies, in both English [EU 0121P] and Spanish [EU 0122P], may be pre-ordered from ED PUBS at <http://www.edpubs.org/>.)

The Manhattan Institute's latest report on high school graduation and college-readiness rates, covering 1991 to 2002, is sobering:

- The national high school graduation rate for all public school students remained flat over the last decade, from 72 percent in 1991 to 71 percent in 2002.
- There is a notable disparity in the graduation rates of white and minority students. In the Class of 2002, 78 percent of white students graduated from high school with a regular diploma, compared to 56 percent of African-American students and 52 percent of Hispanic students.

- There is also a notable disparity among racial and ethnic groups in the percentage of students who leave high school "eligible" for college admission. In the Class of 2002, 40 percent of white students graduated from high school college-ready, compared to 23 percent of African-American students and 20 percent of Hispanic students.

One positive finding: nationally, the percentage of all students who left high school with the qualifications and skills necessary to attend college increased from only 25 percent in 1991 to 34 percent in 2002. For this, the authors credit the "increased standards and accountability programs of the last decade, which have required students to take more challenging courses required for admission into college...." "This study highlights the vital need for high school reform," Secretary Spellings said in a prepared statement. "The President's \$1.5 billion High School Initiative provides the blueprint for states to reform our nation's upper grades so that a high school diploma once again has some meaning." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_08.htm. (The Secretary's statement is available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/02/02152005.html>.)



STRATEGIC VISION: HIGHER ED

In her first speech on higher education as Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings called on university presidents assembled at the American Council on Higher Education's annual meeting to adopt the spirit of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. "Even though we federally fund less than one-tenth of [K-12 education] -- compared to about one-third for higher education -- we've leveraged our investment through the *No Child Left Behind Act*, tying it to the great goals of ensuring that children read and do math at grade level.... The vast majority of states credit *No Child Left Behind* with improving academic performance. And, I believe states and postsecondary institutions should view it as a model as you work to close your own achievement gap, so vividly illustrated by the report you released today." (That report showed minority enrollment had grown by 1.5 million students, or 52 percent, between 1991 and 2001, but participation rates of blacks [40 percent] and Hispanics [34 percent] still trail that of whites [45 percent].) Of course, a big part of that effort is better preparing high school students, which is prioritized in the President's budget. The Secretary appealed, too, for "compatible and comprehensive measurements," including accurate cost information, how credit hours compare at different institutions, and the average time it takes to graduate by major. "This way," she said, "both traditional and non-traditional education consumers can make smart choices based on information, not anecdote." Finally, the Secretary encouraged

high quality teacher preparation programs: "Remember, you produce the teachers who produce the students who make up your freshman class." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/02/02142005.html>.

Note: Two days later, Secretary Spellings called community colleges "truly indispensable in a world defined less by where you were born or live and more by what you know." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/02/02162005.html>.



E-LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

Attention teachers! Fifteen Teacher-to-Teacher sessions are currently available online, and, over the next few months, eight more sessions will be added. Moreover, the Department is continuing to work to support teachers by seeking state approval of these free professional development sessions, which focus on improving teachers' content knowledge and teaching skills in reading, math, and science. So far, Delaware, Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas have agreed to accept these sessions as credit toward teacher re-licensure; Arkansas, California, Colorado, Vermont, and Wisconsin teachers need approval at the local level to receive credit. Many teachers are also using these sessions to earn credit or points to meet their state's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) to become highly qualified.



GRANTS FORECAST

Be sure to review the FY 2005 Grants Forecast (as of February 23) at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html>, which lists virtually all programs and competitions under which the Department has invited or expects to invite applications for awards and provides actual or estimated dates for the transmittal of applications under these programs. The lists are in the form of charts -- organized according to principal program offices -- and will be updated regularly through July 2005. (This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the Department of Education.)

Also: The School Leadership Program is designed to assist high-need school districts with the development, enhancement, or expansion of innovative programs to recruit, train, and mentor principals and assistant principals. For eligibility purposes, a high-need district is defined as one that: (1) either serves at least 10,000 children from low-income families or serves a community in which at least 20 percent of children are from low-income families and (2) has a high percentage of teachers teaching either outside of their certification or with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification. Interested parties must submit a notice of intent to apply by March 24. The deadline for applications is April 15. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/leadership/>.



G8 INDICATORS

Following in the footsteps of the latest results from PISA and TIMSS, a new report from the National Center for Education Statistics compares the U.S. education system to the other Group of 8 (G8) industrialized countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom) in four areas: (1) the context of education; (2) pre-primary and primary education; (3) secondary education; and (4) post-secondary education. The report is an update of a 2002 study and part of a series to be published in alternate years. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005021>.

Charter Schools NEW LISTSERV

The Charter Schools Program Listserv is a free service offered by OII's Charter Schools Program. Subscribers interested in K-12 charter school issues automatically receive periodic notification of information posted on the Department's web site relevant to charter schools nationally. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/charter/csplist.html>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"We're at a crossroads. We still have the best system of higher education in the world, but the world is catching up. China graduates six times as many engineering majors as the U.S.; Japan and South Korea, four times as many. In 2001, India graduated nearly one million more students from college than the U.S., including 100,000 more in the sciences. Meanwhile, our young students lose ground as they age. Our fourth- and eighth-graders score above the international average in math and science, but our 15-year-olds lag below it..... It's now our time. Together, we can show Americans a future where knowledge powers our economy and empowers our citizenry."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (2/14/05)



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, on arts education, is scheduled for March 15. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>.

On March 23, the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives will host a workshop in Las Vegas to assist faith-based and community organizations applying to become approved supplemental educational service providers. The workshop is free, although pre-registration is required. The deadline for registration is March 21. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbci/suppserv-workshops.html>.

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

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