



## ED REVIEW

January 26, 2007

...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/>)

Just one day after President Bush called for Congress to reauthorize the *No Child Left Behind Act* in his State of the Union Address (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2007/>), Secretary Spellings unveiled "Building on Results," a blueprint for strengthening the law's provisions. As articulated by the Secretary and other leaders and detailed in a policy book and fact sheets on various issues, the blueprint has two objectives: (1) to reaffirm *No Child Left Behind's* core principles (annual assessments, in reading and math, in grades 3-8 and high school; disaggregated test score data; grade-level proficiency for all students by 2014; qualified teachers in core academic subjects; and timely information and options for parents) and (2) to embed current flexibility and insert new flexibility into the law. "If we let this opportunity pass us by," the Secretary said, "the loss will be felt greatest by our nation's young people -- the very individuals we will be counting on to keep America competitive and secure. Congress has the ability, right now, to put more effective tools in the hands of families and school districts to impact student achievement."

The administration is not submitting "a bill." Also, unlike in years past, proposals are not presented by title. Instead, the blueprint is arranged thematically. Key proposals are listed for each theme. It is up to Congress to approve, reject, or modify each proposal.

#### 1. Every Child Performing at or Above Grade Level by 2014

- The administration is firmly committed to local control, with states establishing academic standards and assessments. However, to support greater transparency, states would report their National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and their state assessment results on the same public report card.

#### 2. Flexibility for Innovation and Improvement

- As long as they have robust data systems and well-established assessments and set

annual goals based on proficiency (not on student background), states would be able to use growth models to measure individual progress toward grade-level proficiency.

- States would be allowed to prioritize their school improvement activities, based on specific needs of schools. Also, to help states and school districts tailor responses, 100 percent of specified federal funds could be moved among programs.
- As long as they are of high quality and promote challenging instruction, states would be able to tailor assessments to small groups of students with disabilities with modified or alternate achievement standards.
- Schools would be recognized by state accountability systems for making clear progress in teaching limited English proficient students critical English language skills.

### **3. Challenging Our Students and Preparing Them to Succeed**

- All governors have agreed to use a more accurate graduation rate. By 2011-12, states would report school-level, disaggregated results. Until then, states would report district-level, disaggregated results.
- To ensure students are prepared to enter college or the workforce, by 2010-11, states would develop course-level academic standards for two years of English and math. Then, by 2012-13, states would administer assessments aligned to the standards and report the extent to which students are prepared. The tests would not be part of the state accountability system.
- More students would have access to, and more teachers would be trained for, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes. Also, to promote participation, states would report completion rates of the courses by subgroups.
- To ensure high schools have resources to help low-income students, there would be a substantial increase in Title I funds for high schools. A corresponding increase would ensure that elementary schools' Title I programs are not negatively affected.

### **4. Helping Teachers Close the Achievement Gap**

- The Teacher Incentive Fund would provide resources to help states and districts develop compensation systems that reward teachers and principals who make progress in raising student achievement and closing achievement gaps. Educators who choose to serve in the neediest schools would also be rewarded.
- To strengthen the teaching of elementary and middle school math, Math Now would provide resources to help teachers use scientifically proven practices.
- Beginning in 2008-09, science assessment results at all three grade spans would factor into state accountability calculations. By 2019-20, all students would be proficient in science (the same trajectory used for reading and math proficiency).
- The administration would continue to invest in the Reading First program and expand the Striving Readers program.

## 5. Strengthening Public Schools and Empowering Parents

- School Improvement funds would support the implementation of school improvement plans and assist states' efforts to advise on, monitor, and review those plans.
- Today, most schools subject to restructuring are not pursuing the quality of reform that will lead to a turn-around. Therefore, strictly for such schools, the administration would (1) eliminate from the menu of authorized actions under restructuring the ambiguous "other" option; (2) insert the option of turning the school over to elected officials, such as mayors; (3) offer Promise Scholarships, which would permit low-income students to attend a private school or an out-of-district school or receive intensive tutoring (federal funds would follow the child to the new school, supplemented with a scholarship of \$2,500, and students attending a private school would take their state assessment or a national assessment but not be part of the state's accountability system); and (4) empower school leaders to remove the limitations on teacher transfers from collective bargaining agreements.
- For all communities that want to expand local options, the administration would provide Opportunity Scholarships. Modeled after the Washington, D.C., program, which has been funded since 2004, students would be able to attend private schools or seek additional tutoring through a locally designed scholarship program.
- The federal Charter School Program would support all viable applications that can improve outcomes for students. Also, local decisions to convert schools identified for restructuring into charter schools would be allowed, even if the state law caps the number of charter schools in that state.
- Supplemental educational services (SES) would be offered to all low-income students who attend a school in need of improvement from the first year forward, one year earlier than before and concurrent with the offer of public school choice. Also, districts would be told to spend all relevant federal funds or risk their forfeiture, eliminating the disincentive to support choice and tutoring programs. In addition, larger SES per student amounts would be provided for students who have limited English proficiency or disabilities or who live in rural areas.

The Secretary is already on the road discussing these new proposals with parents, educators, and community leaders. Yesterday, she was in Chicago. Next week, she will be in Atlanta. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/nclb/buildingonresults.html>.

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## BUSINESS COALITION

Business is in! Last week, the Business Coalition for Student Achievement, representing business leaders from every sector of the U.S. economy, issued a set of recommendations to improve and strengthen *No Child Left Behind* during reauthorization -- some of which are addressed in the "Building on Results" blueprint. "*No Child Left Behind* provides a solid foundation for improving U.S. education by focusing on increased accountability for the performance of all students," said Arthur Ryan, chairman of Prudential Financial, and one of three co-chairs of the coalition, along with Craig Barrett, chairman of Intel, and Edward Rust, chairman of State Farm. "Improving U.S. student achievement is a critical need for our nation's competitiveness and for individuals to succeed in our rapidly changing world." Secretary Spellings, who attended the coalition's inaugural event, praised the business community's ongoing commitment to quality education. "The business community has been a tireless partner every step of the way, playing a key role in the passage of the law, working hard on the President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI), and supporting our efforts to renew the law this year." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.biz4achievement.org/>.

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## MATH PANEL REPORTS

At its last meeting in New Orleans, each of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel's four task groups -- Conceptual Knowledge and Skills, Instructional Practices, Learning Processes, and Teachers -- submitted progress reports. Moreover, as required by executive order, the panel will issue an interim report. However, because the panel is still the process of reviewing research, this report will not offer specific recommendations for improving teaching and learning. The final report is due February 28, 2008. The panel's sixth meeting is in April in Chicago. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/>.

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## HIGHER EDUCATION ACTIVITY

A few items relating to higher education:

- The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education is organizing an invitational summit (March 21 and 22) to engage higher education stakeholders in a discussion of the Secretary's action plan and priorities: aligning K-12 and higher education expectations; increasing need-based aid; collecting and using student learning outcome data; serving adults and other non-traditional students; and expanding affordability through cost-containment. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/>.
- In response to the College Student Relief Act of 2007, which has since been passed by the House, the White House released a Statement of Administration Policy expressing concern that "reducing student loan interest rates [by 50 percent] would direct federal subsidies to college graduates, not to students and their families who are struggling to meet current and future educational expenses.... Instead, the administration would support efforts to direct savings to additional grant support for low-income students." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/01/01162007.html>.
- The Department's Office of Inspector General's MISUSED web site, <http://www.ed.gov/misused/>, has information on scams, suggestions for preventing identity theft, and resources on how to report identity theft involving federal aid.



## QUOTE TO NOTE

"Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the *No Child Left Behind Act* -- preserving local control, raising standards, and holding those schools accountable for results. Because we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap. Now the task is to build on the success, without watering down standards, without taking control from communities, and without backsliding and calling it reform. We can lift student achievement even higher by giving local leaders flexibility to turn around failing schools and by granting families with children stuck in failing schools the right to choose someplace better. We must increase funds for students who struggle and make sure children get the special help they need. And we can make sure our children are prepared for jobs of the future and

our country is more competitive by strengthening math and science skills. The *No Child Left Behind Act* has worked for America's children -- and I ask Congress to reauthorize this good law."

-- President George W. Bush (1/23/07)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is hosting workshops to assist organizations in applying to become supplemental educational service providers. The workshops are free, but pre-registration is required. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbci/suppserv-workshops.html>.

Details on all four of the Department's negotiated rulemaking teams for Title IV of the *Higher Education Act* are now posted online. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2007/nr.html>.

Education Industry Days, the Education Industry Association's annual legislative and business trends conference, will be held March 13 and 14 in Arlington, Virginia. Department Chief of Staff David Dunn is among the keynote speakers. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.educationindustry.org/>.

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