



ED REVIEW

June 17, 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/>)

Earlier this week, the Department issued non-regulatory guidance that further clarifies the roles of states and districts in implementing supplemental educational services under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The guidance -- the first update since August 2003 -- provides new information, as well as clarifications and modifications to previously included topics. For example, Section C delineates the steps that states and districts must take when a district is identified as "in need of improvement" and can no longer be a service provider. It also explains that some teachers may be hired by service providers, even if they work in a school or district that is in need of improvement. Other sections address the use of incentives by providers to boost or maintain attendance and reward student achievement, the "fair" selection of providers to work in buildings, and the responsibility for evaluation. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/suppsvcsguid.pdf>. (Note: The appendix has a "model" parent letter, to help districts inform parents of free services.)

Also this week, in Indianapolis, Secretary Spellings promoted the value of using research data as the foundation for guiding decisions on school reform. "Information is the key to holding schools accountable for improved performance every year among every student group," she said. "Data is our best management tool. I often say that what gets measured, gets done. If we know the contours of the problem, and who is affected, we can put forward a solution. Teachers can adjust lesson plans. Administrators can evaluate curricula. Data can inform decision-making. Thanks to *No Child Left Behind*, we're no longer flying blind." The Secretary then pushed for a notably greater focus on high school improvement. She cited a number of bleak statistics as evidence of the need for reform: nearly a third of entering ninth-graders do not receive their diploma on schedule; two-thirds of high school graduates are not prepared for college (Manhattan Institute); and about 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs will

require some postsecondary education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/06/06142005.html>.

Meanwhile, today is the last day of the "Pathways to Hispanic Family Learning" conference, featuring some 200 Hispanic leaders. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/06/06162005.html>.



URBAN MYTHS

In a unique new report, Standard & Poor's examined 25 of the largest urban districts in the U.S. using data from www.schoolmatters.com. The data reveals that "progress is being made and that perceptions are not always reality." Indeed, the report debunks four common myths: urban districts spend more than other districts; academic performance in urban districts is not improving ("where data is available, almost 80 percent of urban districts...had larger gains in reading and math, from 2001-02 to 2002-03, when compared to the average proficiency gains in their respective states"); low test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance rates are primarily an urban, minority problem; and urban schools do little to help students learn ("where data is available, S&P found 397 *outstanding* schools...managed to raise student achievement above the state average, even though they have high concentrations [75%] of impoverished students"). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.schoolmatters.com/pdf/fact_or_fiction_master.pdf.



PROPOSED: IDEA REGS

On June 10, the Department announced proposed regulations to implement the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* and invited public comment. The following are some of the highlights of the draft rules:

- **Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers.** The proposed regulations clarify that the highly qualified teacher requirements apply only to public school teachers.
- **Children with Disabilities Enrolled by Their Parents in Private School.** The proposed regulations add in the statutory change that the district in which the child's

private school is located, as opposed to the district where the child resides, is responsible for "child find" and services for these children.

- **Identification of Children with Specific Learning Disabilities.** The proposed regulations lay out parameters for identifying students with learning disabilities and encourage the use of "high quality" instruction and response to that instruction as part of the evaluation process.
- **Discipline Procedures.** The proposed regulations closely follow the language in the statute.
- **Resolution of Disputes at the Local Level.** The proposed regulations encourage cooperative resolution of disputes between the complainant and the district when the complaint is about an individual child.
- **Due Process Procedures.** The proposed regulations closely follow the language of the statute.
- **Parent Consent.** The proposed regulations clarify that a public agency is not required to pursue an initial evaluation of a child if the parent does not give consent.
- **State Responsibility to Supervise Districts.** The proposed regulations make clear that the state is responsible for monitoring and enforcing IDEA implementation and its local districts.

A list of public meetings where comments may be provided is available at the link below. Comments may also be submitted electronically to IDEAComments@ed.gov. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>.



COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS

The Department is seeking proposals for 21 comprehensive centers across the country that will assist states and districts working to meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. In particular, the Request for Proposals calls for 16 regional centers, providing frontline support, and five content centers that would focus on areas that are key to the implementation of the law: assessment and accountability, teacher quality, instruction, innovation and improvement, and high schools. Interested parties have until June 23 to notify the agency of their intent to apply; applications are due July 18. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/newccp/>. (Note: These centers will replace Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers and various math, science, and technology centers.)



HIGH-TECH KIDS

According to a new National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) issue brief, titled "Rates of Computer and Internet Use by Children in Nursery School and Students in Kindergarten Through Twelfth-Grade: 2003," the use of technology is "commonplace," with 91 percent of all PK-12 students using computers and 59 percent using the Internet. Moreover, the use of technology begins early: 67 percent of preschoolers are computer users, and 23 percent use the Internet. By high school, nearly all students (97 percent) use computers, and a significant majority (80 percent) use the Internet. In addition, while the use of technologies varies by several inter-related characteristics (like race/ethnicity, parent educational attainment, family income, etc.), current differences among students are smaller than those found among adults in previous analyses, reflecting the fact that most students now use computers. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005111>.



SUMMER READING

To raise awareness about the loss of reading skills over the summer months, Reading is Fundamental (RIF) is encouraging children to make summer reading "a sweet treat." The interactive RIF web site offers, among its many items, a "sweet reads" booklist; motivation tips for families, teachers, and librarians; stimulating family activities for road trips, vacations, or time-together at home; and a contest for those ages 5-15 to read and review books for a chance to win "sweet" prizes. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.rif.org/summer/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"My attitude is best expressed by an old Texas saying: 'In God we trust; all others bring data.' This is important in so many ways. Policymakers must know which areas need the most immediate help. Parents must know exactly how their own child's school is doing; that is their right.... [Data also] allows us to solidly ground our policies

in the very best and latest scientific information. Earlier this year, I announced a new policy for states that show real results in following the principles of *No Child Left Behind*. They will be eligible for new tools to help students with disabilities. It is based on the latest research showing that a portion of these students can succeed with targeted interventions."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (6/14/05)



UPCOMING EVENTS

On August 11, at 1:30 ET, the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will air a 90-minute satellite videoconference: "Communities Respond to Youth Gangs in America." The videoconference -- available online or via satellite downlink -- will feature community programs and strategies that effectively address the youth gang problem, as well as explore plans to leverage existing resources, provide examples of partnerships across disciplines, and share information on faith-based responses. Registration is free. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.trc.eku.edu/jj/>.

Days later (August 15-17), the Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools will hold its 2005 National Conference (Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.). Register by June 30 to avoid the late fee. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.osdfsnationalconference.org/>.

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

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