



## ED REVIEW

March 24, 2006

...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/>)

In a recent letter to the nation's Chief State School Officers, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Henry Johnson shares the procedures the Department will use to review the progress of each state in meeting *No Child Left Behind's* Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) goal, as well as specific themes states should address in their revised state plans. The letter follows an October 21, 2005, statement from Secretary Spellings assuring states that do not achieve the 100 percent HQT goal by the end of the 2005-06 school year will not lose federal funds "if they are implementing the law and making a good-faith effort" to reach the HQT goal as soon as possible. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/legislation.html#guidance>.

Speaking of teachers, the deadline is fast approaching (April 15) for American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize teachers who are improving student achievement -- using innovative strategies -- and making a difference in the lives of their students. Anyone can nominate an American Star. After the Department receives a nomination, a verification form is sent to the teacher's principal. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.teacherquality.us/TeacherToTeacher/AmericanStars.asp>.

Meanwhile, Delaware, Indiana, and Nevada have now joined the growing list of states that have received feedback on their standards and assessments under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, with Delaware becoming just the second state in the nation to have its assessment system approved. (Reviewers do not look at the standards and assessments themselves, but at documents showing that they meet the law's requirements.) For comparison, review letters are posted online. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/>.

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## PANDEMIC FLU

Earlier this week, Secretary Spellings and Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt joined Governor Michael Easley in North Carolina, part of a national tour of states as the federal government prepares the country for a potential flu pandemic. "At the federal level, we will do everything we can to make sure Americans have the resources and support they need in the event of a pandemic outbreak," Mrs. Spellings said. "When it comes to preparing our school community -- from preschool all the way to college -- there are three steps to take: talk to local health officials and work together to develop a plan; train teachers and administrators to implement the plan; and teach students and parents so they understand what to do in the event of a pandemic. Not Stop, Drop, and Roll -- Talk, Train, and Teach." To so guide the education community, the agencies released three checklists. The checklists target child care and preschools ([http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/child\\_care.pdf](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/child_care.pdf)), K-12 school districts (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/schoolchecklist.pdf>), and colleges and universities ([http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/colleges\\_universities.pdf](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/colleges_universities.pdf)). (HHS has also released checklists for state and local governments, businesses, individuals and families, medical care providers, and faith-based organizations.) In addition, the agencies vowed to provide information on model plans and training exercises and conduct webcasts. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>. (Secretary Spellings' remarks are available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/03/03212006a.html>.)

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## INTEL SCIENCE AWARDS

At a March 14 ceremony, Secretary Spellings honored 40 Intel Science Talent Search (STS) award winners, hailing from 19 different states. "As a mom, I would be happy if my daughters started looking for their idols in this room," she said. "We know math and science skills are the common currency everyone needs to have to succeed in the increasingly competitive global economy." Sponsored by Intel since 1998, STS is America's oldest (since 1942) and most prestigious high school science competition; 1,558 students entered the competition this year, representing 44 states, the District of Columbia, and an overseas school. Top honors went to Shannon Babb of Highland, Utah, who conducted a six-month study on water quality problems in the Spanish Fork River. She will take her place among very esteemed alumni: six Nobel Laureates, three National Medal of

Science winners, 10 MacArthur Foundation Fellows, and two Field Medalists. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.intel.com/education/sts/>. (Don't miss the Secretary's remarks at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/03/03152006.html>. Did you know that "More S&P 500 CEOs majored in engineering than any other field?")

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## GRANTS FORECAST

Be sure to review the FY 2006 Grants Forecast (as of March 13) 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 2007. (Note: This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the Department of Education.)

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## BEATING THE ODDS

The Council of the Great City Schools' annual *Beating the Odds* report compares 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 test scores in 66 urban districts from 38 states. In fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math, students improved:

- In fourth-grade reading, 54.4 percent of urban school students scored at or above proficient, an 11.1 percentage point increase from 2002.
- The percentage of students at or above proficient in fourth-grade math went from 44.5 percent to 58.5 percent, a 14.0 point increase from 2002.
- Students also improved in eighth-grade reading (36.1 percent to 39.7 percent) and math (37.3 percent to 45.7 percent) but at slower rates.

More importantly, academic achievement gaps by race appear to be narrowing (for example, in reading, the gap between white and African-American students narrowed in 84.6 percent of fourth grades tested and 66.3 percent of eighth grades tested, while the gap between white and Hispanic students narrowed in 76 percent of both grades

tested). Also, for the first time, the study compares state and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test scores, showing parallel upward achievement. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.cgcs.org/pdfs/BTOVI%20Final%2054%20pages.pdf>. (Secretary Spellings' remarks are available at

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/03/03202006.html>.)

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## NCES REPORTS

Can't get enough data? Consider the following reports/resources from the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES):

- "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States: 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006313>).
  - "Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2003-2004 Private School Universe Survey" (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006319>).
  - "Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2004; Graduation Rates, 1998 and 2001 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2004" (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006155>).
  - Finance Longitudinal Data Tool (<http://nces.ed.gov/edfin/longitudinal/>), which allows comparison of fiscal and non-fiscal school district data from 1989-90 to 1999-2000.
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## QUOTE TO NOTE

"Strong communities...support the work of schools by providing educational and after-school activities for students. And strong communities nurture healthy children by surrounding them with a network of loving people who keep them safe and can guide them toward success. Forming what we call 'community coalitions' is an important step in reaching children who need help. Community coalitions bring together everyone from teachers, to mentors, to parents, to pastors, to police officers, to substance abuse experts, to social service providers, to business leaders. Anyone who has the ability and

the desire to have a positive impact on a child's life should be part of a community coalition."

-- First Lady Laura Bush (3/16/06),  
at Avon Avenue School in Newark

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 6 and 7, the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education will hold an open meeting in Indianapolis. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2006-1/031506a.html>.

The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, "Inspiring Excellence: Great Teachers, Great Principals," is on for April 18. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>.

**Schedule Change:** The March 31 crisis planning training session in Washington, D.C., cited in the previous issue of *ED Review*, has been replaced by regional training sessions: April 26-28 in Denver and May 15-17 in Pittsburgh. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.sei2003.com/ERCM/CPNG/>.

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