



ED REVIEW

April 21, 2006

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



MATH AND SCIENCE, HOME AND ABROAD

Last week, Secretary Spellings traveled with members of Congress to Bangalore and New Delhi, India, to observe the education system, visit with business interests, and, ultimately, better understand the real implications to U.S. competitiveness. "Halfway through my visit to India, I've been struck by the strong belief both our nations share in the power of education," she said during a brief respite. "As we work in the U.S. to increase academic rigor and enhance math and science, the same focus is driving education on the other side of the world.... The trip has provided a powerful reminder that technology has leveled the playing field, and we must equip our students with the skills they need to compete and succeed in the new global economy." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/04/04122006.html>.

Upon her return, the Secretary shared her insights with the media (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/04/04182006.html>). "There is absolutely a hunger in [India's] system and a high and strong degree of value for education and, in particular, in the STEM fields, in math and science," she said. "I asked someone why that was so much a part of the culture, and he said that there were kind of constant reminders of class and poverty and that education is the 'way out.'" Asked if she witnessed anything that made her worry about America's ability to stay competitive, she noted, "One thing [that worries me] -- and I'll say this as much as a mom of a teenager who is 13. It is just the way we take our opportunities and our system for granted and, maybe, a lack of a 'sense of urgency.' This is certainly reflected in the polls of parents who think American high schools...are just fine and a reluctance to encourage their kids to pursue STEM fields.... Kind of a lack of fire in the belly here that you see very strongly over there, motivation."

This week, staying on theme, Secretary Spellings joined President Bush at a Maryland middle school (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/04/20060418-4.html>)

and Alabama's Tuskegee University (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/04/20060419-5.html>) to promote the Administration's American Competitiveness Initiative (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/04/20060418-8.html>). Also, based on the concept behind the National Reading Panel, the President issued an executive order creating a National Mathematics Advisory Panel (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/04/04182006a.html>). The panel will convene experts to evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches to learning math, and, in doing so, create a research base to improve instructional methods. Its final report is due no later than February 28, 2008.



TEACHER WORKSHOPS

From June through August, the Education Department will convene 14 Teacher-to-Teacher regional workshops for teachers to learn from fellow educators who have had success in raising student achievement. Four will cover the full range of subjects taught in elementary and secondary schools; three are co-sponsored by the National Park Service, dedicated to math, science, and history; four are co-sponsored by TechNet, geared to math and science; two will target the teaching of foreign languages; and one will target the teaching of English as a Second Language. Registration is free, and meals/refreshments will be provided during scheduled activities, but participants are responsible for their transportation and lodging. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <https://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/About.asp>. (Note: Teachers may be eligible for professional development credits through their school districts or states.)



PAPERS, GRANTS, AND LOAN FORGIVENESS

There is plenty to report on the higher education front:

- Last month, a series of issue papers on hot topics -- including accountability, accreditation, and consumer information -- were released at the request of the chairman of the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education to assist the panel as it prepares its final report (due August 1) for the Secretary. The papers "are not

recommendations by the commission, nor are they intended to reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education." Rather, "their purpose is to inform and energize the public about key postsecondary issues and inspire a continued national dialogue around the future of higher education in America." The commission just concluded its fourth public meeting in Indianapolis and will host its last meeting in Washington, D.C., May 18 and 19. (<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/>)

- This month, in a letter to colleges, the Department provided eligibility requirements for the two new grant programs created by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act: Academic Competitiveness Grants (for freshmen and sophomores) and Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants (for juniors and seniors). By July 1, the agency will notify students who could be eligible for AC grants. The notification will direct applicants to a web site to help them determine their eligibility. Institutions already possess all the information needed to determine SMART grant eligibility. Stay tuned for more! (<http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN0604.html>)
 - Also this month, in a letter to public school districts and private school associations, the Department spotlighted the various teacher loan forgiveness provisions included in the Higher Education Reconciliation Act. The act authorizes up to \$17,500 in forgiveness for certain full-time, highly qualified secondary school teachers of math or science. It similarly authorizes up to \$17,500 in forgiveness for certain full-time, highly qualified elementary and secondary special education teachers. In addition, teachers who do not teach in the subjects above may be eligible for up to \$5,000 in forgiveness. (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/secletter/060301a.html>, <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/secletter/060301b.html>)
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NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

The Department has issued a final regulation interpreting a provision in the *No Child Left Behind Act* that guarantees the Boy Scouts and other "patriotic" youth groups "equal access" to public schools that receive federal funding. The regulation states:

- schools may not deny Boy Scout troops the same use of campus meeting space, bulletin boards, information distribution methods, and recruiting opportunities that they provide to other outside groups;
- schools' usual campus rules, such as a ban on knives, may be applied to Scout troops;
- schools are not required to sponsor Scout troops; and

- schools may charge fees for use of facilities, as long as they treat the Scouts no less favorably than any other group.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2006-1/032406a.html>.



HURRICANE RELIEF (<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/>)

The Department has distributed second and third quarter installments of funds to reimburse school districts that took in students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Emergency Impact Aid payments were each \$1,000 per student. The agency also added funds to the first quarter installment, boosting the \$750 per student payment that the states already received to \$1,000 per student. The fourth quarter payment will be made by the end of May. At that point, the Department will calculate the final per student payment and adjust the quarterly distributions to match. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/proginfo/eiap-date.pdf>.

**Charter
Schools**

CHARTER SHOWCASE

May 1 and 2, during National Charter School Week (see http://www.publiccharters.org/section/publications/http_charterweek2006 for further details, including an online toolkit), the Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) will host the National Charter Schools Showcase at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. The showcase will bring together state and federal educational professionals committed to expanding quality charter schools and increasing the national understanding of the charter school model. Charter teams from over 40 states and the District of Columbia will share up-to-date information about initiatives, partnerships, and technical assistance available to states seeking to leverage their resources. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/events/csweek2006.html>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"We should never cede education territory to anybody anywhere in the world. We need to be the centers of excellence all around the United States. And, one way to do that is to continue to provide financial help, and to encourage people to take mathematics and science through additional financial help. And, another way to do it is to make sure the public school system provides excellent education early in a child's life, laying that foundation for children from all walks of life, all across our country, so that we can continue to be the country of hope."

-- President George W. Bush (4/19/06),
addressing an audience at Tuskegee University



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, on new tools for parents to get informed and involved, is scheduled for May 17. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>. (Note: At Tuskegee, the Secretary unveiled a checklist, <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/prepared.html>, of things parents can do to help ensure their children are prepared for higher education and the global workforce.)

Please feel free to contact the Office of Communications and Outreach with any questions:

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