



ED REVIEW

April 7, 2006

...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/>)

President Bush's competitiveness agenda was the focus of two recent hearings on Capitol Hill. Last week, Secretary Spellings appeared before the House Committee on Science: "While testifying before this committee is a clear departure from my normal Hill appearances, I feel it underscores the need to rely on government-wide resources if we are going to give our students the skills to compete, work, and lead in the global economy.... We must align all our efforts with the principles of *No Child Left Behind*." This week, she delivered a similar message to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2006/03/03302006.html> AND <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2006/04/04062006.html>. (Speaking of competing, the Department has awarded new five-year contracts to 10 regional labs. The labs will carry out research, development, dissemination, training, and technical assistance activities. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/03/03282006.html>.)

Between her Hill visits, the Secretary participated in a school choice forum in Queens, New York. She discussed public school choice options and tutoring under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, expanding charter schools, and the President's proposal for America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/04/04052006.html>.

Also, after an initial review, the Secretary sent eight growth model proposals (Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, North Carolina, Oregon, and Tennessee) forward for review by peers. The applications are available online. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/>.



HEA REAUTHORIZATION

On April 1, President Bush signed a bill extending the Higher Education Act (HEA) from March 31, 2006, to June 30, 2006, to give Congress additional time to pass comprehensive HEA legislation. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives has approved its HEA reauthorization bill (H.R. 609), which would, among other provisions:

- authorize an Adjunct Teacher Corps, allowing professionals from outside education to lead classes in math, science, and critical foreign languages;
- authorize a Teacher Incentive Fund program, providing grants to states interested in offering performance-based pay for teachers;
- provide up to two full Pell Grants to students attending throughout the year;
- support critical foreign language study through partnerships between schools and colleges; and
- authorize money for teacher training to be used to prepare educators to teach advanced placement classes.

"H.R. 609 moves forward on two of President Bush's top education priorities: year-round Pell Grants and the Teacher Incentive Fund," Secretary Spellings said in a statement (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/03/03302006a.html>). "And the McMorris American Competitiveness Amendment makes progress toward the goals of the President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI), which is designed to improve the instruction of math, science, and critical foreign languages in our schools.... This is a great step forward." The Senate will consider its version later this year. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/109th/education/hea/hr609billsummary.htm>.



GREAT TEACHERS, GREAT PRINCIPALS

The next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast (April 18, 8:00-9:00 ET) will showcase outstanding educators and schools that (1) explore how effective teaching is at the core of America's long-term economic competitiveness, (2) highlight alternative strategies to recruit, train, and retain effective teachers and principals, and (3) reveal how programs like Teacher-to-Teacher, the Adjunct Teacher Corps, the American Competitiveness Initiative are/will strengthen our nation's teachers, students, and schools.

Recent studies offer compelling evidence confirming what parents have always known: the quality of a teacher is one of the most critical components of student achievement. Studies also show that verbal ability and content knowledge are the most important attributes of highly qualified and effective teachers. Yet, recruitment, preparation, and compensation systems developed during the last century do not fully address the classroom challenges of the current century. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>. (You can watch live and archived webcasts at <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>.)



PERSONNEL CHANGES

Even as the agency is saying good-bye to one leader, it is welcoming another. First, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education Sally Stroup is leaving at the end of the month to become the deputy staff director for the House Education and the Workforce Committee. There, she is expected to play a leading role in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). This will be Stroup's second stint on the committee. As a top aide from 1993 to 2001, she helped draft HEA's previous reauthorization language -- which became law in 1998. Second, effective April 17, Alexa Posny, who is currently Kansas' Deputy Commissioner of Education, will become the Department's Director of Special Education Programs. As director, she will advise the Secretary and other senior officials on federal education policy concerning individuals with disabilities. Posny began her academic career as a special education teacher. She also served as the Kansas director of special education.



TITLE I NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

On April 5, the Department released to lawmakers the "National Assessment of Title I: Interim Report to Congress." Volume I contains key findings on the implementation of Title I under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Volume II is a report on the findings from "Closing the Reading Gap," an evaluation of the impact of remedial reading programs on student achievement. Here are just a few of the findings:

- Student achievement trends since 2000 are positive overall and for key subgroups on both the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and state assessments, although proficiency on NAEP and state assessments differs greatly for individual states.
- Based on data from 21 states, the rate of improvement would need to increase for states to reach the goal established in NCLB for all students to achieve proficiency on state assessments by the 2013-14 school year. Then again, Delaware, Kansas, North Carolina, and Oklahoma are "on track" to have all low-income students reading on grade level by 2013-14.
- Eighteen percent of all Title I schools were identified for improvement for 2004-05 based on state testing in 2003-04 and previous years.
- Schools most commonly missed making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) because of the poor performance of all students or multiple subgroups.
- The level of student participation for supplemental services is much greater than for school choice.
- The majority of teachers have been designated by their states as "highly qualified" under NCLB, but state definitions of highly qualified vary widely.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/title1interimreport/>.



SCIENCE LESSONS

A video study of eighth-grade science classrooms in the U.S. and four other countries found U.S. teachers focused on a variety of activities to fully engage students but not in a consistent way that developed challenging and coherent science content. By comparison, classrooms in Australia, the Czech Republic, Japan, and the Netherlands exposed eighth-graders to science lessons characterized by a core instructional approach that held all students to high content standards and expectations for learning. For example, in Japan, the lessons emphasized identifying patterns in data and making connections among ideas and evidence. The science report is the second released by the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 1999 Video Study; the first report, focused on eighth-grade math, was released in 2003. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"We must stop rationing opportunity by arbitrarily limiting the number of charter schools we allow. Parents want options. And we all benefit from them. Charter schools improve education for everyone in the system, especially students. They're laboratories for new educational strategies that can eventually help raise achievement in all our public schools. And they're even more accountable for students than traditional public schools because parents have a choice and when charters fall short of standards, they can be closed."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (4/5/06),
addressing a school choice forum in New York



UPCOMING EVENTS

April 23-29 is National Volunteer Week. Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, the week is about thanking one of America's most valuable assets -- volunteers -- and calling the public's attention to all that they do to improve communities. The theme is "Inspire by Example" because it reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people -- as well as inspire others to serve. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw/>.

Start spreading the word: on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, at 3:00 p.m. local time, Americans are asked to stop what they are doing and spend one minute in a Moment of Remembrance. The mid-afternoon time was chosen because it is when a majority of Americans are enjoying their freedoms on the holiday. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.remember.gov/>.

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

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