



ED REVIEW

September 8, 2006

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



BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS

Continuing her Back to School tour of the nation, Secretary Spellings visited Providence, Rhode Island, to announce 32 new Early Reading First grants. These multi-year awards to organizations in 25 states -- totaling nearly \$101.7 million -- are designed to enhance the early reading skills of preschool children, especially those from low-income families, via instructional materials, teaching strategies, and professional development. "We want to make sure children enter elementary school ready to learn how to read," she said. "The first years of life are critical for a child's development, and this grant will help children from low-income families start life on the right track." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/>.

Then, over the holiday weekend, the Secretary attended the dedication ceremony of GlenOak High School and Plain Community Campus in Ohio. This two-story structure, which brings the district's high school students together under one roof, is divided into career academies. It also incorporates wireless Internet access, a 900-seat auditorium, a coffee shop, and a branch of the Stark County District Library. "With this new facility, you've literally put your school system at the heart of the community," she said, "which is right where it belongs." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2006/09/09032006.html>.

Today, the Secretary will ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange and, as is the case for every Back to School visit, meet with business leaders to discuss improving the quality of math, science, and technological education to compete in the 21st century.



NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

Yesterday (September 7), Secretary Spellings and 100 Black Men of America, Inc., announced a new partnership to raise awareness in the African-American community of educational resources under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. According to the agreement, the Department will "fully engage" the community and its leaders on charter schools, school choice, supplemental services, parent report cards, and all of the benefits and options provided to students in schools in need of improvement. The partnership will co-sponsor events, produce parent-focused materials, and educate families and communities about the principles of *No Child Left Behind*. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09072006a.html>.

Meanwhile, in a letter to Chief State School Officers, Secretary Spellings encouraged states to "pick up the pace in our efforts to ensure that all core academic subjects are taught by highly qualified and effective teachers." To that end, she urged elimination of the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE), noting that "too many states have HOUSSE procedures that provide relatively weak indicators of a teacher's attainment of subject matter knowledge." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/060905.html>.



BTS: AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS

A special Back to School edition of "Education News Parents Can Use" (September 19, 8:00-9:00 ET) will focus on American competitiveness. Recent statistics, while heralding the effect that *No Child Left Behind* has had on reading and math achievement in the early grades, vividly illustrate the need to better prepare high school students for tomorrow: reading and math scores for 17-year-olds have remained flat since the 1970s; nearly half of all high schools offer no Advanced Placement courses; and three out of 10 students (and five out of 10 minority students) fail to complete high school on time. In response, the President has proposed the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI), which aims to expand advanced programs in math and science; increase the number of highly qualified math and science teachers in America's classrooms; and craft incentives for students to major in high-tech fields. The broadcast will consider how ACI will help

students graduate with the skills they need to succeed in college or the workforce, as well as highlight innovative programs that are intensifying learning in math, science, and engineering. 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/>.)



MEASURING UP 2006

This week, Secretary Spellings joined former North Carolina Governor James Hunt for the release of "Measuring Up 2006," a biennial report card on higher education from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. This paper grades the performance of the U.S. and all 50 states in preparation, participation, completion, affordability, benefits, and learning. It also includes international comparisons. For example, while the U.S. ranks second in the educational attainment of older adults (35-64 years), it drops to seventh for younger adults (25-35 years). Moreover, while the U.S. is among the leaders in college participation (35%), it is 16th of 27 in college completion (17%). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://measuringup.highereducation.org/>.

Note: Both ACT (<http://www.act.org/news/data/06>) and the College Board (http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2006/reports.html) have released results from their 2006 college admissions tests.



PERSONNEL CHANGES

President Bush has nominated Sara Martinez Tucker to be Undersecretary of Education, the Department's third-highest ranking official. Tucker currently serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. Previously, she worked for AT&T for 16 years, becoming the very first Hispanic female to reach the company's executive level. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Texas at Austin (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/08/08292006a.html>). The President has also nominated Lauren Maddox to be Assistant Secretary for Communications and Outreach. Maddox is currently a Principal at PodestaMattoon. Before that, she served as

the House Republican Conference communications director. She received her bachelor's from Creighton University and her master's from Northwestern University (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09072006.html>). And, internally, Kerri Briggs has been named Acting Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, filling the post vacated by Tom Luce.

Note: The President recently named Jason Dean a 2006-07 White House Fellow. Until this month, he was Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour's education policy advisor. He has also served as a college administrator. His fellowship will be at the Department, where he will work on *No Child Left Behind* implementation, higher education, and teacher projects. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/fellows/about/fellows.html>.



STATE REFORMS

The Department's National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) "Overview and Inventory of State Education Reforms: 1990 to 2000" describes the growing role of states in public elementary and secondary education through the 1990s. (In doing so, it extends an earlier NCES report, "Overview and Inventory of State Requirements for Coursework and Attendance," which examined state-level reform efforts in the 1980s.) To facilitate discussion, the report groups reform efforts into four categories: standards, assessments, and accountability; school finance; teacher training and resources; and school choice options. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/>.



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

On August 29, the Secretary issued the following statement on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina:

"As we mark the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we can look back at a year where significant progress was made to help the Gulf Coast region and its citizens recover from one of the worst natural disasters in our country's history. At the Department of Education, we have been there every step of the way. With timely and signifi-

cant federal aid totaling \$2 billion, thousands of furniture and book donations, and student loan relief, we are doing everything we can to make sure schools reopen and children learn. As the region continues to move forward, we at the Department will do all we can to ensure the resources and support needed are available to help this vibrant area once again thrive."



UPCOMING EVENTS

To mark the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787, Congress has mandated that every school and college receiving federal funds take a day to teach the document. (This year, because the 17th falls on a Sunday, institutions will observe Citizenship Day/Constitution Day either the week before or after.) To support students and teachers in their studies, the Department's Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) web site has posted an array of online resources. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/free/constitution/>.

Schools are also encouraged to participate in "Pledge Across America" on Monday, September 18. The synchronized Pledge will begin at 2:00 p.m. EDT; 1:00 p.m. CDT; 12:00 noon MDT; 11:00 a.m. PDT; 10:00 a.m. in Alaska; and 8:00 a.m. in Hawaii. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.celebrationusa.org/>.

On October 12, *Lights On Afterschool!*, a coast-to-coast rally organized by the Afterschool Alliance, will illuminate the country by celebrating afterschool programs and the need they meet in keeping students safe, helping working families, and improving academic achievement. Last year, 8,000 afterschool programs, including hundreds of the Department's 21st Century Community Learning Centers, hosted activities. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/index.cfm.

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