



ED REVIEW

January 13, 2006 (Happy New Year!)

...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/>)

On January 9, Secretary Spellings joined President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush at North Glen Elementary School in Glen Burnie, Maryland, to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. "I'm here today to talk about the spirit of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the evidence that says it's working, and my deep desire to work with Congress," the President said, "to make sure it continues to have the desired effect on children all across the country." He also issued a warning to those seeking to fundamentally alter the legislation (up for reauthorization in 2007): "I'll fight any attempt to [roll back the accountability in Washington, D.C.]. I'm just not going to let it happen. We're making too much progress." Indeed, North Glen's students have made great progress. Reading proficiency increased from 57 percent in 2003 to 82 percent in 2005, and mathematics proficiency increased from 46 percent in 2003 to 84 percent in 2005. Further, among African-American students, reading proficiency increased from 45 percent in 2003 to 84 percent in 2005, and mathematics proficiency increased from 35 percent in 2003 to 82 percent in 2005. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060109-2.html>.

(Secretary Spellings' statement is available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/01/01092006.html>, and a new fact sheet, "*No Child Left Behind is Working*," is posted at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>.)

That afternoon, Secretary Spellings participated in an "Ask the White House" chat (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ask/20060109.html>). And, the "Teachers Ask the Secretary" web site (<http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/reform/teachersask/>) has been updated, covering a range of topics.

Meanwhile, the Department is accepting nominations for its 2006 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. The deadline is April 15. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.teacherquality.us/TeacherToTeacher/AmericanStars.asp>. (For the latest news and information, subscribe to Teacher Updates at <http://www.teacherquality.us/>.)



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

As noted in the last issue, the Department's Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations includes \$1.6 billion in hurricane-related aid, part of the Hurricane Education Recovery Act. Last week (January 5), Secretary Spellings announced the immediate availability of some of those funds in four states for restarting schools and meeting the needs of displaced students. Louisiana and Mississippi will receive \$100 million each; Texas will receive \$50 million, and Alabama will receive \$3.75 million (see <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/051230.html>). This week (January 11), the Department offered guidance for all states on applying for emergency impact aid for displaced students and assistance for homeless youth. A single application covers both programs (see <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/proginfo>).



FOREIGN LANGUAGE INITIATIVE

Addressing the recent U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education, President Bush proposed a new \$114 million national initiative on the teaching of critical foreign languages. The initiative, which would be administered jointly by the Departments of Education, State, and Defense and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, has three broad goals:

- increase the number of Americans mastering critical need languages and start at a younger age;
- increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages, with an emphasis on critical needs languages; and

- increase the number of foreign language teachers and the resources for them.

Education's Fiscal Year 2007 budget proposal will have \$57 million for the initiative: \$24 million for the revised Foreign Language Assistant Program (FLAP); \$24 million for new college-based language partnerships with 24 school districts; \$5 million to recruit 1,000 foreign language teachers by 2010 (Language Teacher Corps); \$3 million to expand Teacher-to-Teacher seminars to reach thousands of foreign language teachers; and \$1 million for a new e-learning language clearinghouse. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, only 31 percent of American elementary schools (24 percent of public elementary schools) report teaching foreign languages, and 79 percent focus on giving introductory exposure to a language, rather than achieving overall proficiency. And, only 44 percent of American high school students are enrolled in foreign language classes -- 69 percent in Spanish and 18 percent in French. Less than one percent of American high school students, combined, study Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Russian, or Urdu. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://exchanges.state.gov/universitysummit/>.



JOB SHADOW DAY

On February 2, working professionals across the country will kick-off Job Shadow Day, part of a national, year-long effort to enrich the lives of students by acquainting them with the world of work through on-the-job experiences and a school curriculum that ties academics to the workplace. Coordinated by America's Promise-the Alliance for Youth, Junior Achievement, and the Departments of Education and Labor, over one million students and 100,000 business are expected to participate. Past work place mentors include former President George Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and *Today* show anchors Katie Couric, Matt Lauer, Al Roker, and Ann Curry. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.jobshadow.org/>.



BALDRIGE WINNER

Belated congratulations to Jenks Public Schools, located south of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for becoming just the fourth school system to receive a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The award, founded in 1998, promotes excellence in organizational performance,

recognizes the quality and performance achievements of U.S. organizations, and publicizes successful performance strategies. Judges lauded JPS for its student performance, low dropout rate (1.2% in 2003-04), and high graduation rate (95% in 2005). Also, JPS boasts an inter-generational program with young students and the elderly, a Parents as Teachers program, and a student-teacher exchange program with Chengdu, China. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/baldrige_2005/jenks.htm. (Jenks' application is at <http://www.jenksps.org/Baldrige/pdf/JPS%20MBQNA%20Application.pdf>.)



AFTER A DECADE...

Education Week's tenth-annual "Quality Counts" report examines the progress that states have made on a core set of policy indicators related to standards-based reform. It finds that state efforts to devise standards, assessments, and accountability systems are positively related with gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress from 1996 to 2005. "An increasing number of states have embraced a standards-based education framework," said Virginia Edwards, the report's editor, "with some of the earliest and most ardent adopters of standards-based accountability systems making some of the most progress in student achievement. But, improvements still have not come far or fast enough." As is true every year, "Quality Counts" tracks student achievement across the 50 states and the District of Columbia and charts progress on states' education systems in four areas: standards and accountability, teacher quality, school climate, and school resources. States averaged a C+ across the graded categories, the same as last year. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2006/01/05/>. (To view the content, you must register. *Education Week* is offering free access to "Quality Counts" until February 4.)



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

On January 6, the Secretary issued the following statement regarding the Florida Supreme Court's decision on the state's Opportunity Scholarship program:

"The Florida Supreme Court's decision is an unfortunate setback for educational accountability and freedom. In a matter of months, it could cause parents to remove

their sons and daughters from good schools and, in some cases, return them to underperforming schools. It may also make it more difficult to close the achievement gap, a major priority under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Accountability is only as good as its consequences. Florida's Opportunity Scholarship program holds all schools accountable by turning a monopoly into a marketplace and helping parents become educated consumers. If a public school cannot meet the high standards promised by the Florida Constitution, we must work to fix the school, not punish the families, many of them minority or economically disadvantaged, who seek a better alternative."



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education will hold its third meeting in San Diego, California (February 2-3), as well as a hearing in Seattle, Washington (February 7). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/>.

On February 7, the White House and several Cabinet agencies will host a conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to help faith-based and other community organizations learn more about the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The conference is free, but pre-registration is required. Please register by February 2. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.fbc.gov/>.

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