

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

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...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/>)

Looking for Department publications featuring the latest research and most effective practices in areas like reading, homework, and staying drug free? The new "Tools for Student Success" catalog provides brief descriptions of available material for parents and teachers, as well as information on how to obtain these publications in hard copy or online at no cost. Also, the catalog will be updated as more resources become available. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/tools-for-success/>.

As part of its High Performing Schools and Districts initiative, Education Trust, a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., is offering a database of school-level test scores, disaggregated by race and poverty level, for 29 states. (More states will be added as they disaggregate the data.) The intent is to identify high-performing, high-poverty schools for study, particularly schools that are successfully narrowing the achievement gap. Meanwhile, to get the ball rolling, the group recognized 12 schools and eight districts (including winners and finalists of the Broad Prize for Urban Education) with inaugural "Dispelling the Myth Awards." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/exeres/D259ED6F-BBD2-444F-8BC7-796CA6E1086C,frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published>. (The database can be accessed at <http://64.224.125.0/dtm/>.)

On November 7, 65 elementary and middle school principals from across the nation and from U.S. schools abroad were named "National Distinguished Principals" by the Department and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Addressing the winners, Secretary Paige reaffirmed the critical role principals play in the education of children. "You are the vanguard of the effort to raise student achievement and to help us achieve the essential goals of *No Child Left Behind*. You are on the front lines, fight-

ing the good fight, and working to ensure that our children get the education they need to grow up and become successful young men and women. This is your life's work." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=924>.



NAEP READING AND MATH

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests, administered for the first time to samples of students in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense schools, show significant gains in math scores for the nation's fourth- and eighth-graders -- continuing a decade-long trend -- but decidedly mixed reading scores. Among the findings:

- The percentage of fourth-graders reaching the Basic achievement level in math increased from 50 percent in 1990 (without accommodations) to 77 percent this year (with accommodations) -- its highest level ever. The percentage reaching the Proficient achievement level rose from 13 to 32 percent.
- In eighth-grade, the percentage reaching Basic increased from 52 to 68 percent and the percentage reaching Proficient increased from 15 to 29 percent.
- The proportion of black fourth-graders reaching Proficient has increased from only one percent in 1990 to five percent in 2000 to 10 percent in 2003, and, over the last three years, the proportion of Hispanic fourth-graders reaching this level has grown from seven to 16 percent. However, 43 percent of white fourth-graders and 48 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander fourth-graders are Proficient this year.
- The percentage of fourth-graders reaching the Basic achievement level in reading increased from 62 percent in 1992 (without accommodations) to 63 percent this year (without accommodations) -- in statistical terms, an "insignificant" difference. The percentage reaching the Proficient achievement level rose from 29 to 31 percent.
- In eighth-grade, the percentage reaching Basic increased from 69 to 74 percent and the percentage reaching Proficient increased from 29 to 32 percent.
- Despite some improvement in black student performance, in both fourth- and eighth-grade, white students' scores are about 30 points higher than black students' scores and 27 points higher than Hispanic students' scores. The achievement gap is almost as wide today as it was in 1992.

State-by-state results show variations in average scores, the proportion of students reaching the different achievement levels, and the achievement of groups of students, such as those eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Ten large urban districts and five other jurisdictions also participated, although their results are not yet available. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.



SCHOOL CHOICE

According to the National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education, which spent two years studying the issue, "The discussion about choice today is as much about 'how' and 'how much' as it is about 'whether.'" Therefore, the commission's final report, "School Choice: Doing It the Right Way Makes a Difference," avoids prescribing any specific choice program or trying to resolve the political and policy issues that arise. Instead, it offers guidance and an analytic framework to help policymakers hash out those disputes. The four key issues: benefits to children whose parents choose new schools; benefits to children whose families do not exercise choice; effects on the national commitment to equal opportunity and school desegregation; and advancement of social cohesion and common democratic values. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.brookings.edu/gs/brown/20031117schoolchoicereport.htm>.



ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

Public Agenda's latest survey of almost 2,000 public school superintendents and principals finds standards and accountability are "well embedded" in the attitudes of school leaders. More than 60 percent of superintendents say student achievement is the primary factor in how they evaluate their principals (nearly nine in ten who have moved an effective principal to a low-performing school say their efforts were successful), and 75 percent of principals report they are more focused on curriculum, teaching, mentoring, and professional development than ever before. Concerning the *No Child Left Behind Act*, a majority of superintendents and principals think it is useful to test students annually and think they can meet the requirement that all teachers be "highly qualified." On the other hand, majorities say the law relies too much on testing and say the consequences for not meeting federal goals are "unfair." One interesting deviation? Superintendents from large school districts are consistently more optimistic that NCLB

can work than those from small districts. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.publicagenda.com/specials/rollingup/rollingup.htm>.



GRANTS FORECAST

Be sure to review the FY 2004 Grants Forecast (<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 2004. (This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the Department of Education.)

Also: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed decisions that affect environmental quality. Since 1992, EPA has received between \$2 and \$3 million in grant funding per year and has awarded over 2,500 grants. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>.



HIGH SCHOOL INDICATORS

A new report from the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) presents data on the number and percentage of students dropping out of and completing public school. Figures are available for the 2000-01 school year, "over time," by race/ethnicity, and by district locale code. From 1993-94 to 2000-01, "dropout rates were more likely to decline than increase..." Indeed, the drop rate increased in just four of the 33 reporting states -- and none by more than one percentage point. Still, seven of the 32 reporting states' four-year completion rates went down from 1996-97 and 2000-01. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004310>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"I think our nation's teachers, administrators, and students have a lot to be proud of. These [NAEP] results show that the education revolution that *No Child Left Behind* promised has begun. We are slowly picking up steam and reforms are starting to work.... These gains are not limited to our best students. We are seeing increases across nearly all subgroups. And in math, the achievement gap separating African-American or Hispanic students from their peers is clearly closing. This is an important turning point in American educational history. We have proof that all children can learn -- no matter the color of their skin or their ethnic heritage."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (11/13/03)



UPCOMING EVENTS

The next "Innovations in Education Exchange," on closing the teacher quality gap, is scheduled for December 2 (10:00-11:30 a.m.) at the Sumner School (1201 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.). Seating is limited, so register early at oii.rsvp@ed.gov.

On December 5, in Tampa, Florida, the White House and the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor are hosting a conference to help faith-based and community organizations learn more about President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.fbc.gov/>. (November 26 is the deadline for registration.)

For your convenience, the current issue of *ED Review* is saved, below, as a PDF file. Viewing, printing, and forwarding the issue from the PDF file should reveal all graphics.

Please feel free to contact the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs with any questions:

Deputy Assistant Secretary -- Ken Meyer, (202) 401-0404, <mailto:Ken.Meyer@ed.gov>

Program Analyst -- Adam Honeysett, (202) 401-3003, <mailto:Adam.Honeysett@ed.gov>

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