



## ED REVIEW

September 23, 2005

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

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### HURRICANE KATRINA (<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/>)

On September 16, just one day after he addressed the nation on Hurricane Katrina, President Bush proposed up to \$2.6 billion in supplemental aid for education:

#### *Public Schools --*

- Current estimates show that 372,000 students from Louisiana and Mississippi are not able to attend class in their local schools -- both public and private -- because of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. In recognition of the communities that have welcomed these children, the President is proposing up to \$1.9 billion in funding to school districts, including charter schools, enrolling at least 10 displaced students. This funding would reimburse districts for the unexpected costs of educating students for the 2005-06 school year, including teacher salaries, transportation, materials and equipment, and counseling.
- Funding would be granted to districts based on the number of displaced students enrolled multiplied by up to 90 percent of the state's average per pupil expenditure for education, with a maximum annual payment of \$7,500 per student. (For Louisiana and Mississippi, money will flow to the states.)
- Also, to ensure the funding supports the education of children wherever they are enrolled, it would be distributed quarterly through the 2005-06 school year.

#### *Private Schools --*

- Communities in Louisiana significantly impacted by the hurricane had a higher than average number of students enrolled in private schools (25 percent, versus an 11 percent national average). In recognition of the fact that many families who have been displaced have opted to enroll their children in private schools, the President is proposing up to \$488 million to reimburse families for the costs associated with attending these private schools. Again, compensation would be up to 90 percent of the state's average per pupil expenditure, with a maximum annual payment of \$7,500 per student, through the 2005-06 school year.

### *Colleges and Universities --*

- Many colleges and universities across the country have accepted students previously enrolled in Gulf Coast-area institutions, so they can continue their studies uninterrupted. The President is proposing up to \$227 million in funding to help meet the needs of displaced adults who are in repayment of their student loans; provide aid to colleges and universities receiving displaced students; and provide support to both the institutions in the severely impacted areas and the students once enrolled by these institutions.
- Colleges and universities would receive a \$1,000 payment for each displaced student.
- Also, colleges and universities that have temporarily ceased operations would be able to retain student aid already received for the academic year, and students would be relieved of any obligation to repay the federal aid that they received for the term at these colleges and universities.

Congress must approve the proposal. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/0916-factsheet.html>. (Note: FEMA may provide temporary school facilities, as well as transportation to and from schools.)

Of course, the financial considerations listed above are just part of the Department's response to the hurricane. Secretary Spellings has committed to "maximum flexibility... around various aspects of operations." At the same time, she has refused requests for broad-based *No Child Left Behind* waivers, taking, instead, a case-by-case approach. As evidence of this deliberative process, she grouped her response to Mississippi's request for flexibility (<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/letters/050912.html>) into four separate categories: (1) waivers to be granted; (2) state flexibility is available, federal waivers not needed; (3) no current legal authority; and (4) additional information needed. In many cases, when the request was straightforward and her authority clear, she granted immediate relief. For example, she waived the Title I maintenance-of-effort requirement and granted a 12-month extension of the time the state has to obligate funds. In other cases, she advocated patience. For example, the state requested a waiver of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for several affected districts. "As you know, AYP is the linchpin of the *No Child Left Behind Act's* accountability system," she said, "and I am reluctant to waive AYP now. Since the tests in Mississippi on which AYP determinations are made will not be administered until spring 2006, it is premature for us to consider this request at this time." Put differently, as she said in an interview with NPR, "We don't want to write-off this school year academically for these kids, and shouldn't, at least not yet." (Note: Similar responses to Louisiana and Texas may be found at [http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/letters/.](http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/letters/))

Also, the agency's Hurricane Help for Schools web site continues to make "matches" between schools requesting supplies and companies and organizations looking to help. Nevertheless, the need is still great. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/schools/>.

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

Did you miss the Secretary's Back-to-School Address, "Katrina: A Teachable Moment?" The webcast is archived at <http://www.connectlive.com/events/deptedu/>.

Today, Secretary Spellings will name 295 public and private schools from 45 states as *No Child Left Behind* Blue Ribbon Schools. This program recognizes high performing schools (schools whose students, regardless of background, perform in the top 10 percent on state assessments [public] or national norm-referenced assessments [private]) and dramatically improving schools (schools whose students, at least 40 percent of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, significantly improved on state assessments or national norm-referenced assessments). Chief State School Officers nominate the public schools, while the Council for American Private Education nominates the private schools. Of the schools nominated by each state, at least one-third must meet the dramatically improving criterion, and winners must meet AYP requirements, as defined by their states. The winners will be honored in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on November 10-11. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbbs/awards.html>.

Congratulations to the Norfolk (VA) Public Schools, winner of the 2005 Broad Prize for Urban Education. The system bested four finalists: Aldine (TX), Boston, New York City, and San Francisco. Norfolk will receive \$500,000 for college scholarships. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.broadfoundation.org/flagship/prize.shtml>.

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## CALLING ALL TEACHERS!

The Department is looking for teachers and school administrators who are using scientifically based research strategies and have data to demonstrate effectiveness for its new Teacher-to-Teacher Training Corps. As introduced last issue, the corps will provide on-site technical assistance and regional workshops for teachers and districts over the next 12 months -- an expansion of the Teacher-to-Teacher Workshops offered in cities across the nation for the past two summers. The agency will provide travel, accommodations, and a \$1,000 honorarium for each event, and corps members will have the flexibility to determine the level of their participation during 2005 and 2006. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.teacherquality.us/TeacherToTeacher/CallForTrainers.asp>.

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## KEY PROMOTION

Secretary Spellings recently named Kathleen Leos Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). Previously, she served as Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary and senior policy advisor in OELA. Before joining the Department, she was a trustee on the Dallas Independent School District's Board of Education, where she co-authored Texas' "No Exemption" law (which required all English language learners to be included in Texas' accountability system), and founded Basic English, a not-for-profit agency whose mission is to transition non-English-speaking families into English while staying focused on academic achievement. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09072005.html>.

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## HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

On September 19, on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Secretary Spellings announced the formation of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The new commission is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will

meet the needs of America's diverse population and address the economic and work-force needs of the country's future. "It is time to examine how we can get the most out of our national investment in higher education," the Secretary declared. "We have a responsibility to make sure our higher education system continues to meet our nation's needs for an educated and competitive workforce in the 21st Century." Through public hearings to be held around the country, the commission will attempt to answer questions such as:

- What skills will students need to succeed in the 21st Century?
- How can we make sure America stays the world's leader in academic research?
- How can we make sure opportunities for quality higher education and best jobs are open to all students?

Former North Carolina governor James Hunt will serve on the 19-member commission, along with university presidents, CEOs, policymakers, and researchers. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09192005.html>.

Also: The national student loan default rate has dropped to an all-time low of 4.5 percent, and all of the nation's colleges and universities have default rates low enough (under 40 percent in one year and 25 percent for three consecutive years) to ensure they remain eligible for federal financial aid programs. The national default rate has dropped almost every year since 1990, when it peaked at 22.4 percent. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09142005.html>. (Individual school default rates are at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html>.)



## INTERNATIONAL REPORT

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's "Education at a Glance," which tracks 30 industrialized nations, the U.S.'s "lead" in education is rapidly eroding. For example, while the U.S. ranks first among adults ages 55-64 with a high school diploma, it falls to fifth among adults ages 35-44 and ninth among adults ages 25-34. Likewise, although the U.S. still has the top college graduation rate among adults ages 55-64, it descends to third among adults ages 35-44 and seventh among adults ages 25-34. Other findings: the U.S. spends more per student on all levels of education (\$11,152) than any nation except Switzerland, and American teachers report

the highest number of teaching hours per year in elementary and high school. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2005/>.

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#### QUOTE TO NOTE

"After the pictures we've all seen on television, and the looks on these children's faces, one thing I know for sure is that these young people [affected by the hurricane] need and deserve a quality education. In fact, we're having what educators call 'a teachable moment.' What is a teachable moment? It's an opportunity to learn from, and act on, the moment you're in. Katrina is a potent reminder to all of us that every single one of our children must be given the opportunity to learn and the chance to share in the American dream."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (9/21/05)

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#### UPCOMING EVENTS

The next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, "Keeping Students Safe and Secure," is scheduled for October 18. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>.

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

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