



## ED REVIEW

June 30, 2006

*...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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### SUPPLEMENTAL STUDENT AID

Attention collegians! Academic Competitiveness (AC) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grants are now available. These grants provide further incentive for students to take more challenging courses in high school and to pursue college majors which are in high demand in the global economy. On July 1, the Department's Federal Student Aid (FSA) Office will begin notifying Pell Grant-eligible students of their potential eligibility for AC grants via regular mail or email, and first- and second-year students can start applying for AC grants. Third- and fourth-year Pell Grant-eligible students who meet all requirements will automatically receive National SMART grants during the 2006-07 school year.

AC grants provide financial aid -- up to an additional \$750 for first-year students and up to an additional \$1,300 for second-year students -- to those students who complete rigorous high school coursework, are enrolled full-time, and maintain a 3.0 grade point average in college. National SMART grants provide up to an additional \$4,000 to third- and fourth-year students who major in math, science, or critical foreign languages, are enrolled full-time, and maintain a 3.0 GPA in college. It is estimated that 500,000 students will qualify to receive these grants. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/competitiveness/ac-smart2.html>.

Note: A very rough draft of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education report is circulating. According to Chairman Charles Miller, "It is expected that this version will undergo significant changes and edits over the course of our discussions. Since we represent a very diverse group of stakeholders, the draft report represents a multitude of opinions. This is a work in progress, and the lively debate we anticipate will result in a strong report to the Secretary and the nation." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/>.

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

Where in the world is the Secretary? Early this week, she was in Athens, Greece, for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Ministerial. Then, she moved on to Madrid, Spain, for bi-lateral talks with her Spanish counterpart. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/06/06282006.html>.

Last week, Secretary Spellings stopped by the Teacher-to-Teacher Summer Workshop in St. Paul, Minnesota. "By the end of this summer, almost 10,000 teachers will have attended these workshops since we started the initiative two years ago," she stated.

"And about one million students will have benefited." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/06/06212006a.html>.



### SPOTLIGHT: GRADUATION RATE

On the same day (June 20), the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and *Education Week's* Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center released striking reports on the nation's graduation rate. Although the reports used different formulas for their calculations, both methods produced similar estimates. According to NCES, the graduation rate in 2003-04 was 74.3% (up from 73.9% in 2002-03), while, according to EPE, the graduation rate in 2002-03 was 69.6%. Some other notes:

- Female students (72.7%) graduate from high school at higher rates than male students (65.2%), and Asian (77.0%) and white (76.2%) students fare much better than Hispanic (55.6%), African-American (51.6%), and American Indian (47.4%) students. (EPE)
- Overall, 14 states had graduation rates of at least 80%. (NCES)
- Comparing graduation rates from 2002-03 to 2003-04, 32 states and the District of Columbia showed improvement. Yet, the average increase for these states was just 1.7%, and only five states showed increases of more than 3%. (NCES)

- Students from urban areas (60.0%) are far less likely to graduate on time compared to students from suburban areas (74.4%) and rural areas (73.1%). (EPE)
- 35% of the students who fail to graduate dropout between ninth- and tenth-grade, whereas just 17% of students who make it to twelfth-grade fail to graduate. (EPE)

EPE's study also includes an online mapping tool (that allows users to zoom in on each of the nation's school districts and compare district data to U.S. and state data. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006606> AND  
<http://www.edweek.org/dc06>.

Note: For a slightly different perspective, see NCES' updated report on dropout rates at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006062>.

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## STATE TABLES

The agency recently updated its state-by-state tables of formula-allocated and selected student aid programs. Currently, these tables show Fiscal Year 2001-06 enacted appropriations and the FY 2007 budget request for the following programs:

- Title I (Grants to LEAs, Reading First Grants, Even Start Grants, and Grants for Neglected and Delinquent Children)
- Improving Teacher Quality State Grants
- Math and Science Partnerships
- Educational Technology State Grants
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- State Grants for Innovative Programs
- State Assessments
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants
- Language Acquisition State Grants
- Education for Homeless Children and Youth
- Special Education (Grants to States, Preschool Grants, and Grants for Infants and Families)

Other FY 2006 allocations and all FY 2007 allocations are preliminary estimates based on available data. New data may result in significant changes to these estimates. FOR

MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/>.

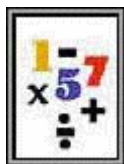
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## PARTNERSHIP FORUM

The non-profit Business/Education Partnership Forum, <http://www.biz4ed.org/>, is a free online resource center for anyone involved in school-business partnerships, as well as for those interested in business' role in supporting K-12 education. It offers an index of current news articles and press announcements; various resources for businesses and schools (such as how-to guides and market reports); a directory of national, state, and local organizations; an index of best practices/case studies; and an online forum where participants can communicate with others in the field.

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## STEM ACTIVITY

As the Department finalizes its report on the Girls in Math and Science Summit, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) remains the hot topic across the nation. Consider these items from the past month:

- "Math and Science Education in a Global Age: What the U.S. Can Learn from China" (Asia Society) outlines ways in which China (and, more broadly, East Asia) has been successful in producing higher student achievement in math and science. It also reveals that China is seeking to adapt certain aspects of the U.S. educational system. (<http://internationaled.org/mathsciencereport.htm>)
- "Bayer Facts of Science Education XII" (Bayer Corp.) polled 100 executives who lead U.S. companies that specialize in STEM fields. The executives are concerned about the rising competition for scientific and technical workers and fear their company's international competitors, having access to this same talent, will gain a crucial edge. They also acknowledge that their industries "suffer" from a lack of women, African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian workers. (<http://www.bayerus.com/MSMS/news/facts.cfm>)
- "Keeping Our Edge: Americans Speak on Education and Competitiveness" (ETS) polled parents, teachers, administrators, and college faculty. A majority feel schools are coming up short in preparing students to compete for highly technical scientific and

engineering jobs and are going to have to challenge students more if America is to maintain its competitive advantage.

([http://www.ets.org/Media/Education\\_Topics/pdf/HW\\_KeepingOurEdge2006.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/HW_KeepingOurEdge2006.pdf))

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## QUOTE TO NOTE

"Math, science, and foreign language skills are the new currency in our global economy. These new grant programs will not only enable more students to attend college but also provide strategic alignment with our national goal to better prepare our students for today's world. Justin Blahnik, a computer science student and SMART grant qualifier I met last week in St. Paul, put it best when he said these grants would enable students 'to borrow less, work less, and study more.'"

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (6/29/06),  
declaring the availability of new grants for college students

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

On July 10, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory Committee will hold a conference call to develop an agenda and identify participants for its next meeting (August 21 and 22). There will not be an opportunity for public comment, although anyone may listen by calling 1-866-215-1938 (chairperson: Deborah Price). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2006-2/062806a.html>.

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

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