

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

December 2, 2005

...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/>)

As Americans were starting the Thanksgiving holiday, a federal judge in Michigan dismissed a legal challenge to the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Plaintiffs argued the law imposed requirements that were not paid for by the federal government. The judge said nothing in the law prohibits "Congress from offering federal funds on the condition that states and school districts comply with statutory requirements, such as devising and administering tests, improving test scores, and training teachers." "This is a victory for children and parents all across the country," Secretary Spellings said in a statement. "Chief Judge [Bernard A.] Friedman's decision validates our partnership with states to close the achievement gap, hold schools accountable, and to ensure all students are reading and doing math at grade-level by 2014."

Jumping back a week, on November 18, Secretary Spellings announced a pilot program whereby up to 10 states can use growth models to evaluate the progress of schools and school districts in making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under *No Child Left Behind*. Whereas the law currently judges schools based on how today's students compare with last year's students, growth models grant schools credit for student improvement over time by tracking achievement year to year. However, as the Secretary emphasized, "A growth model is not a way around accountability standards. It's a way for states that are already raising achievement and following the bright-line principles of the law to strengthen accountability." Indeed, the models proposed by states must:

- ensure that all students are proficient by 2014, and set annual goals to ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students;
- set expectations for annual achievement based upon meeting grade-level proficiency, not based on student backgrounds/school characteristics;
- hold students accountable for achievement in reading/language arts and math;

- ensure that all students in tested grades are included in the assessment and accountability system, hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of each student subgroup, and include all schools and districts;
- include assessments in grades 3-8 and high school in both reading/language arts and math (this assessment system must have been operational for more than one year, receive approval through the law's peer review process for the 2005-06 school year, and produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year);
- track student progress as part of the state data system; and
- include student participation rates and achievement on a separate academic indicator in the state accountability system.

States that wish to apply and meet the requirements above must submit their proposals by February 17, 2006, to use growth models for the current school year. The Department will rigorously monitor and evaluate the states that receive approval -- providing useful information to inform future actions. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/11/11182005.html>.

Not coincidentally, on the same day the Secretary announced the growth model pilot, the Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) awarded \$52.8 million in grants to 14 states for the design and implementation of statewide longitudinal data systems. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/11/11182005a.html>. (Note: For tools that states can use as they develop longitudinal data systems, see the Data Quality Campaign at <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>.)



TUDA 2005

Yesterday, the non-partisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) released results of the 2005 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), which provides comparable data on fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics achievement in 11 of the nation's urban school districts. (This is the third time districts have participated in the TUDA. In 2002, six districts took reading and writing assessments. In 2003, 10 districts took reading and math assessments.) Notably, during the last two years, seven out of the 10 districts posted larger gains than their peers nationwide in fourth-grade reading; eight districts posted larger gains than their peers nationwide in fourth-grade math; and, in eighth-grade, the percentage of students with basic math skills has increased in seven districts more than it has across the nation. And, in many of the sys-

tems, minority students are outperforming their peers elsewhere. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://nationsreportcard.gov/tuda_reading_mathematics_2005/.



TITLE I MONITORING RESULTS

Over the last couple of weeks, the Department released Title I monitoring results for 30 states. (2004-05 is the second year of a four-year evaluation cycle.) Because of monitoring, the agency is able to gather accurate data about state and local needs and use that data to design national leadership activities and technical assistance initiatives. Thus, monitoring serves not only as a vehicle for helping states achieve high quality implementation of educational programs, it also helps the agency be a better partner with states in that effort. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/>.



SCHOOL CRIME AND SAFETY

Although violent crime rates in the nation's schools are virtually unchanged between 2002 and 2003, the rate remains at nearly half that recorded in 1992. "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2005," issued jointly by the Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics and the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, shows that the rate of violent crime (assault, rape, or robbery) declined from 48 per 1,000 students in 1992 to 28 per 1,000 students in 2003 (ages 12-18). Also, between July 1, 1992, and June 30, 2002, the number of homicides of school-age youth at school declined. On the other hand, 29 percent of students reported that drugs were made available to them on school property (down from 32 percent in 1995, but up from 24 percent in 1993); nine percent were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (up from seven percent in 1993); and seven percent reported that they had been bullied (up from five percent in 1999). This is the eighth in a series of annual reports; in every year, students were more likely to be victims of serious crime away from school than at school. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006001>.



LEARNING IN THE ARTS

"Third Space: When Learning Matters," published by the Arts Education Partnership (of which the Department is a member), is a three-year research study of 10 elementary, middle, and high schools, serving economically disadvantaged students in both urban and rural settings across the country, that have used the arts to effectively transform their curriculum and culture and "succeed where others have failed." The metaphor "Third Space" describes the positive and supportive relationships that develop among students, educators, and the community when they are involved in creating, performing, or responding to works of art. "'Third Space' reminds us -- vividly and compellingly -- why the arts are a 'core academic subject' in the *No Child Left Behind Act*," asserted representatives from the Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) at the study's release. "It also provides us with insight concerning how arts education increases student engagement, invigorates teaching, and fosters community involvement. Most importantly, the report shows us how the cultures of schools can be transformed into exciting learning environments..." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.aep-arts.org/ThirdSpacehome.htm>. (Note: Five of the schools studied have participated in projects supported by OII's Arts in Education programs.)



NET V. STICKER PRICES

A new report by the aforementioned National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), "Changes in Patterns of Prices and Financial Aid," examines median prices of attendance, financial aid, and net prices for first-time, full-time undergraduates over the period 1999-2000 to 2001-02. Not surprisingly, during this period, both the median price of attendance (or sticker price) and the median value of financial aid at four-year institutions increased at a faster rate than inflation. However, as a result of financial aid, net prices did not rise as rapidly as sticker prices. Moreover, at public two-year institutions, net prices not only increased at a slower rate than sticker prices, but they also increased at a slower rate than inflation. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006153>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"We are honored and trusted with the responsibility of ensuring our next generation is equipped to participate in the American Dream.... While others may argue about mandates, waivers, and other distractions, we must -- and we will -- recognize and cherish our opportunity to improve the life of every single child, including the growing millions of those who are learning English as a second language. I recently had a teacher tell me, 'all that waivers, rules, and policy stuff -- that's for you in Washington. All I know is that the kids in my classroom had better reach grade-level this year.' I could not have said it better myself. Helping every child reach grade-level is our most urgent priority."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (12/1/05)

<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/12/12012005.html>



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, on improving access to college, is scheduled for January 17, 2006. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>.

Coming Up Taller Awards (<http://www.cominguptaller.org/awards.html>), sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, focus national attention on exemplary programs currently fostering the creative and intellectual development of America's children/youth. Fifteen awards of \$10,000 are presented each year, providing project recognition and contributing to continued work. All applications must be postmarked by January 30, 2006.

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

Special Assistant -- Tom Bolvin, (202) 205-3809, <mailto:Thomas.Bolvin@ed.gov>

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

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