

# Archived Information



## ED REVIEW

July 28, 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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### NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

According to an initial survey of the *No Child Left Behind Act's* Reading First program, there are considerable differences between what Reading First teachers report about their instructional practices and the responses of teachers in non-Reading First schools which are demographically similar. Among the highlights:

- On average, Reading First teachers reported they spent significantly more time on reading than did teachers in non-Reading First Title I schools -- a difference of about 19 minutes per day or about 100 minutes per week.
- Reading First schools were significantly more likely to have a reading coach to support teachers in the implementation of their reading programs than were non-Reading First schools.
- Reading First teachers were significantly more likely than their counterparts in non-Reading First Title I schools to place struggling readers in intervention programs.
- Reading First teachers were more likely to report applying assessment results for varied instructional purposes (planning, grouping, progress monitoring, and identifying struggling readers) than their counterparts in non-Reading First Title I schools.

All 50 states have been awarded Reading First grants. As of July 2006, states have awarded sub-grants to approximately 1,600 school districts, and these districts have provided funds to 5,300 schools. A final report -- due in 2008 -- will include data on changes in student reading achievement. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/readingfirst-interim/>.

On July 26, the Department announced the extension and expansion of two *No Child Left Behind* pilot programs designed to help struggling K-12 students. One will allow four school districts designated "in need of improvement" to be providers of tutoring.

The other will allow several districts within five states to offer tutoring ahead of schedule to students in schools in the first year of improvement. The pilots were initiated last year and proved successful. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/choice/help/sespilot-2006.html>.

Then, yesterday (July 27), the Department announced a partnership initiative designed to provide focused support for improving appropriate and valid accommodations and content assessments for limited English proficient (LEP) students in reading and math. As part of this partnership, the agency will provide targeted technical assistance and support to state partners. Also, the agency will sponsor opportunities for all states to participate in forums on best practices concerning the instruction and assessment of LEP students. *No Child Left Behind* focuses attention on the academic achievement of more than five million LEP students in the U.S. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/methods/english/lepfactsheet.html>.

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## SPOTLIGHT: HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Speaking of best practices, the National Center for Educational Accountability has released a series of state-based studies that delineate the practices of nearly 200 high-performing schools. The studies used three years of performance data to identify top schools in 20 participating states, and, through the use of consistent protocols, researchers found strong similarities in the methods the schools utilize to improve student achievement. The studies include schools ranging from elementary through high school, as well as interviews with district leaders, principals, and teachers from high- and average-performing schools. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO [http://www.just4kids.org/jftk/twenty\\_states.cfm](http://www.just4kids.org/jftk/twenty_states.cfm).

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## ADA ANNIVERSARY

Earlier this week, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services John Hager joined representatives from across the federal government to celebrate the 16th anniversary of the signing of the landmark *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA). The day's events included remarks by National Council of Disability (NCD)

Chairman Lex Frieden on the current state of disability (based on findings from NCD's soon-to-be-released annual report) and three ADA-related panels relating to ADA's goals: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. The ADA has played a key role in raising awareness of disability issues and the broad social benefits of equal opportunity for 50 million Americans with disabilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/ada-event-2006.html>.

Ever timely, the Assistant Secretary also released his office's new long-term goals:

- achieve true excellence in education for all children and youth with disabilities;
- expand meaningful and competitive employment for people with disabilities and emphasize the transition of youths with disabilities to postsecondary education, employment, or both;
- improve outreach, communications, and visibility;
- build partnerships leveraging resources with federal and other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector; and
- expand the access to, utilization of, and reuse of assistive technology.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/goals.html>.



THE BIG READ

Building off the success of "city reads" programs across the U.S., the National Endowment for the Arts' The Big Read seeks to provide citizens with the chance to read and discuss a single book within their communities. Communities are encouraged to apply for one of approximately 100 grants that will be awarded in 2007; 50 will be awarded for programming occurring between January and June (deadline: September 12, 2006), and 50 more will be awarded for programming occurring between September and December. In addition to a direct grant, communities will receive a library of resources, including reader's and teacher's guides and audio guides with commentary from renowned artists, educators, and public figures. Communities will also get publicity materials. For 2007, communities will choose from eight American classics: *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury; *My Antonia* by Willa Cather; *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway; *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston; *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee; *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck; and *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.neabigread.org/>.

Note: On July 25, the Secretary announced \$19 million in Improving Literacy Through School Libraries grants to 78 school districts in 26 states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These funds can be used to increase library holdings, improve schools' technological resources and capabilities, facilitate Internet links and other resource-sharing networks, enhance professional development opportunities, and expand hours of access to library services. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/>.

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## ARTS INSTRUCTION

A new Issue Brief from the Department's National Center for Education Statistics provides a descriptive look at the prevalence of arts instruction received by first- and third-grade public school students. In both grades, most students received at least weekly instruction in art (87%) and music (86%), but dance (23%) and theater (11%) instruction occurred less often during the year. Likewise, a majority of students who received weekly instruction in the arts experienced no change in art and music instruction from first- to third-grade, yet about half experienced a decrease in dance and theater. In each arts area, the incidence of instruction varied by school characteristics. For example, students in suburban schools were more likely to receive weekly instruction than students in either rural or urban schools. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006099>.

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## BRIEF INTERRUPTION

As we move into August, I am breaking *ED Review's* regular two week cycle to escape the heat and tour "the Last Frontier." In the interim, I strongly encourage you to visit <http://www.ed.gov/> and check the headlines. Also, watch for the August 25 issue of *ED Review*, which will cover the major activities of the previous month.

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## QUOTES TO NOTE

"As a former teacher and librarian and a lifelong reader, I understand not only the importance of literacy to a society but also the pure joy and personal enrichment that comes with sitting down with a good book."

-- First Lady Laura Bush (7/20/06),  
Honorary Chair of NEA's The Big Read

"*Harry Potter* has a positive impact on kids' reading and their performance in school: 51% of *Harry Potter* readers ages 5-17-years-old say they did not read books for fun before they started reading the series, while 65% say they have been doing better in school since reading *Harry Potter*."

-- Scholastic's "Kids and Family Reading Report"

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

September 19-21, in Washington, D.C., the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence is sponsoring "Persistently Safe Schools." The conference is intended to be a creative and informed debate about the state of school violence research and its practical application in schools. J. Robert Flores, administrator of the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, is among the keynote speakers. There is a registration fee. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://hamfish.org/cms/view/203>.

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

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