

# Archived Information



## ED REVIEW

April 22, 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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### NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

It has been a busy two weeks on the stump for Secretary Spellings. First, on April 14, she testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee regarding lifelong learning (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/04/04142005.html>), highlighting the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the President's high school initiative ("No government program available at age 20 can make up for a poor education from ages 5-18"), as well as the President's proposals to reauthorize the Higher Education Act and the Perkins vocational program ("President Bush's proposals will help create a seamless educational continuum from K-12 through college and beyond -- to serve young students and adults seeking to adapt to the ever-changing global economy"). Second, on April 18, she discussed with school principals the Department's new "common-sense approach" to working with states that focuses on results for students (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/04/04182005.html>). "We all have learned much over the last three years, and now we need to use this new information to improve the way we do our work," the Secretary explained. "We know the heavy lifting of closing the achievement gap and making this law a reality takes place in your schools, and we want to know what is working and what needs to work better." Third, on April 19, she addressed the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on maintaining a robust economy. (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/04/04192005.html>). "As local leaders, you know that the best way to keep your economies growing and your communities strong is to close the achievement gap," the Secretary stated. "States with the best school systems will end up with the best jobs."

Meanwhile, the Department is accepting nominations for its annual American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize teachers who are improving student achievement -- using innovative strategies -- and making a difference in the lives of their students. Anyone can nominate an American Star; after the Department receives that nomination,

a verification form is sent to the principal at the teacher's school. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/teacherinitiative/>.

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## TEACHER AWARDS

Speaking of star teachers, congratulations to Jason Kamras, who was just named National Teacher of the Year, the first time in the contest's 53-year history that a District of Columbia educator has won the top prize. Kamras joined Southeast's John Phillip Sousa Middle School in 1996 and has initiated several innovative programs that have helped boost math scores. Consequently, his students have met the district's adequate yearly progress targets every year since the *No Child Left Behind Act* was implemented. He will now take a year off, with pay, to serve full-time as a national and international spokesperson for education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO [http://www.ccsso.org/projects/National\\_Teacher\\_of\\_the\\_Year/](http://www.ccsso.org/projects/National_Teacher_of_the_Year/). (Note: Kamras was recognized at the White House on Wednesday. The President's remarks are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/04/20050420-1.html>.)

Also, the White House recently recognized 95 teachers with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. For example, Florida's Rachel Hallett organized an archeological dig for a 60-foot dinosaur skeleton behind her middle school. She built the dig area and the dinosaur to give her sixth-graders a chance to get out of the classroom and learn how scientists gather data in the field. Every awardee receives a \$10,000 gift from the National Science Foundation. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.paemst.org/>.

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## DEPUTY SECRETARY

President Bush has nominated Raymond Simon, current Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, to be the new Deputy Secretary of Education. Under Secretary Spellings' agency reorganization plan, the Deputy will oversee all K-12 education policy, including the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the President's high school initiative, and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. (The Undersecretary, yet to be nominated, will oversee all higher and adult education policy.) Clearly, Simon's

one-and-a-half-year term in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and past experience as teacher, administrator, and director of the Arkansas Department of Education make him a natural choice for this critical post. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/04/04152005a.html>.

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## GRANT POLICIES

The U.S. Department of Education is transitioning to [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), a web site that allows individuals and organizations to find and apply for grants from all grant-making agencies electronically. If you are planning to apply for federal grants, please note the following:

- All potential applicants for grants should register early at [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Do not wait until the grant opportunity you are interested in is posted.
- The Department has changed its policy and procedural requirements for permitting applicants, under certain circumstances, to submit paper applications for competitions that otherwise require the electronic submission of applications through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or e-Application.
- The Department's Grants Forecast (<http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html>) indicates which competitions might decide to use [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) this year; however, the application notice for each competition is always the final authority.
- In addition to the preceding information, potential applicants for grants should read the *Federal Register* notice published by the Department's Chief Financial Officer on February 10, 2005 (see <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2005-1/021005d.html>).
- For information on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), call the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Help Desk at 1-800-518-GRANTS.

And how about a grant opportunity? The Teaching American History Grant Program -- which requires e-Application -- supports projects to raise student achievement by improving teachers' appreciation and understanding of traditional American history. Grant awards assist school districts, in partnership with entities that have extensive content expertise (such as colleges and universities, libraries, and museums), to design, implement, and demonstrate "effective, research-based professional development programs." Applications must be received by June 14. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teachinghistory/>.

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## REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Last week, after a year of conducting educational needs assessments of their regions, the 10 Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) submitted their final reports to the Secretary. RAC members identified major challenges to the successful implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and considered types of technical assistance that might mitigate the challenges. Nationwide, four themes emerged: better integration of and more effective use of existing resources; more rigorous use of scientifically based research and data in decision-making; broader engagement with parents and other stakeholders; and strengthening the capacity of state educational agencies. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.rac-ed.org/Default.aspx?tabid=294&DMXModule=880&EntryId=948>.

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## IG REPORT

The Department's Inspector General, John Higgins, has completed his investigation of the agency's FY 2003 contract with Ketchum Communications. While noting "Department officials made some poor management decisions, including the failure to provide critical information to decision-makers, and exercised poor judgment and oversight," Higgins found "no violations of contract law" and "no evidence of any ethical violations in the formation of the Ketchum contract and Graham Williams Group work requests." Secretary Spellings accepted the IG's findings and concurred with recommendations for providing better oversight of contracts. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/a19f0007.html>.

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## OFFICIAL STATEMENT

On April 20, Department Press Secretary Susan Aspey issued the following statement regarding the National Education Association's lawsuit against the Department:

"Today's announcement is regrettable. *No Child Left Behind* is, at its core, about fairness and educational opportunity for all students. The preliminary results are

in, and in just three short years, states across the nation are showing strong gains in student achievement. The achievement gap -- decades in the making -- is finally starting to narrow. President Bush and Congress have provided historic funding increases for education.... Four separate studies assert the law is appropriately funded and not a mandate.... [And] we're not alone in our efforts. Respected, national education organizations, including the Council of the Great City Schools and the Council of Chief State School Officers, are working with us to continue this unprecedented national progress. We intend to continue moving forward in partnership with national and state education leaders...."

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

National Charter Schools Week is May 1-7. The Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement has events scheduled for the week at high performing charter schools across the country, including Boston, Chicago, Dearborn (MI), Denver, Greenville (SC), Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco, and Woodland Hills (CA). Also, a kick-off celebration is planned at Thurgood Marshall Academy in Washington, D.C., on May 2. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/events/csweek2005.html>.

Time is running out to register for one of the Department's 2005 summer workshops for teachers and principals. The Phoenix and Tampa workshops are full! Still available: Cincinnati (6/20-22), Minneapolis (7/11-13), Bethesda, MD (7/25-27), and San Jose, CA (8/1-3). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.teacherquality.us/TeacherToTeacher/Workshops.asp>.

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

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