

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

December 17, 2004 (Happy Holidays!)

...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/>)

In a farewell address to the Heritage Foundation -- "I have come to the point in time here where I feel as if I am being pinned with that inevitable 'L' word: legacy" -- Secretary Paige reflected upon his service during "a nascent educational revolution" and called for the principles of the *No Child Left Behind Act* to "be applied to our ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-graders as soon as possible." "I've seen these changes up close," he detailed. "I've spent a lot of time on the road in this job, visiting some 160 schools in 46 states.... What has struck me about these diverse schools is the students' universal hunger to learn, the teachers' passion to teach, and the administrators' desire to make it all work." The Secretary also noted that choice, whether in the form of school transfers, supplemental services, or charter schools, "is now an indelible part of the education lexicon. That couldn't have been said four years ago." For his successor, Secretary-designate Margaret Spellings, he outlined three challenges (not excluding high school reform): getting "serious" about low-performing charter schools and fiscally unsound voucher programs; moving states' information systems into the 21st Century; and advancing teacher merit hiring and promotion. As for the future, "I am very much alive and intend to carry on my life's work," he stated. "I will be working toward that mission from a different vantage point, but it is still a cause near and dear to my heart."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/12/12142004.html>.

Semi-annually, the Secretary of Education publishes an agenda of federal regulations. The explicit purpose of the agenda is to encourage more effective public participation in the regulatory process by providing the public with early information about pending regulatory activities. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/proprule/2004-4/121304a.html>.



APPROPRIATIONS BILL

On December 8, President Bush signed into law P.L. 108-477, an appropriations bill providing Fiscal Year 2005 funding for 13 federal agencies, including the Department of Education. Under the agreement, funding for the Department's discretionary programs increases from \$55.66 billion to \$56.58 billion, a \$920 million boost. Among the highlights:

- \$12.74 billion for Title I grants to local education agencies;
- \$1 billion for Reading First, \$104 million for Early Reading First, and \$25 million for the new Striving Readers initiative for struggling middle and high school readers;
- \$10.6 billion for special education grants, an increase of \$500 million (5.2 percent); and
- \$12.36 billion in Pell Grants for five million low- and middle-income undergraduates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/>. (State-by-state data is available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/>.)

Also: Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs), which can be used for renovating and repairing buildings, have been extended through 2005. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/041202.html>.



GRANTMAKING AT ED

To aid parties interested in discretionary monies, the Department released an updated "Grantmaking at ED: Answers to Your Questions About the Discretionary Grant Process" (<http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/grantmaking/>), which provides a non-technical summary of the types of grants offered by the agency and how grants are competed and awarded. Indeed, the booklet goes through application, review, award, administration, grant closeout, and audit.

Note: The Association of Education Service Agencies and Catapult Learning have been awarded a five-year, \$5 million grant to establish a replicable, streamlined contracting and purchasing system so that both small and rural school districts have greater access

to high-quality supplemental educational services. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.catapultlearning.com/pdfs/USDOE_Grant.pdf.



PISA AND TIMSS

The results of two major international studies released this year present a rather mixed picture. On the one hand, American fourth- and eighth-graders significantly outperformed many of their international peers on the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), while eighth-graders -- including boys, girls, and minority students -- improved their scores compared to past TIMSS studies (1995 and 1999). On the other hand, scores for fourth-graders remained static in both areas, and, on the 2003 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), U.S. ninth- and tenth-graders (15-year-olds) performed below the international average in math literacy and problem-solving. Consider:

PISA 2003

- Of the 29 industrial nations participating in the study, the U.S. was outperformed by 23 in math literacy and 23 in math problem-solving.
- American white students performed above the PISA average (literacy: 500, problem-solving: 500) in both topics, but black (417, 413) and Hispanic (443, 446) students performed below the average.
- U.S. scores in two math topics that were also measured in 2000 (space and shape *and* change and relationships) did not improve. Two-thirds of the participating nations outperformed the U.S. in these topics in 2000 and 2003.

TIMSS 2003

- In fourth-grade math, the U.S. ranked 12th out of 25 nations participating in that portion of the study. In eighth-grade math, the U.S. ranked 15th out of 45 nations. (Note: TIMSS covers industrial and developing countries.)
- In science, the U.S. fourth-graders ranked 6th and eighth-graders ranked 9th.
- The performance of American fourth-graders in both areas was lower in 2003 than in 1995 relative to the 14 nations that participated in the studies, while the performance of American eighth-graders in both areas was higher in 2003 than in 1995 relative to 21 nations.
- American black fourth- and eighth-graders and Hispanic eighth-graders improved significantly in math and science between 1995 and 2003.

This is the third edition of the studies; PISA also covers reading and science literacy (American students scored at the average in reading but below the average in science) but focused primarily on math in 2003. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/>.

Also: Want to really get into the data? The National Center for Education Statistics just issued background information for comparing PISA, TIMSS, and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://nces.ed.gov/timss/pdf/naep_timss_pisa_comp.pdf.



FOR KIDS

Secretary Paige recently joined David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and Desiree Sayle, director of USA Freedom Corps, to formally launch the Corps' brand new web site for kids: <http://www.usafreedomcorpskids.gov/>. Packed with ideas and resources -- with separate sections for students, parents, and teachers -- the site seeks to show America's kids how to start making a difference by volunteering. "The message remains the same," the Secretary remarked, "but we are posting it where we know our children will see it -- on the Internet."



BARNEY CAM III

On Wednesday, First Lady Laura Bush unveiled "Barney Cam: Where in the White House is Miss Beazley," the much-anticipated third installment of "Barney Cam," which features the President's Scottish Terrier touring the White House to provide viewers with a dog's eye view of the holiday decorations. This year, having been overlooked for a Cabinet post (including Education!), Barney is "tasked" by President Bush to look after his new sister: Miss Beazley. The video features cameos by Secretary-designate Margaret Spellings, other senior White House officials, and Willie the cat. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/holiday/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"My friends, we are winning the battle of ideas. When the nation was declared 'at risk' two decades ago, concepts like true parental choice, charter schools, and accountability for results were barely conceived and rarely advocated. But thanks to the work of scholars and activists, educators and parents, dreamers and doers -- people like you -- these ideas are embedded in the law of the land, changing America even as our ideas change the world."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (12/14/04)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Bentley College is looking for 25 outstanding high school juniors who are "making things happen" in their schools and communities and who may be the business leaders of tomorrow. Nominations of Tomorrow25 candidates may be submitted by teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, business and community leaders, parents, and even other students. Finalists will be invited to Bentley (all expenses paid) to attend a forum sponsored by TIME magazine. Nominations must be received by February 1, 2005. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.bentley.edu/tomorrow25/>.

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

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