

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

October 20, 2006

Review

...a bi-weekly update on U.S. Department of Education activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community and other stakeholders



SCHOOL SAFETY SUMMIT

In response to the recent spate of school shootings in Colorado, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, President Bush asked Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings to convene a meeting of school safety experts and other stakeholders to share valuable lessons from prior incidents and emphasize what can be done to shield schools from future violence. (By and large, schools remain "safe places," <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/>, with children 70 times more likely to be victims outside school walls than within them.) The diverse group met on October 10, with panels on (1) the scope of the school violence problem; (2) steps schools and communities can take to help avert new tragedies; and (3) short- and long-term needs of schools and communities following traumatic events. At the close of the meeting, Gonzales and Spellings summarized the panel discussions with the President. "All of us in this country want our classrooms to be gentle places of learning, where students not only learn the basic skills necessary to become productive citizens but learn to relate to one another," President Bush said. "The violence we've seen is upsetting to a lot of people. But rather than be upset, it's best for all of us...to be proactive." Specifically, the White House unveiled a new web site (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education/schoolsafety/>) as a one-stop source of information, including a fact sheet, transcripts and videos of the panel discussions, and a growing list of federal, state, and local resources (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061010-1.html>). That same day, Secretary Spellings also hosted a special "Ask the White House" chat (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ask/20061010.html>) on the conference and other topics.

Note: To assist educators in their planning for pandemic influenza, the Department has published a new planning guide. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/pandemic/planning-guide/>.



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

On October 18, President Bush and Secretary Spellings were in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area, emphasizing how *No Child Left Behind* has helped improve education. They met with community leaders, toured Falkener Elementary School (which fell short of its performance goals in 2003 but has made Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP] every year since), and visited young children with chronic medical conditions or serious illnesses at Victory Junction Gang Camp (founded by NASCAR's Kyle Petty and his wife in honor of their son). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061018.html>.

Last week, Secretary Spellings announced that 36 more schools in six states (Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, New York, and Pennsylvania) have been named 2006 *No Child Left Behind* Blue Ribbon Schools. These schools were not among the initial 250 named last month because the Department was waiting for information on AYP. All recipients must meet AYP requirements, as defined by their states. The schools will be recognized November 10 and 11 in Washington, D.C. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html>.

Also last week, the Secretary and National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Executive Director Vincent Ferrandino announced the 2006 National Distinguished Principals. "Effective principals mean better schools, motivated teachers, informed parents, and thriving students," the Secretary stated. "It's important that we commend and reward these outstanding leaders, recognizing their dedication and commitment is making a real difference in the lives of our children." The principals are selected by NAESP state affiliates and by committees representing private and overseas schools. The guidelines include: nomination by peers; demonstrated commitment to excellence; evidence of support by students, colleagues, parents, and the community; high standards and expectations for all students and staff; and service as a leader for at least five years. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/10/10102006a.html>.



FOREIGN LANGUAGE GRANTS

As part of the President's National Security Language Initiative (<http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/academic/foreign-language/teaching-language.html>), the Department has announced \$12.9 million in grants to school districts in 22 states to help dramatically increase the number of Americans learning foreign languages deemed crucial to national security and international commerce. When combined with the continuation of funding for existing Foreign Language Assistance Program grants, the agency has awarded more than \$22 million. In the post-9/11 world, the ability to engage foreign governments and people, especially in critical regions, is essential. Yet, less than one percent of American high school students, combined, study Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Russian, or Urdu. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/10/10132006a.html>.

Note: The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, focusing on the National Security Language Initiative, is scheduled for November 21. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>.



HIGHER EDUCATION ACTION PLAN

Meanwhile, in various settings across the nation, the Secretary continues to promote her comprehensive action plan for higher education. First, October 13, she addressed the Association of Community College Trustees in Orlando, Florida (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/10/10132006.html>), noting the days of politicians talking about America's higher education system merely in terms of four-year colleges and universities "are over. Today, the largest percentage of students receiving federal Pell Grant aid are community college students." (She also revealed that, next month, she will be leading a delegation of university presidents to Asia to consider common challenges.) Then, on October 17, she joined students, education officials, and business leaders at the University of New Mexico for an intense roundtable discussion on higher education and global competitiveness (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/10/10172006a.html>), remarking "To help keep America competitive, we must provide students and families more information and more affordable access to higher education, while holding our institutions of higher education accountable for student learning."

Note: Presentations by the Department's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) and Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) -- including sessions on AC and SMART grants, the Direct Loan and Family Loan programs, and student loan forgiveness -- are posted at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/presentations.html>.



PRESERVING AMERICA'S HERITAGE

More than 300 individuals representing business, education, and government interests gathered together in New Orleans October 18-20 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Through this national effort and President Bush's Preserve America Initiative (<http://www.preserveamerica.gov/>), communities of students and teachers have been able to learn American history by exploring actual physical evidence of our past. Whether touring historic places, visiting national parks, or observing historical objects, children are experiencing our history and studying the diversity that makes us so unique. Of course, as time passes, more and more places of historical importance are at risk. Therefore, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, working in partnership with the History Channel and the Newspaper in Education Institute, has created a 20-page newspaper supplement and companion document to develop a broader understanding of historic preservation and the continuing role of the NHPA in contemporary society. These materials incorporate numerous examples and stories of preservation activities. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.achp.gov/NIE/>.



NETDAY SPEAK UP

Starting November 1, students, teachers, and parents from across the country will have an opportunity to share their ideas and viewpoints on how technology should be utilized in the education process through NetDay's fourth annual Speak Up survey. This year's survey will follow up on many of the issues discussed in previous years, as well as address new hot topics in education. The system will remain open for about one month. The results are shared with participating schools and school districts (registration is already open!) so that they can use the data for planning and community conversation. In addition, the results are used by local, state, and national organizations and govern-

ment agencies to inform new programs and polices. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.netday.org/SPEAKUP/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"They say to me, 'What do you want from the schools?' I don't know if you recognize this, but [the U.S.] just had six Nobel Prize winners recently announced, all of whom went to public schools in America. And I hope, as I travel through the halls of schools like this one, I'm meeting Nobel Prize winners of the future. It's a noble aspiration for all of us to aim for."

-- President George W. Bush (10/18/06),
at Falkener Elementary School in Greensboro



UPCOMING EVENTS

National Veterans Awareness Week (November 5-11) encourages schools to invite veterans into their classrooms in the days leading up to and following Veterans Day (November 11). Veterans are asked to share their experiences and teach students lessons about the history and significance of Veterans Day, helping students reflect on the importance of sacrifice for the ideals of freedom and democracy. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/>. (A school kit is available at <http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/schoolkit.asp>.)

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

Director, Intergovernmental Affairs -- Rogers Johnson, (202) 401-0026, <mailto:Rogers.Johnson@ed.gov>

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

To be added or removed from distribution, or submit comments (we welcome your feedback!),

please contact Adam Honeysett. Or, visit <http://www.ed.gov/news/newsletters/edreview/>.

This newsletter contains hypertext links to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. These links are provided for the user's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Furthermore, the inclusion of links is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered, on these sites, or the organizations sponsoring the sites.