

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

February 27, 2004

...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/>)

This morning, in a *Washington Post* op-ed, Secretary Paige urged the nation to focus on children. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/opeds/edit/2004/02272004.html>.

On February 19, Secretary Paige announced two new policies that will give states and school districts greater flexibility in helping students with limited English proficiency under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. "Although we classify these students as 'limited' for the purpose of monitoring their progress," the Secretary said, "I really don't like that phrase. They should in no way be thought of as 'limited.' Rather, at a time when most Americans speak only one language, these 'English Language Learners' (ELL) have the opportunity to achieve early fluency in both English and their native tongue." First, during an ELL student's initial year in U.S. public schools, schools may choose to substitute an assessment of English language proficiency for the assessment of reading competency. This test does not count toward Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals for the school, but it does count toward the 95 percent participation rate for the subgroup. In other words, the policy allows schools one more year to prepare ELL students to learn in English. (All students must still be tested in mathematics.) Second, schools may continue to count ELL students toward AYP for two additional years after they have become English proficient. This policy rewards schools that are constantly absorbing and educating new ELL students. Previously, once students were no longer considered learning English, they were no longer eligible for their accountability subgroup. Both of the policies must go through a formal process to become official regulations. However, the Secretary is using his "transitional authority" to implement the policies immediately. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/02/02192004.html>.

In a recent letter to Democratic members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Secretary Paige detailed the notable progress made since *No Child Left Behind* was enacted. In particular, the Secretary emphasized "technical assistance and outreach efforts have expanded. At all levels -- from senior leadership to staff-level experts -- the Department is communicating on a daily basis with states, districts, and schools." For example:

- Since the bill's passage, 29 guidance documents on NCLB programs have been issued. The agency has also sent almost 20 letters on NCLB implementation issues to governors, Chief State School Officers, and other state officials.
- The Department has recruited and trained 50 teachers, principals, district officials, higher education representatives, and national policy experts to serve as members of the Teacher Assistance Corps (TAC). By the close of February, TAC will have visited 49 states.
- The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education has held conference calls and meetings with state Title I directors, initiated a new program of conference calls with local Title I directors, hosted eight national conferences, and sent 500 letters to various state and local offices.

Of course, *ED Review* is among a series of newsletters (*The Achiever*, *Extra Credit*, *Education Innovator*, etc.) aimed at keeping you informed. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/02/02242004.html>.



STATE FACT SHEETS

What does the President's Fiscal Year 2005 budget request for education mean for your state? The one-pagers at <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statefactsheets/> provide official estimates as of February 14, including Title I, special education, Pell Grants, Reading First, choice/options, teacher quality, annual assessments, educational research, and English language acquisition.

Meanwhile, it is important to remember that, historically, budgetary increases have not produced proportional gains on the nation's report card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), either in overall student achievement or in the significant narrowing of the achievement gap between students of different races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. NAEP state profiles -- with 2003 results -- are available at

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>. (Achievement gap data can be found within the PDF files at the end of each profile, under the "Related Material" header.)



COMPUTER-BASED PRODUCTS

In an effort to determine the effectiveness of educational technology for core learning, the Department is financing a study of 16 computer-based reading and math products. The products, from 12 different companies, were developed to enhance the learning of reading in first- and fourth-grade and math in sixth- (pre-algebra) and ninth-grade (algebra). All had some prior evidence of effectiveness in raising student achievement. Teachers at 120 schools in 40 districts will be trained to utilize the interventions over the summer. At the end of the 2004-05 academic year, student achievement growth will be assessed. Mathematica Policy Research and SRI International will conduct the study using a random-assignment study design. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/02/02132004.html>.



FREE RESOURCES

The Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) web site makes it easy to find learning resources from some 50 federal organizations. Whether you are looking for teaching ideas and learning activities or primary documents like audio recordings, maps, paintings, and photos, FREE offers one-stop access to items created by the Library of Congress, NASA, and the Smithsonian Institution, to name a few. And, every week day, a new resource is featured. Indeed, in recognition of President's Day (on February 16), FREE promoted: a look at the job of the president and the ways presidents have communicated with the public; artifacts associated with the presidents, such as the sword of George Washington, the lap desk on which Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, and the top hat worn by Abraham Lincoln the night he was assassinated; writings and records associated with George Washington -- including his letters, diaries, financial accounts, military records, and other writings; important documents concerning the Abraham Lincoln presidency -- including the Emancipation Proclamation, his second inaugural address, and more than 70,000 images and transcriptions of letters, speeches, and other writings; and more than 150 portraits depicting every American president and

most first ladies. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/free/>.

Also: The Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM) web site, <http://thegateway.org/>, is a database of more than 24,000 high quality lesson plans, curriculum units, and other resources across more than 400 web sites.



POSTSECONDARY HISTORIES

"Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972-2000," from the Institute of Education Sciences, is a descriptive account of the major features of the postsecondary academic experience and success of traditional-age students over the last three decades. To provide this account, the report draws on three grade-cohort longitudinal studies (from 1972, 1980, and 1988), and, within the studies, high school and college transcript records. Tables cover topics of geographic mobility, access and degree of participation, attainment (degrees, credits, time-to-degree, etc.), attendance patterns, majors, curriculum clusters, grades, and remediation. The findings raise some questions about reports that suggest dropout rates, grade inflation, and remedial coursework are on the rise. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/prinindicat/>.



CHARACTER EDUCATION

The Department's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools has unveiled a web site for the Character Education and Civic Engagement Technical Assistance Center (CETAC). CETAC's objective is to furnish technical assistance for implementing effective character education and civic engagement to the agency's Partnerships in Character Education Program grantees, as well as serve as a resource for educators, parents, and the community at large. CETAC also contains information on news, events, and publications that may be of interest to the field. In the last two years, the Department has awarded 47 grants to state and local school districts to implement character education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.cetac.org/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"The *No Child Left Behind Act* transformed the federal government's role in education, moving it, in a musical sense, from second chair status in the orchestra to the conductor's podium. The government is now almost literally in the position of setting the stage for all the other players. The conductor can call in the string section (highly qualified teachers), cue the wind section (supplementary service providers), maintain the drama through the percussionists (adequate yearly progress), and conclude with a stunning finish that brings everyone to their feet (accountability)."

-- Christopher T. Cross



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, regarding math and science, is scheduled for March 16. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=174>.

The fourth annual Education Industry Day (March 30-31, Washington, D.C.), featuring the Department's own Nina Rees, will focus on supplemental service implementation, public-private partnerships, and higher education reauthorization issues. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.educationindustry.org/>.

April 4-7, ASPIRA will be hosting its sixth-annual Latino Education Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. This year's theme is "The Latino School Dropout Dilemma." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.latinoedconference.org/>.

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

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