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ED REVIEW

July 18, 2003

...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.nochildleftbehind.gov/>)

On July 8, Secretary Paige gave Congress an 18-month update on the implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, highlighting the progress made to date and identifying issues and topics that the Department will focus on in the coming months. In 18 months, every state has developed an accountability plan to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap (all 52 plans are available at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/csas/index.html>), a plan to test every child in reading and math in third- through eighth-grade and once in high school, and a plan by which public school choice and supplemental services will be offered to parents of children attending schools in need of improvement. Also, 35 states have now received \$680 million in Reading First grants. Regarding "issues on the horizon," the Secretary emphasized helping states place a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, expanding the opportunities for students to receive tutoring and other supplemental services, and identifying schools in need of improvement and ensuring they are getting the assistance they need to get back on track. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/07-2003/07082003a.html>.

A week later, Secretary Paige sent to Congress "Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge," his second annual report on states' teacher quality initiatives, and announced a series of initiatives designed to assist states and educators in meeting the *No Child Left Behind Act's* highly qualified teacher requirements. The report shows states are making progress: as of October 2002, 35 states had linked certification requirements to student content standards, and all but nine states had approved an alternative route to certification. On the other hand, only 54 percent of nation's secondary teachers were highly qualified during the 1999-2000 school year, and seven states had more than 10 percent of their teachers on waivers. In response, the Department will field a new Teacher Assistance Corps -- a team of experts, practitioners, and researchers who will

provide voluntary support to states as they carry out the provisions of the law. Moreover, the agency is developing a tool kit that will provide educators with accurate, easy-to-understand information about *No Child Left Behind*, including research that supports the rationale for the teacher quality provisions. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/07-2003/07152003.html>.



NAEP WRITING

Like the reading test before it, results from the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment offer optimism for young students but concern for high school seniors. Among the findings:

- The average score of fourth-graders increased from 150 in 1998 (when the test was first administered) to 154 in 2002. Of NAEP's three achievement levels -- Basic, Proficient, and Advanced -- the percentage of fourth-graders reaching Basic rose from 84 percent to 86 percent, while the percentage reaching Proficient rose from 23 percent to 28 percent.
- The average score of eighth-graders increased from 150 in 1998 to 153 in 2002. The percentage reaching Basic was unchanged (85 percent), while the percentage reaching Proficient rose from 27 percent to 31 percent.
- The average score of twelfth-graders decreased from 150 in 1998 to 148 in 2002. The percentage of seniors reaching Basic fell from 78 percent to 74 percent, while the percentage reaching Proficient was unchanged (24 percent).
- From 1998 to 2002, the average scores of white, black, and Hispanic students increased in both fourth- and eighth-grades, while the averages for all three groups were unchanged in twelfth-grade. The racial/ethnic gaps in average scores remained about the same, but for a significant decrease in the white-black gap in fourth-grade.

State-by-state results show variations in average scores, the proportion of students reaching the different achievement levels, and the achievement of particular groups of students, like those eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/results2002/>.



SUMMER VOLUNTEERISM

In order to help link more Americans to meaningful volunteer service opportunities during the summer months, the USA Freedom Corps has launched an online resource, "How I Spent My Summer," which offers information on the extra summer needs of youth-serving, parks and recreation, hunger relief, and other community organizations; ideas for how youth, families, seniors, and business, civic, and religious groups can volunteer; tips for starting a project based on these or other ideas; and millions of volunteer opportunities with more than 75,000 organizations across the country and more than 100 countries around the world. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/for_volunteers/summer/.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department recently posted several grant competitions in the *Federal Register*. The Alaska Native Education Program and Native Hawaiian Education Program support innovative projects that address the needs of their particular subsets of students and teachers. Eligible applicants include Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian organizations; community-based and cultural organizations with experience in developing or operating Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian programs; and consortia of eligible entities. (A state or school district may apply for an award as a part of a consortium.) The deadline for applications is August 6. The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools' Demonstration Grants for Student Drug Testing develop or enhance, implement, and evaluate school-based drug testing programs for students. Eligible applicants include school districts and public and private organizations, and, in order to determine whether the projects produce meaningful effects, there is a competitive preference priority to those that propose experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation of projects. The deadline for applications is August 20. <http://www.ed.gov/GrantApps/> lists all the competitions that are currently underway and provides links to electronic application packages, forms, and other key information.



HISPANIC PARTNERSHIP

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (<http://www.yesican.gov/>) and some of the nation's leading Hispanic organizations and corporate leaders are coming together to improve education for the country's largest minority group. The new Partners in Hispanic Education consists of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC); USHCC Foundation; MANA, A National Latina Organization; Girl Scouts of the USA; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU); National Council for Community and Education Partnerships; State Farm Insurance Companies; IQ Solutions; League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR); United States Army; and National Association of Hispanic Publications. The partners have committed to host education programs in six pilot cities over the next several months. Each will involve town hall meetings; educational workshops for students, parents, educators, and business and community leaders; and seminars on student financial aid and scholarships. The first event is scheduled for October 18 in San Diego, California. Other pilot cities include the Bronx, Detroit, El Paso/Las Cruces (NM), Miami, and Tucson. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.yesican.gov/releases/partner_july03.html.



STATE REFORMS

The Department's National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) "Overview and Inventory of State Education Reforms: 1990 to 2000" describes the role of states in public elementary and secondary education through the 1990s. (In doing so, it extends an earlier NCES report, "Overview and Inventory of State Requirements for Course-work and Attendance," which examined state-level reform efforts during the 1980s.) To facilitate discussion, the report groups reform efforts into four categories: standards, assessments, and accountability; school finance; teacher training and resources; and school choice options. These four categories reflect the primary ways in which states have sought to change the provision of education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003020>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"Our public education system deprives too many young Americans of the tools they need to earn freedom for themselves, the freedom that flows only from an educated mind. So to those who fear accountability for the success of every young mind entrusted in our public education system, let us say we as a nation can no longer tolerate guardians of mediocrity who block the school door for those students who most need the education. Can any of us look earnestly at this enduring achievement gap and not feel a sense of urgency in saying that defenders of the status quo must step aside? We must do things differently."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (7/12/03)



UPCOMING EVENTS

On July 22, NCES will hold a briefing on the first district-level National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results at 1990 K Street, N.W., Eighth Floor (12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.). Five large urban districts (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Atlanta) participated in the NAEP 2002 Trial Urban District Assessment in reading and writing. The results will set a benchmark for the performance of fourth- and eighth-graders in these districts. To RSVP, please contact Sarah Howard at (202) 842-3600 ext. 223 or showard@hagerssharp.com by **today**. (The report, itself, will be posted by 10:00 a.m. at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.)

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

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