

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

May 20, 2005

...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/>)

On May 10, Secretary Spellings presented further details of a new *No Child Left Behind* policy designed to help states better assist students with disabilities. The guidelines follow-up on the Secretary's declaration last month that she would provide states with additional alternatives and flexibility to implement the law. The agency already allows states to test one percent of students -- those with the most significant cognitive disabilities -- using alternate assessments, based on alternate achievement standards, and "count" their proficient scores as such. Now, another two percent of students with disabilities may be allowed to take alternate assessments based on modified standards.

In order to be eligible for this short-term flexibility, states must meet certain requirements, including:

- testing at least 95 percent of students with disabilities;
- putting in place appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities;
- for students with disabilities who are unable to take the regular assessment, making available alternate assessments in reading/language arts and math; and
- adjusting the minimum number of special education students required to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), or "N-size," so that it is no larger than the overall group size.

Also, each state must request to amend their accountability plan by June 1 and furnish specifics on their actions taken to raise achievement for students with disabilities, with evidence that such efforts are improving achievement.

After meeting those requirements, states have two options for 2004-05 AYP decisions:

- **Option 1.** States that do not have modified achievement standards for students with disabilities may make an adjustment to provide additional credit to schools or school districts that would miss making AYP solely because of students in that sub-

group. Essentially, states will add a "proxy" passing percentage to the proportion of special education students who actually passed the tests; the actual passing percentage plus the proxy would determine the special education subgroup score.

- **Option 2.** States that do have modified achievement standards for students with disabilities may count in AYP calculations the proficient scores of students tested on the modified standards, up to the two percent cap. These states must also show they have administered tests based on modified standards for over two years, established clear testing guidelines, used a valid method to craft the tests, and trained teachers in how to use them.

In addition, the Secretary will consider other options offered by states. However, the same option must be used statewide.

The Department is working on a final rule. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/05/05102005.html>. ("The Pursuit of Raising Achievement," which explains the process for requesting approval of flexibility in general, is available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/raising/disab-amendment.html>. "Interim Policy: Accountability for Students with Disabilities Accountability Plan Amendments for 2004-05," referencing the special education flexibility above, is available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/raising/disab-acctplan.html>.)

Meanwhile, speaking May 6 at the annual meeting of the Education Writers Association, the Secretary called on the broadcast and print media to focus on "the quiet revolution" made possible by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/05/05062005.html>.



MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

In a letter to educators, Carmella LaSpada, executive director of the White House Commission on Remembrance, asked schools to hold a Remembrance Ceremony as close to Memorial Day (Monday, May 31) as possible and actively encourage students to pause on Memorial Day at 3:00 p.m. local time, to think about the men and women who gave their lives for our freedom. The idea of a moment of remembrance was born in 1996 when children touring Washington, D.C., were asked what Memorial Day meant to them. They responded, "That's the day the pools open!" Four years later, Congress established the White House Commission on Remembrance. The mid-afternoon time was chosen

because it is an hour when a majority of Americans are enjoying the holiday. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.remember.gov/>.



CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

Several important pieces of education legislation are working their way through Congress. First, on May 18, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce unanimously approved a bill that would introduce greater competition into the federal Head Start program, as well as strengthen school readiness and increase the role of states and local communities. (Secretary Spellings praised the action in a statement: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/05/05182005a.html>.) Second, recently, the full House passed a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. House and Senate lawmakers are working to reconcile differences in their bills. And, this week, Govs. Tom Vilsack (IA) and Mitt Romney (MA) testified on high school reform (<http://edworkforce.house.gov/hearings/109th/fc/highschool051705/wl51705.htm>).



NEW COMMISSIONER

Edward Kame'enui, an international authority on learning problems and special education, has been named the nation's first Commissioner for Special Education Research. He will lead a newly established office within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the research arm of the Education Department. A native of Hawaii, Kame'enui started his special education career in 1971 as a teacher and houseparent at a residential treatment center, in Wisconsin, for children with serious emotional and behavior problems. He joins IES from the University of Oregon, where he has been a faculty member for the past 17 years. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/05/05182005.html>.



SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

"The How-To Guide for School-Business Partnerships," an exciting new resource from the Council for Corporate & School Partnerships, is designed for school officials and/or business leaders who are interested in effective partnerships. The guide is a result of extensive research and personal interviews with individuals who have experience creating, implementing, and evaluating successful partnerships. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.corpschoolpartners.org/guide.shtml>. (Quite appropriately, the Council notes that the guidelines are not intended to serve as an exact prescription, but rather to provide a framework in which to build a partnership that fits local needs.)

Also: On May 17, Secretary Spellings addressed the Business and Professional Women's Leadership Summit, calling education "the key" to "helping the next generation take advantage of the freedoms we enjoy." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/05/05172005.html>.



READY FOR COLLEGE?

"Troubling" is the word Indiana University researchers used to explain the findings of its 2004 survey of 90,530 high school students in 26 states, when compared to earlier surveys of community college and four-year college students. For example, fully 55 percent of high school students polled said they devoted no more than three hours a week to class preparation (with 65 percent reporting getting A's or B's). On the other hand, half the first-year, four-year college students reported spending over 10 hours a week studying outside of class, and one-quarter of community college students (with less than 30 credit hours) spent 11 or more hours preparing for courses each week. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.iub.edu/~nsse/hssse/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"As we watch nations...take the first steps toward democracy, we remember that democracy begins with education. And after more than two centuries, education still

lies at the heart of our great experiment and our quest for 'a more perfect union.' We can't fulfill the promise of equal opportunity until we first provide every boy and girl with a quality education. It's a promise we need to keep."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (5/17/05)



UPCOMING EVENTS

On June 1, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Summer School (1201 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.), the National Center for Education Statistics will hold a briefing on the results from "The Condition of Education 2005." This congressionally mandated report contains 40 indicators on conditions and trends in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, with a special analysis on the teacher workforce. To RSVP, please contact Elizabeth Osterman at eosterman@air.org by May 27. (Note: On June 1, the report will be posted by 9:00 a.m. at <http://nces.ed.gov/>.)

Then, on June 2, the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives will host a workshop in New Orleans to assist faith-based and community organizations applying to become supplemental educational service providers. The workshop is free, but pre-registration is required. The deadline for registration is May 31. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbci/suppserv-workshops.html>.

The Department's next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast, the final broadcast of the 2004-05 season, is scheduled for June 21. The topic: service learning. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=186>.

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

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