

## Landmark Legislation Has Changed Landscape of American Education

# Fifth Anniversary for *No Child Left Behind*

This month marks the fifth anniversary of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, the bipartisan legislation signed into law by President George W. Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, to reform America's public schools. The law is based on four principles: 1) stronger accountability for results; 2) greater flexibility for states and communities; 3) proven education methods; and 4) more choices for parents.

"At its heart, [NCLB] was intended to help teachers help students reach their potential," said U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings at a national summit on the law held last April.

Ultimately, NCLB set a historic goal for the country: every child reading and doing math at grade level by 2014. Schools are held accountable for students achieving annual progress



toward proficiency in those subjects based on state standards. Performance is measured in grades 3–8 and once in high school by state assessments that must be reported by income level, race and ethnicity, disability and limited English proficiency to ensure that no child falls through the cracks.

Since its enactment, test results have shown that the law is working. "The achievement gap that has persisted for decades in the younger years between minorities and whites has shrunk to its smallest size in history," said Spellings. The most recent Nation's Report Card also revealed that America's fourth-graders posted the best scores in reading and math in the history of the 30-plus-year-old report, while eighth-graders earned the highest math scores ever.

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## Empowering Parents

# Response Soars for Supplemental Educational Services Option in Indianapolis

“And then they came around with this tutoring program ...”

The after-school tutoring program in Indianapolis could not have come at a better time for the Jessie family. Jodi Jessie said her children had been struggling with their schoolwork, so she had been looking into getting their teachers to work with them for maybe an afternoon or two. "And then they came around with this tutoring program, which they can do Monday through Thursday," she said. "That was even better. So I just went ahead and put them in it."

Provided free of charge, it was a huge savings for the mother of eight whose four children in grades 1–4 qualified for the service. Last September, after their school did not meet the state's adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals

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Among its efforts for improving student achievement, NCLB has introduced free tutoring for children from low-income families in persistently underperforming schools, the Reading First program to boost literacy skills in the early grades, and grants to improve

teacher quality. In addition, federal funding for it has increased by 34 percent over the life of the law—from \$17 billion in 2001 to \$23 billion in 2006.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* is due to be reauthorized this year. President Bush has

pledged to work with Congress to ensure that the accountability measures that have led to academic gains as well as the nation's commitment to NCLB's 2014 goal remain in tact.

For more information about the No Child Left Behind Act, visit <http://www.ed.gov>.

## Spellings Speaks on International Education

**D**uring International Education Week, Nov. 13–17, 2006, Secretary Spellings, along with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Dina Habib Powell (pictured together at right), led the first-ever delegation of U.S. college and university presidents to Japan, Korea and China. Following is an excerpt of the secretary's remarks at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan.

... Higher education has long been one of the strengths of America. Our decentralized system has empowered students with a wide range of options.

new exchanges. In the past, study abroad was something that not many students could afford, and it wasn't offered at many universities. But that's changing.

In the past 10 years, [the number of] Americans studying overseas has increased by 10 percent. And the number of institutions offering study abroad programs and highlighting international education has increased dramatically. If our students are going to be prepared for the international marketplace, study abroad is a critical part of that preparation.

We can learn a lot from each other to better prepare our students. For example, Japan has strong math and science programs, and America is known for its emphasis on critical thinking and creativity. Working together, we can give all our students a better education.

Companies today want graduates skilled in ... math, science and foreign language—the new currencies of our global economy. And these days, companies are following talent—whether that talent is in Texas or Tokyo.

Since our universities are at the heart of recruiting and nurturing talent, they must adapt to make sure a college education equips students to be competitive with the new international workforce.

A core strength of America's higher education system is flexibility. Our colleges are able to innovate and adjust to meet the demands of a dynamic job market



Photo courtesy of U.S. Embassy Japan

and changing global society. Recently, I had a group of higher education and business leaders explore ways we can strengthen higher education in America and make it more affordable, accessible and accountable.

Our government is committed to ensuring that our education system provides students with the resources and instruction they need to be competitive and succeed in the new global economy. For us, the internationalization of education means sharing best practices, fostering innovation and increasing transparency.

Because no matter what country we call home, all of us share the same commitment to see students succeed. Education opens the doors of opportunity and is the foundation for a better life and a bright future.

To promote freedom, end hunger, find the cure for cancer, explore new frontiers in space ... these are noble objectives—objectives we have a much greater chance of accomplishing together than on our own. Through shared collaboration of ideas and invention, we can make our world and the world our children inherit one of great promise and opportunity. ...

Visit <http://www.ed.gov> and click on "Speeches" for the complete Nov. 13, 2006, remarks.

## Rewarding the Hardworking

This past November, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the first disbursement from a new grant program that rewards educators in high-poverty schools who boost student achievement. Sixteen grants totaling \$42 million from the Teacher Incentive Fund will help a group of school districts, states and partnerships provide financial incentives to principals and teachers showing results in schools where at least 30 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The funding also will help to provide similar compensation for hard-to-staff positions in subjects like math and science. The grants are expected to be funded for five years for a total of \$240 million. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov> and select "Programs," then "ED Programs" for the "Teacher Incentive Fund."

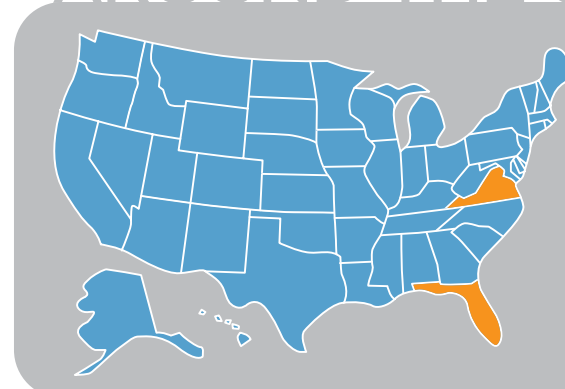
It's a system that encourages innovation and adapts to meet many different needs. ...

And in the fields of both academic and scientific research, foreign students contribute tremendously to and greatly enrich our universities. As a nation, we understand the value of international exchange. ...

Foreign student enrollment continues to rise in the post-Sept. 11 era. In the last year, the number of student exchange visas issued reached an all-time high of more than 590,000. Student visas were up 15 percent.

Our universities are working to promote the value of international education and foster

## AROUND THE COUNTRY



**FLORIDA**—In December, Broward County Public Schools wrapped up its third round of provider fairs designed to inform eligible families about the free tutoring available for their children under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Approximately 31,000 students in the district—the fifth largest in the nation—qualify for supplemental



for a third consecutive year, they became eligible to either receive free tutoring or transfer to another school.

For Jessie, it was a no-brainer: "My kids have been going there since kindergarten. I went there. My husband went there. And the school is great. The teachers are awesome. The principal is amazing. So it never crossed my mind to take them out of that school."

Introduced by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the extra academic help is an effort to help those who need it most: students from

improvement" for a second year for failing to meet AYP for three straight years. The school district covers the cost; parents select the tutoring organization they feel is best for their child.

"It really empowers parents," said Carrie Reinking, who coordinates the SES program for Indianapolis Public Schools.

This school year, with the support of federal funding, Indianapolis will spend more than \$4 million on supplemental educational services to help several thousand students in grades K–8 improve their

According to recent records, Indianapolis has one of the highest participation rates in the country, with 64 percent of the 3,500 eligible students signing up for tutoring in the 2005–06 school year. (The 2006–07 rate will not be available until the final audit in August.) As the largest school system in the state, Indianapolis Public Schools facilitates services for 16 eligible schools, a number that has quadrupled since the program's start in 2002.

Several factors account for the large enrollment: an aggressive outreach effort that involves notifying parents at the beginning of the school year about their child's eligibility; regular provider fairs that allow tutoring companies to describe the scope of their services; and open houses and other parent events year-round that give Reinking and fellow coordinator Sylvia Myles a continuous platform to speak about the program's benefits.

However, it's not just about getting the word out, added Reinking. In one area where participation was low, she said, "They wanted to be reassured by a voice or a face to say, 'Yes, this is something we feel is valuable for your child. Yes, it is going to be after school, right there in your child's own school. And yes, you can have faith that your child's going to be safe and secure in that environment.'"

Scheduling the tutoring at a convenient location, particularly at the child's school, has been the biggest draw, explained Myles. "The parents do not have to worry about transporting their children to another site. They're at a safe location; they're at their own home school," she said. Other sites include public libraries, community centers and, in some cases, children's homes.

Another bonus for parents is that many of the tutors hired are actually their



low-income families in consistently low-performing schools. The law requires that school districts offer supplemental educational services (SES) to students who:  
1) qualify for free or reduced-price lunches; and 2) attend

knowledge and skills in core subjects while their schools undergo improvements. Approximately \$1,500 has been allotted per student to pay for tutoring sessions that vary in number based on SES providers' hourly rates.

Providers, which may include high-performing public and private schools as well as community and faith-based organizations, are approved and monitored by states. At the local level, school districts supply parents of eligible children with a list of qualified providers serving the area, from which they may make their selection. Then the districts, which broker the contract and manage all logistics, arrange a meeting with the parent, provider and a district staff member to discuss specific goals for the child, set up a schedule for services, and decide how the child's progress will be measured.



schools receiving Title I funds (federal dollars for high-poverty schools) that have been identified as "in need of

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educational services. So far, more than 4,700 students have signed up, a fraction of those eligible, but significantly more than the 330 registered in 2004–05. The increase is credited to several efforts, including: a multiple enrollment season; a partnership with the Urban League, which hosted town hall meetings; and an automated phone system announcing events.

**VIRGINIA**—After a yearlong pilot run, four school districts in Virginia continue to offer students from low-income families free tutoring one year earlier than usual. Based on an increase in participation, the U.S. Department of Education reauthorized the state to provide supplemental educational services to students in schools in Alexandria, Henry County, Newport News and

Stafford County that are in the first, rather than second, year of school improvement. Due to the flexibility, one district experienced as much as a 200-percent increase in the number of eligible children enrolling. The school systems are among 16 in five states involved in the Department's pilot program.



children's classroom teachers. They are part of a wide range of talent, which also includes retired educators, college students and career professionals, providing one-on-one instruction or small-group tutoring.

Yet, as the market grows—state-approved tutoring companies in Indianapolis have doubled to 32 from just last year—choosing

**From left to right:** Tutor Ann Spitz with students Charles and Alex; tutor Peter Watford with first-grader Alexandria; and tutor James Davie with sixth-graders Adrenne and Chyenne. On the cover, Jodi Jessie with her children: Tristen, Kaylee, Layla and Clyde. Photos by John Gress.

children who already have spent eight hours a day in a classroom, it's important to provide a variety of academically

A former teacher for more than 25 years, Reinking considers the additional instruction provided through the SES program “a valuable extension of ... the hard work we're doing with our students during the day,” while it helps to bring more community partners on board to support schools. Among other measures of success, she points to the high ratings on parent satisfaction surveys, though she admits there is still more work to do in improving student achievement.

But Jodi Jessie, who said she has seen a difference in her children's attitudes toward learning following the tutoring sessions, believes the outcomes are more than numerical. “Being in the neighborhood that we are in, there are a lot of kids who go home to nothing,” she said. “And when they've got a teacher there who's going to stay with them and pay attention to them—that means a lot to them.”

—BY NICOLE ASHBY

the right provider can feel like a daunting task for parents. “My take has always been pretty simple,” said one provider. “If you put the kids first ... the word will spread.”

Overall, it has been Indianapolis' open enrollment policy that has allowed more families to take advantage of the program. Instead of restricting enrollment to, for example, one month, students can register anytime during the school year, which is especially convenient for middle school students, who often are involved in extracurricular activities, such as football or band practice, that may compete with tutoring sessions. After the tutoring, transportation is provided at no cost to seventh- and eighth-graders.

Also, as another SES provider points out, for

enriching activities, such as a board game to hone math skills: “That keeps the kids interested in coming to the after-school program every day.”

# Indianapolis Public Schools



- > **Grade Span:** K–12
- > **Locale:** Urban
- > **Total Students:** 36,957
- > **Race/Ethnicity Enrollment:** 58% African American, 25% white, 12% Hispanic, 4% multiracial, 0.5% Asian, 0.5% American Indian
- > **Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible:** 83%
- > **English Language Learners:** 9%
- > **Special Education Students:** 17%
- > **Percentage Proficient:** In reading, 50%; in math, 51% (based on third- through 10th-graders assessed on the 2006 state exam)
- > **Interesting Fact:** Indianapolis has one of the country's highest participation rates for supplemental educational services, with 64 percent of the 3,500 eligible students signing up for tutoring in 2005–06.



## January

**Magnet Schools Month**, a national initiative to highlight magnet schools. As part of the celebration, Magnet Schools of America is inviting communities to host special events and activities and is sponsoring a poster contest that will conclude on Jan. 26. For details, visit <http://www.magnet.edu> or call 202-824-0672.

## January 8

**Fifth Anniversary of *No Child Left Behind***, an observance of the landmark education law signed by President George W. Bush in 2002. The bipartisan legislation is predicated on four principles: 1) stronger accountability for results; 2) greater flexibility for states and communities; 3) proven education methods; and 4) more choices for parents. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov> or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

## January 18

**White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Conference**, Seattle, sponsored by a consortium of federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education. Part of a series of regional conferences being held around the country, this meeting for grassroots leaders will provide information about federal grant opportunities. To register, visit <http://www.fbc.gov> or call 202-456-6718.

# Q&A GLOSSARY

## Is my child eligible for supplemental educational services?

Children in schools receiving Title I funds that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for three years are eligible to receive supplemental educational services (SES)—free tutoring and other extra academic help outside of the regular school day. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires that school districts offer SES to students from low-income families attending Title I schools that have been identified as “in need of improvement” for more than one year.

Parents of eligible children should receive annual notices about the availability of services. School districts must provide a state-approved list of SES providers, which may include public and private schools as well as community and faith-based organizations, from which parents can make a

selection. Once a decision has been made, parents meet with the provider and a district staff member to discuss specific goals for the child, set up a schedule for services, and decide how the child’s progress will be measured. SES providers must give both the parents and the school information on the child’s progress.

For details about local SES opportunities, contact your local school district or state department of education. For information about federal guidelines, call the U.S. Department of Education toll-free at 1-800-USA-LEARN.

**SES** supplemental educational services: additional academic instruction or tutoring provided free-of-charge to students from low-income families in Title I schools that have not met state targets for increasing student achievement for three years.

## News Show Celebrates *No Child Left Behind*

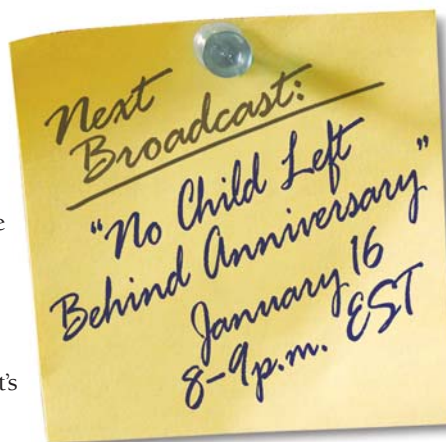
Stories of successful schools and school districts, high-performing teachers and students, and how they have helped to realize the goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, will be the focus of the January edition of *Education News Parents Can Use*, the Department’s monthly television program.

Five years ago, *No Child Left Behind* was signed into law, thereby raising expectations for all children. It asked more of the nation’s education system, requiring that states: set standards for student achievement and regularly measure progress; provide better information and more options to parents; and provide a highly qualified teacher for every classroom. Guests on January’s show will explore the ways in which the law’s principles

of accountability, parent choice and teacher quality have helped to close the achievement gap and raise test scores. In addition, videotaped stories of high-performing schools will provide shining examples of how all students—regardless of race, family income or zip code—can achieve at high levels.

Each month, *Education News Parents Can Use* showcases: schools and school districts from across the country; conversations with school officials, parents and education experts; and advice and free resources for parents and educators.

To learn about viewing options, including webcasts, visit <http://www.ed.gov> and click on “Parents,” then “News Parents Can Use,” or call toll-free 1-800-USA-LEARN.





## New Design for FREE Web Site

One of the most popular online resources supported by the U.S. Department of Education recently received an extreme makeover that has put hundreds of teaching and learning resources easily at the public's disposal.

The redesign of the FREE (Federal Resources for Educational Excellence) Web site—available at <http://free.ed.gov>—helps users to better navigate more than 1,500 resources from more than 35 federal agencies that range from an interactive program picturing phases of the moon from the National Science Foundation

to video narratives by Holocaust survivors from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. It organizes

these resources according to academic subjects, using an appealing display of photos and illustrations for easy identification.

In addition, the new design adds a subject map on the home page that organizes the online collection according to eight categories: language arts; math; science; U.S. history; U.S. time periods; world studies; arts and music; and health and physical education.

Each category follows with a subgroup that helps to fine-tune the search for resources. For instance, U.S. history covers ethnic groups, famous people, movements and wars. The science category explores applied, earth, life, physical and space sciences, while the math group looks at algebra, data analysis, geometry, measurement, and numbers and operations.

And, for observances celebrated in the classroom, the site—which is updated weekly—includes resources for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Sept. 11 as part of its special collections.

The redesign was the first since the FREE Web site was created in 1998.



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**Comments?** Contact Nicole Ashby, editor, at 202-205-0676 (fax), or at [education@custhelp.com](mailto:education@custhelp.com).

**Address changes and subscriptions?** Contact 1-877-4ED-PUBS, or [edpubs@inet.ed.gov](mailto:edpubs@inet.ed.gov).

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