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ED REVIEW

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...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 January 8, President Bush and Secretary Paige joined school superintendents and principals, Chief State School Officers, several members of Congress, and other education leaders in celebrating the one-year anniversary of the signing of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. "We can say the work of reform is well begun," said the President. "The work will be complete, however, when every public school in America is a place of high expectations and a place of achievement. That is our national goal." As part of the event, the President announced that five states (Colorado, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio) have taken the lead in integrating the requirements of the law into their current accountability systems and have received Department approval -- well in advance of the January 31 statutory deadline. "Their plans are rigorous, and their plans are innovative," the President explained. "They are also varied, reflecting the different strengths and challenges within each state. One size doesn't fit all when it comes to public education. What counts are results." These plans have been made available on the Department's web site (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/csas/>) as models for other states finalizing their plans. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2003/01082003a.html>. (Both the President's and the Secretary's remarks, as well as a list of materials distributed at the celebration, can be accessed at the same URL. But, for an explanation of the peer review process, go to <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/>.)

According to a new survey commissioned by Americans for Better Education, a non-partisan coalition of parents, educators, and business leaders, more than 80 percent of voters support having the federal government hold states and schools accountable for ensuring student improvement -- a central goal of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Moreover, those numbers climb to 91 percent on three elements of the law: requiring schools to set and meet goals each year to show that all children are making academic progress;

requiring districts to give parents annual report cards on the academic performance of their schools; and requiring states to have a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by the end of 2005-06, even if it means forcing some teachers to obtain more training. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press108/01jan/nclboneyear10803.htm>.



BUDGET PRIORITIES

In his first weekly radio address of the new year, President Bush outlined a couple of his budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year (which begins October 1, 2003). First, to help close the achievement gap, he will ask Congress for an additional \$1 billion for the Title I program, the Department's signature program providing resources to turn-around low-performing schools, improve teacher quality, and, if necessary, ensure that no child is trapped in a failing school. The overall request, of \$12.35 billion, would be the highest funding level ever for Title I. Second, the President is seeking \$75 million more for the Reading First (to help children learn to read by the end of third-grade) and Early Reading First (to improve pre-reading skills in pre-school) programs, bringing the total support for reading to over \$1.1 billion. "Over the last two years, we have increased federal spending by 40 percent," the President revealed, "and, in turn, we are insisting that schools use that money wisely." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030104.html>.

Note: Secretary Paige penned a January 9 *USA Today* editorial echoing the President's statement. "No idea in politics has hurt children more than the false and misleading idea that the quality of education is determined by how much we spend," the Secretary argued. And even "worse, wasteful spending and the debates about money have masked the problem." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2003-01-09-oppose_x.htm.



QUALITY COUNTS

Education Week's seventh-annual "Quality Counts" report examines what the 50 states and the District of Columbia are doing to attract, retain, and support qualified teachers for students in high-poverty, high-minority, and low-achieving schools. Since *No Child*

Left Behind requires that all teachers in the core subjects must be "highly qualified" in each subject they teach by the end of the 2005-06 school year, the emphasis is timely. Yet, even as states are taking a number of steps to boost teacher quality, the report finds that very few of these efforts are directed at finding teachers for the students who need them the most. Consider:

- Twenty-four states provide college scholarships, loans, and other tuition assistance to future teachers, but only seven of them target such programs at candidates committed to working in high-need schools.
- Five states provide signing bonuses for teachers, but only California and Massachusetts gear the bonuses to teachers willing to work in high-need schools.
- Thirty-four states and the District of Columbia offer retention bonuses to veteran or highly qualified teachers, but only five of them direct those bonuses at teachers in high-poverty, high-minority, or low-achieving schools.

As a result, while 22 percent of secondary students nationwide take at least one class with a teacher who did not even minor in the subject taught, the percentage of students in high-poverty secondary schools is even bigger: 32 percent. Also, students in high-poverty secondary schools are twice as likely (26 percent to 13 percent) to have at least one teacher who is not certified in the subject taught.

Meanwhile:

- Just 33 states and the District of Columbia require subject-knowledge tests for teachers to earn a beginning license, and only 29 states and the District of Columbia require all high school teachers to have majored in the main subjects they teach.
- Only four states and the District of Columbia require middle school teachers to have majored in their subjects.
- Only Kentucky bars the practice of assigning teachers to classes for which they are not certified.
- Only New York prohibits the practice of hiring teachers with so-called emergency licenses in its lowest-achieving schools.
- Just 22 states require that report cards on individual schools or school districts include information about teacher characteristics, such as the percentage with emergency credentials, and only four states publicly report teacher qualifications broken down by school type.

"The findings articulated in the Quality Counts report are not a surprise," Secretary Paige said in a statement (<http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2003/01072003.html>).

"We must do a better job of preparing future teachers, and providing current teachers

with rigorous professional development to help them strengthen their knowledge and skills.... The best way to make sure our children learn, even those in the most challenging circumstances, is to have a teacher at the front of the classroom who knows the subject matter." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.edweek.org/sreports/QC03/>.



NATIONAL FILE FORMAT

In consultation with the Education Department, the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum (NCAC) has named a technical panel to develop a voluntary National File Format to serve as a foundation for accessible educational materials. The panel consists of about 40 individuals representing: consumers, such as advocacy groups and state and local education officials; technical experts, including assistive technology professionals, textbook administrators, software developers, standards organizations, and data conversion experts; and feasibility experts, such as national standards agencies, curriculum publishers, technology researchers, and ex-officio members from the Department. During 2003, NCAC will convene a series of technical meetings. Also, NCAC requests that parents, students, and other interested parties send comments to nff@cast.org on impediments facing students with disabilities (and the context in which these arise) and particular features and functions that would benefit such students. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2003/01062003.html>.



OFFICIAL RESIGNATION

On January 14, Secretary Paige accepted the resignation of Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Susan Neuman. "Susan has been part of a team that has worked hard to make sure we have a swift and smooth implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*," the Secretary said. "It has been a very busy and intense two years, and I thank Susan for her efforts and her service to the American people." Neuman will return to the ranks of academia and resume her research in the field of reading; before joining the agency, she was a professor at the University of Michigan and directed the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. In the

coming days, an acting assistant secretary will be named. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2003/01142003.html>.



UNDERGRADUATE BORROWERS

Using the 1999-2000 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, "Characteristics of Undergraduate Borrowers," a new report from the Department's National Center for Education Statistics, explores the demographic and enrollment characteristics of sets of borrower groups (from non-borrowers to high borrowers and from less-than-maximum borrowers to maximum borrowers), the risk for not persisting to completion of an educational program, and types of loans and other financial aid received in 1999-2000. That academic year, 29 percent of undergraduates borrowed from some source to help finance postsecondary education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003155>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"The Supreme Court will soon hear arguments in a case about admission policies and student diversity in public universities. I strongly support diversity of all kinds, including racial diversity in higher education. But the method used by the University of Michigan to achieve this important goal is fundamentally flawed.... Recent history has proven that diversity can be achieved without using quotas. Systems in California and Florida and Texas have proven that by guaranteeing admissions to the top students from high schools throughout the state, including low-income neighborhoods, colleges can attain broad racial diversity... University officials have the responsibility and the obligation to make a serious, effective effort to reach out to students from all walks of life, without falling back on unconstitutional quotas. Schools should seek diversity by considering a broad range of factors in admissions, including a student's potential and life experiences.

-- President George W. Bush (1/15/03)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Just a reminder: the President's State of the Union address is scheduled for Tuesday, January 28. And, on February 3, the President will release his FY 2004 budget request.

National School Counseling Week, February 3-7, focuses public attention on the unique contributions professional school counselors make within American school systems. Visit <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/> for sample press releases, proclamations, and certificates.

Today, the Education Department will present its first Forum on Economic Education and Financial Literacy. The featured speaker will be Dara Duguay, executive director of the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy. Why the sudden emphasis? The first National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test in economics is now scheduled for 2006. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2003/01152003.html>. (Robert Duvall, president and chief executive officer of the National Council on Economic Education, will speak on February 21.)

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