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ED REVIEW

April 9, 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/>)

At the National School Board Association's annual conference in Orlando, Florida, Secretary Paige announced new flexibility for calculating the participation rate of students on standardized tests. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, schools must demonstrate that at least 95 percent of students, both schoolwide and for subgroups with enough students, participated in the state's assessment program. Now, if a school misses that threshold, states may average participation rates for a given school over two or three years. For example, a school might find that its participation rate dropped to 94 percent for one year. If, in the previous two years, the participation rates were 95 percent and 96 percent, it would still meet the federal mandate. Almost every state had schools that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based solely on participation rates. In addition, students who are unable to take the test during either the testing or make-up windows due to a significant medical emergency will not count against the school's participation rate. Admittedly, states already have considerable leeway to look at the reasons students were unable to take the test when considering appeals from schools that missed AYP. However, medical emergencies would no longer require an appeal. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/03/03292004.html>. (The Secretary's remarks are available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/03/03292004.html>. He was preceded in the program by First Lady Laura Bush. Her remarks are posted at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/03/20040329-8.html>.)

In a recent letter to Chief State School Officers, Secretary Paige reiterated the new areas of flexibility under the *No Child Left Behind Act's* "highly qualified" teacher provisions. Further guidance is forthcoming. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/040331.html>.

With much of the nation talking about jobs and the economy, President Bush announced a new plan to strengthen math and science education to ensure that young Americans are graduating with the skills they need to succeed in college and to compete for the high-demand jobs of the 21st Century. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/04/04082004.html>.



HELPING YOUR CHILD SERIES

The latest editions of the Department's *Helping Your Child* series aims to help parents prepare children to become critical thinkers. *Helping Your Child Learn Mathematics* demystifies the notion that math is a "hard" subject that few can master, illustrating opportunities at home, at the grocery store, and on the go (such as license plate riddles that can be used during a road trip) for children preschool through fifth-grade to learn mathematical concepts. *Helping Your Child Learn Science* suggests enjoyable activities for children ages 3-10 that can be done at home and in the community without expensive chemistry sets, as well as books that cover various science fields, tips for selecting science toys, and contact information for science camps. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html>.



HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

The next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast (April 20, 8:00-9:00 ET) will highlight schools across the country that are taking the steps needed to prepare students for the evolving world. Today, many students leave high school unprepared, often lacking the basic skills they need to get a high-wage job or pursue postsecondary education. Further, employers from all sectors of American industry are demanding stronger reading, writing, and math skills of their entry-level workers, and statistics show many recent graduates are not on par with their international peers. Fortunately, in partnership with businesses, colleges and universities, and their communities, many schools are meeting the challenge with proven strategies: raising standards and expectations, expanding access to rigorous courses of study, ensuring that extra academic assistance is provided to help struggling students master course requirements, providing opportunities to acquire technical skills and explore careers, and aligning graduation requirements with requirements for admission to postsecondary education and those of the workplace.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=175>. (You can watch live and archived webcasts of each show at [http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/.](http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/))



TRANSCRIPT STUDIES

"The High School Transcript Study: A Decade of Change in Curricula and Achievement, 1990-2000," from the Institute of Education Sciences, examines the trends and changes in high school curriculum and student coursetaking during the past decade. Notwithstanding data limits -- federal researchers do not know the exact content of courses students took or whether grade inflation might explain the increase in A's and B's -- the findings offer good news. Consider:

- Overall, the number of course credits earned by high school graduates increased from 23.6 in 1990 to 26.2 in 2000.
- The average number of course credits earned in core academic subjects (English, math, science, and social studies) increased from 13.7 to 15. The average number of course credits earned in non-computer-related vocational courses fell from 3.5 to 3.1.
- From 1990 to 2000, the average grade point average increased from 2.68 to 2.94. Also, the increase was evident for all examined student and school characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity, school type, and region of the country).
- Of the 16 major academic subjects covered by the study, math and science proved the most difficult. Class of 2000 graduates earned a 2.6 and 2.67 GPA, respectively, lower than the GPAs for the other 14 subjects. (This finding mirrors findings from 1990, 1994, and 1998.)
- High school graduates who took Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses in both math and science earned a 3.61 GPA, edging graduates who took just AP/IB math (3.53) or AP/IB science (3.33).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004455>.



RACE-NEUTRAL ALTERNATIVES

Building upon a report released last year, "Achieving Diversity: Race-Neutral Alternatives in American Education" outlines the numerous ways higher education institutions are using innovative, race-neutral approaches to achieve diversity on their campuses. Some use "developmental approaches," designed to diversify student enrollments by improving the qualifications of applicants; others use "admissions approaches," which weigh additional admissions criteria in an effort to achieve a more diverse student body. The report does not endorse any particular program, but rather provides a catalog or description of what institutions are attempting. Plus, the report contains information on approaches used in K-12 schools, including state efforts to align pre-college curricula with college admissions requirements and schools' use of "lottery" systems. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/03/03262004a.html>.

Also: On March 30, the Secretary renewed the Department's commitment to expanding educational opportunities for Hispanic students by signing a memorandum of understanding with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/03/03302004.html>.



40 YEARS OF NAEP

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) began in 1964, with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to establish an Exploratory Committee for the Assessment of Progress in Education. The first national assessments were held in 1969. Voluntary assessments for the states began in 1990 on a trial basis, and in 2002 and 2003 select urban districts participated for the first time. What will the next 40 years hold for this reliable measure? A special web site

(<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/fortieth.asp>) explores NAEP's rich past. Specifically, a history telling NAEP's story, from its conception to the present, will be released next week at the American Educational Research Association's annual meeting.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"President Bush and I received a letter from a mother in New Jersey who thanked the President for *No Child Left Behind*. She wrote, 'By expecting excellence from our children and working with them to achieve it, I wonder how many dreams will be fulfilled. A child who was once passed by may become the teacher that makes all the difference, or a surgeon who saves a life. Or maybe that child will write a poem that brings tears to our eyes. Thank you for giving all our children the chance to truly shine.' We must work together for the teachers and the doctors and the poets of tomorrow. Children spend such a short time of their life in school. We don't have years to argue and to criticize and to ignore."

-- First Lady Laura Bush (3/29/04)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Don't forget! The Department is sponsoring seven regional high school summits to help state teams strengthen outcomes for youth and improve high schools. The next summit is April 16-17 in Phoenix, Arizona, for teams from Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hsinit/regional.doc>.

April 18-24 is National Library Week. To prepare for the celebration, the American Library Association has a variety of programming and publicity materials. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/nlw/nationallibraryweek.htm>.

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

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