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ED REVIEW

October 24, 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.ed.gov/nclb/>)

To educate families about the options available to them under *No Child Left Behind*, the Department recently awarded \$1.3 million in grants to three organizations to develop or continue their existing public information campaigns:

- The Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) will use its grant to continue Project Clarion, a high-quality communications and media campaign designed for low-income black parents in Dallas, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia. Among its activities, BAEO hopes to work with schools districts to simplify the application process to transfer students to other schools and provide supplemental services.
- The Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (Hispanic CREO) is planning a new initiative to help 18,000 at-risk children and their families in Austin, Camden, Dallas, Miami, and San Antonio. Project CREO will establish parent, community, and school resource operations, as well as develop Spanish language communication tools.
- The Greater Education Opportunities Foundation (GEO Foundation) will use its grant for parent outreach programs in Denver and Gary, Indiana. The project will feature a "direct to the people" media campaign, a 1-800 number, and a web site on *No Child Left Behind* and state-specific services. GEO will also assist with a national distribution of 100,000 posters on supplemental services.

The grants are via the Fund for the Improvement of Education, which is administered by the Office of Innovation and Improvement. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/10/10092003b.html>.

Speaking of grants, 30 local education agencies and organizations will share more than \$74 million under the Early Reading First Program. Part of the President's "Good Start, Grow Smart" initiative, Early Reading First seeks to transform early education programs

into centers of excellence that offer high-quality instruction to young children. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/>.

Last week, the Department released non-regulatory guidance on Title I services to eligible private school children. A section of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, strengthened under *No Child Left Behind*, requires districts to provide eligible children attending private schools, their teachers, and their families with Title I services or other benefits that are deemed equitable to those provided to eligible public school children, their teachers, and their families. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/psguidance.doc>.



TURNING AROUND SCHOOLS

Purposefully coinciding with the release of state lists of schools in need of improvement, the National Governors Association has prepared a guide that describes strategies for turning around low-performing schools and highlights best practices in states, districts, and schools. "Reaching New Heights" advocates five key principles: not all low-performing schools are the same; capacity-building must be part of the solution; school districts are essential collaborators; be prepared for the long haul; and any assistance should be part of a larger strategy of school improvement. Want more specifics? Richard Elmore, a Harvard professor, examined the process by which two low-performing schools (which "differ...from the stereotypical image of a 'failing school'") were trying to improve and, from this analysis, derived a theory of what the process looks like when it is successful. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.nga.org/center/schools/>.



MINORITY FOCUS

A new report by the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), "Status and Trends in the Education of Blacks," draws on a wide variety of statistics published by NCES and other federal agencies and synthesizes the findings in a single, compact volume. "Despite...gains," the report states, "progress has been uneven over time and across various measures, and differences persist between blacks and whites on key indicators of education performance." For example, while long-term trends in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show increased performance

for black students in reading, the achievement gap between blacks and whites actually widened between 1988 and 1999. Similarly, the proportion of black students completing college increased between 1975 and 2000, but blacks still remained less likely than whites to earn degrees. Down the line, blacks face lower pay and higher unemployment for equal levels of education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003034>.

On October 13, Secretary Paige addressed a group of educators in Edinburg, Texas, attending Hispanic Engineering, Science, and Technology Week at the University of Texas-Pan American. "One recent study shows just how important mathematics and science can be to a young student," the Secretary said, promoting his plan to reinvigorate math and science teaching in schools in the context of boosting Latino learning. "Of the students who studied...60 percent of Hispanic students who took an advanced mathematics course went on to enroll in a four-year postsecondary institution; of those who stopped at the intermediate level, only 16 percent went on to a four-year college or university." The remarks conclude with eight "meaningful steps" the Department is taking to improve Hispanic education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/10/10142003a.html>.



CHARACTER EDUCATION

At the Character Education Partnership's 10th National Forum, Secretary Paige called for the United States to do a better job of educating children -- not just academically but also by fostering good character -- in order to sustain the country's prominence on the world stage. He also announced that the Department will create a Technical Center for Character Education and Civic Engagement. The center will provide technical assistance to grant recipients; a web site with answers about resources and support; publications and seminars on effective programs; and internal training for Department staff. Since taking office, President Bush has increased funding for character education from \$8 million to \$25 million. In the last two years, the Department has awarded 47 grants to states and school districts, compared to the 46 awarded during the first six years of the Character Education Program. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/charactered/>. (Secretary Paige's remarks are available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2003/10/10162003.html>.)



SCHOOL CRIME AND SAFETY

NCES has unveiled two new reports on crime and safety in schools. The first, "Violence in U.S. Public Schools" (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004314>), presents the initial analysis of a nationally representative sample of public elementary and secondary school principals. Not surprisingly, the percentage of students who principals felt considered academics to be very important was inversely related to the prevalence of violent and serious violent incidents. However, in 1999-2000, seven percent of public schools accounted for 50 percent of the violent incidents that were reported, and a mere two percent of public schools accounted for half the serious violent incidents. The second, the annual "Indicators of School Crime and Safety" (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004004>), shows that most types of school crime dropped between 1995 and 2001, with the proportion of students saying they were victims of crimes dropping from 10 percent to six percent. Indeed, between 1993 and 2001, the percentage of high school students who reported being in a fight declined from 16 percent to 13 percent and students who reported carrying a weapon during the previous 30 days dropped from 12 percent to six percent. However, in 2001, eight percent of students reported being bullied at school during the last six months, up from five percent in 1999, and from 1997 to 2001 teachers reported being victims of 1.3 million crimes while at school, including 473,000 violent crimes and 817,000 thefts.

Also: The Bomb Threat CD-ROM (<http://www.threatplan.org>) is an interactive tool for schools dealing with bomb threats.



FROM THE INTERAGENCY STAFF...

The United States Army is proud to announce the second launch of eCYBERMISSION (<http://www.ecybermission.com/>), a web-based math, science, and technology competition for sixth-, seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade teams. Each team proposes a solution to a real problem in their community and competes for regional and national awards (like U.S. savings bonds). Last year's winning eighth-grade team devised a two-digit key code system to speed the handling of 9-1-1 calls. Registration is open through December 15.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"Our country is uniquely the product of two powerful forces: our love of freedom and our desire for knowledge. With God's grace, every good thing in this country flows from these two rivers of human aspiration. They become one mighty torrent: education is freedom. Our economic wealth, our national security, our rich culture, and our immense technological abilities are the product of our educational enterprise. Our educational endeavor will define our future. "

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (10/14/03)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Attention schools and libraries! Two important E-Rate deadlines are fast approaching. The deadline for postmarking invoices for FY 2002 recurring services is October 28, and schools and libraries whose discounts were approved before the start of FY 2003 face an October 29 deadline to notify administrators that their services have started. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.sl.universalservice.org/>.

On November 7, the Appalachian Regional Commission and Federal Interagency Committee on Education are sponsoring a federal showcase of K-12 education resources. Twelve federal agencies will present information and lead roundtable discussions with attendees. The deadline for registration is October 31. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=1878>.

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

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