

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

March 12, 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/>)

Over the last two weeks, the Department has released a variety of *No Child Left Behind* guidance. On March 2, in a letter to Chief State School Officers (<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/csso030204.html>), Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Ray Simon outlined a process for states to follow if they wish to seek an exception to the one percent cap for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities using alternate assessments. "We expect that it will be necessary to grant exceptions only for small increments above the one percent cap," Simon explained, "and that we will grant such exceptions only for a specified period of time..." A school district may initiate an exception request, or a state may initiate a request on behalf of an district. But as states consider whether to permit any exceptions, they should be mindful of how district exceptions will affect the overall one percent cap that applies at the state level. "[The agency] will not grant an exception to the state based on the state's liberal granting of exceptions to LEAs." Meanwhile, new guidance is available for preschool services (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/preschoolguidance.pdf>), and revised guidance is out for paraprofessionals (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.pdf>) and public school choice (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolchoiceguid.pdf>). Also, the Department has added a web site, <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/stateletters/>, that links to over 50 policy letters, giving the public access to the guidance the agency is providing their states and allowing states and districts to learn from each other. (Note: On Monday, the Department will announce new flexibility under the *No Child Left Behind Act's* highly qualified teacher provisions. Materials will be posted at <http://www.ed.gov/>.)

Secretary Paige is seeking public comment on a proposed regulation that would make it easier for schools to offer -- and for parents to choose -- same-sex classes and schools.

In general, current Title IX regulations prohibit single-sex classes, except in very specific situations, such as physical education classes involving body contact or sex education. Under the proposed amendments, schools would be permitted to offer single-sex classes as long as participation is voluntary (for example, if a school offers AP physics for girls, it must also offer a co-ed AP physics class) and fair. On the other hand, Title IX rarely applies to school admissions; therefore, a school district does not need to justify offering single-sex schools -- as long as certain conditions are met to ensure that all students have equal educational opportunities. Nevertheless, the proposed amendments would increase the flexibility for districts that offer single-sex schools by allowing districts to decide whether the opportunity offered for the excluded sex should be single-sex or co-ed. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/proprule/2004-1/030904a.html>.

In the near future, the Department will be sending out electronic information updates specifically designed for classroom teachers. To receive the updates, simply send your email address to Teachers@ed.gov.



TEACHER FORUM

The Department annually invites all 50 state Teachers of the Year to Washington, D.C. The forum is an opportunity to exchange best practices on teaching methods that have worked in improving student achievement. In addition, teachers were asked how the agency can best help them in their efforts to ensure that all children are learning. "In my home, the Teacher of the Year award was more important than the Nobel Prize," Secretary Paige said, citing his "family of teachers." "From my first day, I have insisted that the Department of Education seek your views as our nation's teachers, listen to you, and keep an open dialogue.... We need your wisdom and experience." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/03/03012004.html>.



MATH AND SCIENCE

The next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast (March 16, 8:00-9:00 ET) will discuss improving mathematics and science instruction. American students are lagging

behind in both subjects: one out of every three students in fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade performed at the lowest level on the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math assessment; a substantial achievement gap between white students and their black and Hispanic peers persists in math (despite gains for all three groups); and, in international math and science studies, students in nearly all other industrialized nations outperform U.S. eighth-graders. Not surprisingly, states are also reporting alarming gaps in the current number of math and science teachers meeting highly qualified provisions under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Yet, the situation is ripe for improvement. States are revising their math and science standards, and projections indicate the U.S. will need 240,000 new math and science teachers this decade -- all of whom must be highly qualified under the law. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=174>. (Remember, you can watch live and archived webcasts of each show at [http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/.](http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/))



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Deadlines are fast approaching for a number of grant competitions. The Excellence in Economic Education Program awards a single grant to a national non-profit organization that has as its primary purpose improvement of the quality of student understanding of economics and personal finance (closes 4/16). Pre-applications under the Early Reading First Program, which is open to high-need school districts (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/eligibility.html>) and public and private organizations within those districts, are due April 22. Complementing the formula-driven Reading First Program, Early Reading First supports local efforts to enhance the oral language, cognitive, and early reading skills of pre-school children, especially those from low-income families, through strategies, materials, and professional development. The State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program encourages states to develop and expand per-pupil facilities aid programs and to share in the costs related to the operation and management of charter schools (closes 7/1). <http://www.ed.gov/GrantApps/> lists all the competitions that are currently underway and provides links to electronic application packages, forms, and other key information.



COLLEGES ONLINE

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) College Opportunities On-Line (COOL) is a direct link to nearly 7,000 colleges and universities in the country. Whether for large universities, small liberal arts colleges, specialized schools, community colleges, career or technical colleges, or trade schools, IPEDS COOL offers information on enrollment, awards/degrees conferred, cost (updated for 2003-04) and financial aid, accreditation, and campus crime statistics. And, for the first time, it has graduation rates based on first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students; the rate is broken down by bachelor's degree-seeking students, gender, and race. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>.



MANAGING INFORMATION

Attention records and information management specialists! The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is inviting written views on issues related to implementing Section 207(e)(1)(A) of the E-Government Act of 2002. NARA is particularly interested in feedback on the following topics:

- The definition of "Government information on the Internet and other electronic records."
- Perceived barriers to effective management of "Government information on the Internet and other electronic records."
- Guidance tools for federal agencies that would assist in overcoming the barriers identified above.

Any comments should be sent to ERPWG@nara.gov no later than April 5. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/04-5091.htm>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"An equal chance can be given through choice. It is right and just to make choice available to students and parents. Some are overtly denied education, like John Hurt [who was seven-years-old when his school closed, rather than accept the end of segregation, and never recovered]. Others are covertly denied, millions of students who are not given a chance or a choice. Let us end indifference and disregard, uniting our country through the power of knowledge, the moral equity of our institutions, and the inclusive message of our learning environment. That's how this country will best provide educational, political, and cultural leadership for its citizens and for the rest of the world."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (3/5/04)



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 March 26-27 in Atlanta, Georgia, for teams from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, the Carolinas, and Tennessee. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hsinit/regional.doc>.

On April 21, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the White House and the Departments of Education, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor are hosting a conference to help faith-based and community organizations learn more about President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.fbc.gov/>. (Note: The deadline for registration is April 12.)

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

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