

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

January 3, 2003 (Happy New Year!)

...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/>)

The Department has released an updated version of the guidance on standards for highly qualified teachers. One of the most significant additions clarifies when teachers not certified by traditional means can be considered qualified. Although they must have a four-year degree and show mastery of subject matter, teachers moving through alternative certification programs may begin teaching before they are fully licensed. But, he or she must: receive high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused; participate in a program of intensive supervision; function as a teacher only for a specified period of time -- not to exceed three years; and demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full certification. Also, the guidance reiterates that only elementary school teachers do not have to demonstrate specific competence in academic subjects. Middle school teachers must show mastery of any subject they teach. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SIP/TitleIIguidance2002.doc>.

A December 17 "dear colleague" letter, from Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Susan Neuman and Agriculture's Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Eric Bost, addresses "whether it is permissible to use information from the school lunch program in disaggregating student assessment scores, in determining student eligibility for supplemental educational services, and, under certain circumstances, in prioritizing opportunities for public school choice." Actually, the National School Lunch Act allows both the disclosure of aggregate information and the disclosure of individual children certified for free and reduced-price school meals and the child's eligibility status to "persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of a federal [such as Title I] or state education program." That being said, schools are urged to establish procedures that limit access to a child's eligibility

status to as few individuals as possible. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SASA/letter121702.html>.



SPOTLIGHT: IMPOVERISHED YOUTHS

Last week, President Bush tapped Margaret Spellings, his chief domestic policy adviser, to lead a task force of Cabinet members (including Secretary Paige and the heads of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor) and five other high-ranking administration officials to improve federal services for impoverished youths. In a memo, the President instructs the task force to consider recommending expansion of successful programs and the consolidation or elimination of ones it views as ineffective. By April 30, the team is to provide its initial assessment of 117 federal programs, spread across 15 different agencies. By October 1, an action plan is due. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/20021223.html>.



NCLB ANNIVERSARY

The next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast (January 21, 8:00-9:00 ET) celebrates the first year of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the accomplishments of parents in improving education in communities nationwide. The show will feature "empowered" parents who are promoting reading competence through mentoring and tutoring, supporting testing and accountability as a mechanism for improving student academic performance, and embracing school choice through the development of parent-organized charter schools and supplemental services. In addition, the show will emphasize steps parents can take to promote educational excellence in the home. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=163>. (Note: As before, you can watch live and archived webcasts of each show by going to <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>.)



SECOND YEAR EVALUATION

The Year Two Evaluation Report of the Department's Public Charter Schools Program, prepared by SRI International, documents charter school and charter authorizer characteristics, accountability relationships, flexibility, and support received from external agencies. Among the findings:

- Charter schools serve a range of grade levels, often in unusual combinations. Indeed, the proportion of K-8 charter schools grew substantially from 1998-99 to 2000-01 -- from 16 percent of all charter schools to 29 percent.
- On average, more than half of the students in charter schools were members of ethnic minority groups. Yet, charter school teachers, like teachers in most regular public schools, were predominantly white.
- Of the charters that have come up for renewal, most schools have been renewed. Revocation of a school's charter tended to be related to problems in the areas of finances and management, rather than student performance.
- Fewer than half of all charter schools were eligible to depart from the laws and regulations that applied to regular public schools (such as teacher certification). Also, a higher proportion of newly created schools than conversion schools reported full authority.
- Fewer than one-quarter of charter schools reported having relationships with either for-profit or non-profit organizations, even though the majority of authorizers allow the involvement of these organizations.

Since 1998, SRI has been conducting the first national evaluation of the program. SRI's first evaluation report was completed in 2000; the third and final report is expected in 2003. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.sri.com/policy/cep/choice/pubcharter.html>.



HEA REAUTHORIZATION

To facilitate the receipt of comments and recommendations for amending and extending the Higher Education Act (HEA), the Education Department established a web site (<http://bc01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OPE/HEA/index.cfm>) from which users can transmit their ideas. The website lists seven unique questions for consideration (for example, "How can HEA programs be changed to eliminate any unnecessary burdens on students, institutions, or the federal government, yet maintain accountability of federal funds?")

and allows interested parties to express thoughts under seven major topics (from teacher preparation, recruitment, and development to international education and graduate programs) and numerous subtopics. All comments are requested on or before February 28. (Note: The agency's reauthorization goals and objectives are available at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/reauthorization/HEGoals.html>.)



RESEARCH COMPETITIONS

The Department's new Institute of Education Sciences is requesting applications under four programs. The Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research Program supports research to determine, through randomized experiments, whether one or more curricula produces educationally meaningful effects on children. The Reading Comprehension Research Program seeks to (1) understand factors in reading comprehension that contribute to the achievement gap for students, (2) build on that understanding by developing targeted interventions and teaching practices, and (3) develop assessments that efficiently identify weaknesses in comprehension that can be addressed through instruction. The Cognition and Student Learning Program brings advances in cognitive science and neuroscience to bear on significant educational programs. The Interagency Education Research Initiative, in collaboration with the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, funds research that investigates the effectiveness of educational interventions in reading, math, and science as they are implemented in varied school settings with diverse student populations. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/IES/funding.html>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"An unacceptably large number of youth fail each year to develop the academic, social, and citizenship skills necessary to succeed in our country. For example, 60 percent of fourth-graders from low-income families cannot read at grade level, 2.6 million teens use illicit substances each month, and 400,000 teens commit violent crimes each year. Many of these young people grow up in economic and social environments that place them at a significant disadvantage. The federal government has spent billions of dollars over the last 30 years in a variety of programs to address these issues.... Some of these programs have been very successful. However, overall, the federal government's

efforts and programs to assist disadvantaged young people have been fragmented and not as successful as hoped."

-- President George W. Bush (12/23/02)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, January 31, is National Job Shadow Day. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.jobshadow.org/>.

The Consortium for School Networking's 8th Annual School Networking Conference is scheduled for February 25-28 in Arlington, Virginia. Over 500 district, state, and national education technology leaders will focus on:

- How can real-time assessment change instruction?
- What is data-driven decision making?
- What is scientifically based research, as required by the *No Child Left Behind*?
- How does e-Learning address equity?
- What is the promise of broadband in schools?
- How do we define literacy for the 21st century?

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.k12schoolnetworking.org/>.

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

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