

# Archived Information



## ED REVIEW

October 7, 2005

...a bi-weekly update on U.S. Department of Education activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community and other stakeholders

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HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA (<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/>)

In recent hearings before the Congress, Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Henry Johnson (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/09/09222005.html>) and Secretary Spellings (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/09/09292005.html>) testified on the agency's response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Johnson (speaking just days before Rita made landfall) deftly outlined the flexibility and waivers granted to the most affected states as well as reiterated the administration's funding proposal for K-12 students, while Spellings (speaking post-Rita) announced two "temporary options" on certain aspects of adequate yearly progress (AYP). States may adopt one or both.

- **Option 1: Exercise Existing Natural Disaster Provisions of NCLB.** The *No Child Left Behind Act* allows a school or school district to delay, for up to one year, its school improvement timeline if the reason for not making AYP is "due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster..." Consequently, any state or district with schools (1) that are located in the "major disaster" areas declared by President Bush [Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas] and (2) that have been closed for a significant period of time as a result of damage from Hurricanes Katrina or Rita may implement this delay for the 2005-06 school year without a federal waiver. In addition, the Secretary is willing to consider waivers for other schools and districts that have been adversely affected by the hurricanes due to enrolling large numbers of displaced students and/or other factors.
- **Option 2: Establish a Separate Subgroup for Displaced Students.** For the 2005-06 school year, the Secretary is willing to consider waiver requests from states for schools or districts heavily impacted by the hurricanes that would allow them to establish a separate subgroup of displaced students for NCLB accountability and reporting purposes. (If a waiver is granted, the state could decide not to include those students in any other subgroup.) Then, once test results are in at the end of the school year, the Department, in conjunction with the affected states, will make

decisions about school and district accountability. Having separately identified achievement information will facilitate informed decisions about how such students performed and how, and to what extent, accountability determinations should be applied next year.

Notably, under either option, states must "comply with current NCLB requirements for assessment, accountability, and reporting. All students, including displaced students, must be tested on state assessments, and states must ensure that their policies help schools and districts meet the AYP target of testing at least 95 percent of students."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/050929.html>.

Lawmakers are still debating various supplemental funding proposals for education, but some federal education aid is now on the way to the Gulf Coast. First, Louisiana was awarded a \$20.9 million grant to reopen charter schools damaged by the hurricanes, create 10 new charter schools, and expand existing charter schools to accommodate students displaced by hurricane damage

(<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09302005.html>). Second, last week, President Bush signed into law the *Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Act*, granting affected states access to \$25.9 million in federal funds for vocational rehabilitation services without the states having to provide matching funds (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/10/10032005.html>).

Also, the Department's Hurricane Help for Schools web site

(<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/schools/>) continues to make "matches" (as of October 6, 315!) between schools requesting supplies and companies and organizations looking to help, and the USA Freedom Corps is encouraging students, parents, and educators to visit <http://www.usafreedomcorpskids.gov/> to find ideas on how youth can help those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

Although she opened her remarks with hurricane-related news, the primary purpose of the Secretary's appearance before the House Education and the Workforce Committee was to provide an update on *No Child Left Behind* implementation. "Thanks to our

nation's latest education report card, we now have proof that high standards and accountability are paying off," she said. "Scores are at all-time highs for African-American and Hispanic students, especially in the early grades. We've made more progress within the last five years than in the previous 30 combined. Clearly, we are on the right track.... At the same time, I have been listening to the concerns of parents, educators, and policymakers closest to our students.... Nobody I know has ever passed a perfect law. Implementing public policy is an organic process." As proof, the rest of her testimony describes the steps the Department has already taken (e.g., pilot agreements for supplemental educational services) or will take to make the law "sensible and workable." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/hearings/109th/fc/spellingsnclb092905/wl092905.htm>.

One day earlier (September 28), the Secretary discussed the need for high school reform at the National Association of Manufacturers' Board of Directors meeting. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/09/09292005.html>.

The Department has placed all of its *No Child Left Behind* fact sheets on one web site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/opeds/factsheets/>. Among the categories: academic subjects, information for parents, and material on student achievement.



## RESPONDING TO TRAUMATIC EVENTS

The next "Education News Parents Can Use" (October 18, 8:00-9:00 ET) broadcast will explore what can be done to keep children safe -- before, during, and after school -- in the face of a natural catastrophe or other crisis. Carefully drawing from the nation's experience with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the program will highlight the ways that local, state, and federal agencies, as well as teachers, principals, law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, and others, can respond when children face a crisis. Don't miss the special profile of a Florida school that is effectively serving more than 100 students displaced by Hurricane Katrina. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>. (You can watch live and archived webcasts at <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>.)

Also: Early next week, the Department will release a brochure, based on discussions with some three dozen experts who work with students, with practical information for parents, students, teachers, coaches, counselors, and administrators who are coping

with the aftermath of a natural disaster. This release will coincide with a series of meetings in the Southeast with teachers and principals in schools that have received displaced students. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/>.

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## STRIVING READERS

In a recent *Federal Register* notice, the Department modified the eligibility criteria for the Striving Readers program so that states are eligible to apply on behalf of one or more school districts and clarified the grades that must be targeted and students who must be served by the program's school-level and targeted intervention components. And, on October 13, the Department will conduct a briefing via conference call. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/>. (Note: The previously announced September 14 notice of intent to apply for the grant is non-binding. The deadline for all applications is November 14.)

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## UNESCO CONFERENCE

Throughout this week, Secretary Spellings has been representing the United States at the 33rd United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) general conference in Paris. (First Lady Laura Bush is the nation's official ambassador but was unable to attend the session this year.) UNESCO's ambitious "Education for All" campaign calls for universal primary education by 2015; a 50 percent expansion in adult literacy; and increased opportunity for "excluded and marginalized" populations. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.unesco.org/>.

Also: Planning is underway for the agency's sixth annual International Education Week, November 14-18 (coinciding with American Education Week). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://iew.state.gov/>.

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## PROJECTIONS TO 2014

Tired of dated data? The National Center for Education Statistics' "Projections of Education Statistics to 2014" projects key statistics, such as student enrollment and expenditures, for elementary and secondary schools and degree-granting institutions. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005074>.

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## QUOTE TO NOTE

"*No Child Left Behind* is provoking a lot of discussion about how we can best help the most students. We are learning from our experiences and from the research as it develops. Our ongoing conversations about remaining issues are right and appropriate. If *No Child Left behind* had not become law, I'm not sure we would be having these conversations."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (9/29/05)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

On October 20, the White House and several Cabinet agencies will host a conference in Milwaukee to help faith-based and other community organizations learn more about the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The conference is free, but pre-registration is required. Please register by October 14. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.fbc.gov/>.

The 2006 National Conference on Aviation and Space Education is set for October 19-21 in Arlington, Virginia. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ncase.info/>.

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**Please feel free to contact the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs with any questions:**  
Special Assistant -- Tom Bolvin, (202) 205-3809, <mailto:Thomas.Bolvin@ed.gov>

Program Analyst -- Adam Honeysett, (202) 401-3003, <mailto:Adam.Honeysett@ed.gov>

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