

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

June 2, 2006

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



NAEP SCIENCE

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, administered last year to fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students across the U.S., shows mixed progress in science achievement. On the one hand, fourth-grade scores were higher in 2005 than in both 1996 and 2000, when previous science tests were conducted. And, since 2000, fourth-grade black and Hispanic students' scores rose seven and 11 points, respectively, narrowing the achievement gaps. On the other hand, there was no overall improvement among eighth-graders, and twelfth-grade scores (though not significantly different from 2000) have decreased since 1996. These findings mirror the findings from the reading and math tests released last fall. "The results illustrate the need to introduce *No Child Left Behind's* accountability principles to...high schools," Secretary Spellings stated, alluding to President's High School Reform Initiative and American Competitiveness Initiative. "The results also underscore the importance of reading and math. Gains made in these 'foundational subjects' have a positive impact across the academic spectrum. As we work with states to add science assessments by the 2007-08 academic year, we will not let up in our efforts to bring all students up to grade level in reading and math." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://nationsreportcard.gov/science_2005/.

Note: In addition to national results, scores were reported for 44 states in fourth- and eighth-grades. Most states showed no improvement in either grade, but five states -- California, Hawaii, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Virginia -- improved between 2000 and 2005 in both grades.



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

Over the last couple of weeks, Secretary Spellings has been promoting the *No Child Left Behind Act's* principles in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, at the Broader Middle East and North African (BMENA) Education Ministerial (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/05/05232006.html>), and in Moscow, Russia, at the Group of 8 (G-8) Education Ministerial (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/05/05302006.html>). While in Moscow, the Secretary signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with her Russian counterpart, expanding cooperation and exchanges in the field of education (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/05/05312006.html>).

Are you sometimes confused by the agency's common fiscal terms, like "comparability," "maintenance of effort," and "supplement, not supplant?" Never fear! Newly unveiled Title I guidance tackles these terms -- and more. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/fiscalguid.pdf>.

Meanwhile, 33 states have now received feedback on their standards and assessments under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, with Tennessee and Utah becoming the third and fourth states to have their assessment systems approved. (Reviewers do not look at the standards and assessments themselves, but at documents showing that they meet the law's requirements.) For comparison, review letters are posted online. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/adms/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/>.



CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The last "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast of the 2005-06 season (June 20, 8:00-9:00 ET) will look at the ways in which state and federal agencies are working with schools and families to promote active, healthy lifestyles in students. Research confirms what parents and teachers have long known: students who are well nourished and physically fit are much more productive in the classroom and happier at home. In fact, healthy eating and exercise habits aid cognitive development and academic achievement in children, as well as enable a wide range of health benefits -- like lowering the risk of

disease and obesity -- that can enhance students' lives now and in the future. Conversely, unhealthy choices can burden children with short- and long-term health problems and make it difficult for them to succeed in school. Among the topics that will be discussed: the revised Food Pyramid; the Education Department's physical education grants; and the beverage industry's recent decision to remove all sugary sodas from public schools. 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/>.)



GRANTS FORECAST

Be sure to review the FY 2006 Grants Forecast (as of May 15) at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html>, which lists virtually all programs and competitions under which the Department has invited or expects to invite applications for awards and provides actual or estimated dates for the transmittal of applications under these programs. The lists are in the form of charts -- organized according to principal program offices -- and will be updated regularly through July 2006. (Note: This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the Department of Education.)

Also: The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) awards grants to states and school districts for model programs providing for the establishment, improvement, or expansion of foreign language study for elementary and secondary school students. A competitive priority, as part of the National Security Language Initiative, supports projects that teach one or more of the following critical need languages: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and those in the Indic, Iranian, and Turkic language families. There is a cost-sharing component, although it may be waived for districts. The deadline for applications is June 30. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/oela/OELAprograms/4_FLAP.htm.



UPDATE: AC GRANTS

In a statement, the Department clarified that students who participate in dual enrollment programs, whereby they take college classes while enrolled in high school, may be

eligible for Academic Competitiveness (AC) grants. When Congress created AC grants, it limited first-year eligibility to those students who have "not been previously enrolled in a program of undergraduate education." However, this restriction would only apply to students admitted into a formal program of study that leads to a degree, certificate, or other credential. Within the higher education community, these students are identified as "regular students." In general, the agency would not consider students who attend college to complete their high school diploma requirements to have been so enrolled as "regular students." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/05/05022006.html>.



CONDITION OF EDUCATION 2006

On June 1, the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released its annual report (required by law) on the condition and progress of education in the U.S. "The Condition of Education 2006" includes 50 indicators in five main areas -- participation in education, learner outcomes, student effort and educational progress, elementary and secondary education contexts, and postsecondary education contexts -- and a special analysis on international assessments. Trends show "both promises and challenges." For example, progress on the NAEP in reading and science (see above) is uneven or static, but math scores have improved. Similarly, American progress on international assessments is varied, with fourth-graders' math and science scores static but eighth-graders' scores increasing. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>.

Also: Akin to the "Condition," "The National Indian Education Study" (NIES) is a two-part study designed to describe the condition of education for American Indian/Alaska Native students in the U.S. Part I of this study, released last week, presents the performance of this group of students on the 2005 NAEP reading and math tests. In both fourth- and eighth-grade, American Indian/Alaska Native students had lower average scores and proficiency rates compared to all other students in the nation. Yet, if compared to specific racial/ethnic groups, American Indian/Alaska Native students' average scores were higher than black students. Part II of this study, to be released later this summer, is a survey of the educational experiences of American Indian/Alaska Native students, their teachers, and their schools. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/NIES/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"Education is the foundation of all our children's success. It advances freedom, opportunity, and understanding. It strengthens economies, curbs the spread of diseases, and improves the quality of life for entire populations. It gives us hope for a brighter future. It teaches us to see beyond ignorance and bigotry and to respect and appreciate cultures that are not our own."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (5/24/06),
addressing the BMENA Education Ministerial in Egypt



UPCOMING EVENTS

Don't forget! From June through August, the Department will convene 14 Teacher-to-Teacher regional workshops for teachers to learn from fellow educators who have had significant success in raising student achievement. Registration is free, and meals and refreshments will be provided during scheduled activities, but participants are responsible for their transportation and lodging. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <https://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/About.asp>. (Note: Some workshops are full: Atlanta [6/12-13], Boston [7/12-13], and Seattle [8/8-9].)

Mark your calendars now for the 2006 National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Conference, September 10-13 in Washington, D.C. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whhbcu/edlite-index.html>.

Please feel free to contact the Office of Communications and Outreach with any questions:

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