

Archived Information



THE ACHIEVER

July 2, 2002

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

In a landmark ruling that reaffirmed the rights of parents to control educational opportunities for their children, the Supreme Court voted to uphold the Ohio school choice program that provides tuition vouchers to nearly 4,000 families for use at public or private schools of their choice. This ruling overturns the court ruling in 2000, which stated that such programs violate the First Amendment.

This decision is about choosing the needs of students over the demands of the status quo. Cleveland's choice program began because of years of serious academic, financial, and bureaucratic problems in the city's public schools. The school choice program is a lifeline for nearly 4,000 students in Cleveland, giving them and their parents hope beyond an underachieving school. "Children need and deserve access to a quality education, and their parents should be empowered to help them achieve their dreams," said Secretary Rod Paige.

For more information about the Cleveland School Choice decision, please visit:
<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/media/news/062702a.html>

Upon the signing of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams, the second President of the United States, wrote to his wife:

"I am apt to believe that this day will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore."

Happy Independence Day!!!

8,600 TITLE I SCHOOLS LISTED AS “IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT”

The U.S. Department of Education is reporting information as provided by the states as part of a 1994 law that pre-dates President Bush’s *No Child Left Behind Act*. Under the old law, states were required to define “adequate yearly progress.” Since then, states have chosen many ways to report their data, and not every state defines achieving and underachieving schools the same way.

Some states define progress as closing the achievement gap between sub-groups of students. Others define it as meeting absolute targets on state tests. A third way is measuring growth or progress on state tests from one year to another. No matter what the method, the state establishes the target.

The release of this data confirms something we already know—America’s schools need help. Since 1965, the federal government has spent more than \$321 billion on education, yet over the last two decades, reading and math scores have been stagnant.

Under *No Child Left Behind*, states will revisit their definition of “adequate yearly progress”—to meet the goals of closing the achievement gap and ensuring that every child is learning proficiently. Unlike prior years, from now on states will be required to provide the names of schools that are not reaching their goals for student achievement.

Students attending these schools will have the option to choose and attend a higher performing school in the district. School districts are required to help cover the costs of transportation for students who exercise this option to enroll in a higher performing school.

To view a press release on this announcement, please visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/07-2002/07012002a.html>

For a detailed explanation of “adequate yearly progress,” please visit:

<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/start/glossary/index.html>

For more information about taking advantage of supplemental services or choosing another school, please visit: <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/start/facts/gettingkids.html>

ALABAMA, COLORADO, AND FLORIDA ARE “READING FIRST”

Alabama, Colorado, and Florida were the first states to receive *Reading First*, the new grants aimed at helping schools and school districts improve reading achievement by using scientifically based curricula and instruction.

Alabama received \$15.5 million this year, and will receive \$102 million over six years; Colorado received \$9 million this year and will receive \$59 million over six years; and Florida received \$45.6 million this year and will receive \$300 million over six years. The six-year totals are subject to each state's successful implementation of *Reading First* and congressional appropriations. This year's funds first became available to states on July 1 and are released upon approval of their state applications.

Every Reading First Grant will do four things in each state:

- ✓ Encourage comprehensive reforms based on science.
- ✓ Ensure early and ongoing assessment of every child's progress using the best analytical tools.
- ✓ Provide professional development and support for teachers.
- ✓ Help monitor reading achievement gains in grades K-3.

"*Reading First*" will help transform reading instruction from the fads of the past into the most focused, early reading initiative we have ever undertaken," said Secretary Rod Paige. "The program's focus on scientific evidence, including the essential elements of proven reading instruction, constitutes a recipe for success. We can now ensure that *all* children will be given the tools and instruction they need to read well by the end of the third grade."

For more information about Reading First, please visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/index.html>

CLOSE-UP ON *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND*

SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES = GREAT TOOLS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

The term "supplemental services" refers to extra academic help available to students in reading, language arts, and math. This extra help can be given to students before or after school, or on weekends. Tutoring and remedial classes are just some options that will be available to students across America.

If your child attends a school that has not been making enough progress in student achievement, then you will not have to pay for these services yourself. In most cases, the school district will pay for the services directly.

There are a number of organizations approved by each state to deliver these services, including non-profit and for-profit companies, local colleges, churches, synagogues, mosques, and charities. School districts will provide parents with a list of eligible programs in the community.

Quality help is very important and this law requires that "supplemental educational service" suppliers adhere to high-quality, research-based instruction. *No Child Left Behind* requires school districts to provide information about every available program in the area—including information about the providers, their qualifications, and their effectiveness.

There are some rules about who is entitled to these services. If your family is classified as low-income by your school district and your child's school is designated as "needing improvement" for the second year, then your child is eligible. By law, school districts are required to promptly tell you if your child's school is in need of improvement. Your state also is required to publish a list of schools that need improvement. According to numbers

submitted by the state departments of education, there are at least 8,600 schools nationwide that are considered in need of improvement.

To find the contact information for your State Department of Education, please visit:
<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/where/sea.html>

For more information on supplemental services, go to:
<http://www.nclb.gov/parents/supplementalservices/index.html> or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HOSTED NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL CONFERENCE

The U.S. Department of Education sponsored the 2002 National Charter School Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 19-23. More than 3,000 charter school advocates and practitioners from around the country gathered to discuss school choice, charter school governance, facilities financing and operation startup, among other topics.

Conference highlights included keynote addresses by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, Deputy Secretary of Education William Hansen, Under Secretary of Education Eugene Hickok, and former Secretary of Education William Bennett. Their presentations focused on the charter school components of *No Child Left Behind*, as well as President Bush's 2003 budget and how it will help charter school facilities financing.

For quick facts on charter schools, please visit:
<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/start/facts/charter.html>

We hope you find the No Child Left Behind e-newsletter of interest. We will be sending these out regularly. You can also check out our website, which is updated daily, and serves as a one-stop shop for parents and families, teachers and principals, local and state officials, and members of the business and civic communities. If you have any questions or suggestions about topics you would like to know more about, please e-mail nochildleftbehind@ed.gov. If you would like to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please e-mail listproc@inet.ed.gov, and write this message: unsubscribe NoChildLeftBehind.