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ED REVIEW

July 1, 2005

...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/>)

Acknowledging that a significant number of high-poverty schools are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) because of challenges in mathematics education and instruction, the Department is developing a national strategic plan in mathematics. Department officials are operating on three basic assumptions: (1) teachers cannot teach what they do not understand; (2) students cannot learn what they have not been taught; and (3) students cannot perform well on high-stakes state assessment exams if they have limited access to high-quality curricula material. Also, to assist in the effort, the Title I and Mathematics and Science Partnerships program offices have formed a steering committee comprised of leading educators, policymakers, and researchers; the committee members have expertise in math, math education, Title I administration, educating children from impoverished backgrounds, and public policy related to *No Child Left Behind*. Over the next six months, the committee will conduct regional meetings with school district administrators, curriculum coordinators, and other school personnel to plan, develop, and review the strategic plan. A final draft of the plan will be available by September 2005. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/mathsci/titleimath.html>. (Comments are welcome at TitleI.Math@ed.gov.)

Speaking of educators, paraprofessionals now have an additional semester to meet the *No Child Left Behind Act's* "highly qualified" standard. The law specifies that paraprofessionals with instructional duties in Title I schools have until January 8, 2006, to meet the standard. But, in a recent letter, Deputy Secretary Ray Simon shifted the deadline to the close of the 2005-06 school year -- aligning it with a similar deadline for teachers. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/06/06172005a.html>.

Five states -- Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia -- are the first five states to submit evidence of compliance with *No Child Left Behind's* standards and assessment requirements. For comparison, their approval letters are posted online. It is expected each state will have more than one approval letter over the next year. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/>.



CARING ABOUT EVERY CHILD

On June 24, Secretary Spellings addressed the National Parent Teacher Association's annual convention, urging parents to be interested in the experiences of all children, including those who have slipped through the cracks. "We have double duty," Spellings, the mother of two daughters, said, "to advocate for all children, not just your own, and to make your community care about all children as well.... Achievement for all students must matter to all of us. At some point in the future, if 40 percent of Americans don't have the skills to hold a job, we'll see crime, hopelessness, and despair on the rise." Then, turning to the organization itself, the Secretary noted PTA's "unique role to play" in the success of *No Child Left Behind*. "You are a 'non-vested stakeholder.' You are not on the payroll. You are not captive to the system. You work outside the system to make the system better and are free to ask the toughest questions. You do what you do because you want to, because you believe that all kids deserve to be educated. You serve the kids in the system, not the grown-ups. Your mission explicitly states that your focus is on the parents and the children." Her request? In the next five years, the PTA reach twice as many parents as today. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/06/06242005.html>.



APPROPRIATIONS BILL

That same day (June 24), the House approved its FY 2006 education appropriations bill. In a statement (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/06/06172005.html>), Secretary Spellings praised the creation of an \$100 million Teacher Incentive Fund, which will reward teachers and principals who show progress in raising achievement and closing the achievement gap, and increased funding for Pell Grants (see more below).

Attention now moves to the Senate. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/news.html#06action>.



PAYING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Earlier this month, the Bush administration sent Congress a set of recommendations for revamping student aid programs under the *Higher Education Act*. In total, these proposals would generate over \$27 billion in benefits to students over the next 10 years, including the following:

- providing greater access to disadvantaged students to pursue high-quality education (components include strengthening the Pell Grant program by eliminating its budgetary shortfall while increasing annual disbursements to qualified students; Enhanced Pell Grant funding of \$3.3 billion intended to encourage students to take demanding high school courses; and increasing loan limits for some undergraduate, graduate, and professional students);
- making permanent the expanded loan forgiveness provisions of the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004, which forgive up to \$17,500 in loans for highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers serving low-income communities);
- investing \$500 million in a new Math and Science Scholars Program to encourage students to enter the vital fields of math and science; and
- providing \$1.25 billion for Community College Access Grants through the Department to expand dual enrollment programs designed to bolster college enrollment and completion, particularly among low-income students.

Over one million more low-income students are receiving Pell Grants this year than when the President first took office, and, under the President's FY 2006 budget request, funding for the Pell Grant program will have grown by \$4.9 billion (or 56 percent) since FY 2001. Moreover, overall postsecondary student financial aid will have increased from \$48 billion to \$78 billion. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/2006-postsecondary-budget.html>.



NEW NOMINATIONS

President Bush has nominated Stephanie Johnson Monroe to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and Terrell Halaska to be Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs. Recently, Monroe served as Chief Counsel for the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. Previously, she was Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, Children and Families Subcommittee. Halaska currently serves as a Special Assistant to President for Domestic Policy. Earlier, she served as Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department of Health and Human Services. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/06/06232005.html> AND <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/06/06302005.html>



RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is inviting comments on developed priorities. The priorities were devised by Russ Whitehurst, the director of IES, and must be approved by the 15-member National Board for Education Sciences. Still, before proposing the priorities to the board, he is seeking public input. The long-term goals associated with IES' priorities are three-fold: first, to develop or identify a substantial number of programs, practices, policies, and approaches that are effective in enhancing academic achievement and that are widely deployed and implemented; second, to identify what does not work and what is problematic, and thereby encourage innovating and further research; and third, to develop dissemination strategies and sources of information on the results of education research that are routinely used by educators, policymakers, and the general public when making education decisions. IES' "over-arching priority" is research that contributes to improved academic achievement for all students. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/proprule/2005-2/061605a.html>. (Comments must be received on or before August 16.)



QUOTE TO NOTE

"I know how hard it is to compete for attention in the high-speed, interconnected, I-pod lovin', 24-7 media-rich world in which we are raising our children. I am living it.... It's not easy to stay involved in your child's school, especially if you're a single parent like I was, or a parent who doesn't speak English, or a working mom.... [But] *No Child Left Behind* gives parents information about their school's performance; gives parents options if their local school isn't serving their needs; and provides free tutoring for their children who are struggling. In fact, the word 'parent' is mentioned 651 times in *No Child Left Behind*. The law puts parents front and center! We as parents now know more about our schools than ever before and have many more options to ensure our children's success."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (6/24/05)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Don't forget! There are two more public meetings scheduled to solicit feedback on proposed regulations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act: San Antonio (7/7) and Washington, DC (7/12). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>.

Next month, both Secretary Spellings and Deputy Secretary Ray Simon will speak at the Education Commission of the States' National Forum on Education Policy (July 11-15). Also, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education Susan Sclafani and Mississippi Superintendent of Education (and Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education-nominee) Henry Johnson will participate in workshops focused on improving math and science education, and Special Assistant Alan Endicott will facilitate a roundtable on helping states implement the law. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ecs.org/nf2005>.

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

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