

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

September 22, 2006

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



BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS

Secretary Spellings recently concluded her Back to School tour of the country with new grant announcements, two major addresses, and a whirlwind visit to Pennsylvania. First, she announced 33 grants, totaling \$17 million, to boost the participation of low-income students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and tests (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09082006.html>). Second, she delivered remarks at a National Historically Black College and Universities Week conference at Howard University in Washington, D.C., reminding students of the availability of Academic Competitiveness and National SMART grants (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09122006.html>). Third, she visited Wilson Elementary School in Imperial, Pennsylvania, spoke to the National Conference of Editorial Writers (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09142006.html>) in Pittsburgh, and read to children in the Reach Out and Read program at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Finally, in suburban Virginia, she announced the first of dozens of grants, totaling \$22 million, to help students learn critical foreign languages (http://www.ed.gov/news/photos/2006/0920/edlite-0920_1.html).



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

Yesterday (September 21), Secretary Spellings joined National Urban League President Marc Morial in Columbus, Ohio, to announce a new collaboration aimed at increasing parental involvement in selecting supplemental educational services. A town hall meeting immediately followed the announcement, allowing parents to learn about the services, receive information on educational providers in the area, register their children, and

speak to families who have benefited from such services. Similar town hall meetings are scheduled for Broward County, Florida, and Gary, Indiana. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09222006a.html>.

This morning, the Secretary will name the initial batch of 2006 *No Child Left Behind* Blue Ribbon Schools. (A second batch will be named next month, after states complete Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP] calculations.) This program recognizes high performing schools (schools whose students, regardless of background, perform in the top 10 percent on their state assessments [public] or nationally normed assessments [private]) and dramatically improving schools (schools whose students, at least 40 percent of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, significantly improved on tests to score in at least the top 40 percent statewide). Chief State School Officers nominate public schools. The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) nominates private schools. Of the schools nominated by each state, at least one-third must have more than 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds. All recipients must meet AYP requirements, as defined by their states. Schools will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., November 10-11. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html>.

In other K-12 news:

- In a letter to Chief State School Officers, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Henry Johnson provided an update on the Department's priorities for the new school year, including improving assessments for limited English proficient (LEP) students and implementing the growth model pilot. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/stateletters/priorityltr.pdf>.
 - Acting Undersecretary and Chief of Staff David Dunn discussed reauthorization of *No Child Left Behind* at the Business Roundtable's fourth annual forum on the law. A transcript will be available shortly. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.businessroundtable.org/>.
 - According to educators surveyed by the Center on Education Policy, Reading First is having a positive and significant impact on student achievement. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.cep-dc.org/pubs/readingfirst/CEP-ReadingFirst.pdf>.
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LEP REGULATIONS

Speaking of limited English proficient (LEP) students, the Department has unveiled final regulations for testing and evaluating LEP students under *No Child Left Behind*. The rules differ only slightly from the proposed regulations published two years ago, defining a "recently arrived" LEP student as one who has attended school in the U.S. for 12 months or less -- compared to 10 months or less -- and requiring the reporting of "exemptions." Nevertheless, the rules codify greater flexibility on assessment, while holding the line on accountability. All "recently arrived" LEP students are exempt from one administration of the state's reading test. They must still take an English language proficiency test and the math test, but the scores do not have to be used in calculating AYP until the second administration of the test. For AYP determinations, the scores of former LEP students may be included in the LEP category for up to two years. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/lepfactsheet.html>.

Note: Among the What Works Clearinghouse's latest batch of intervention reports is one on English language learning initiatives. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/>.



REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION

On September 19, after a year of public hearings and meetings, Secretary Spellings received the final report of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. "Among the vast and varied institutions that make up U.S. higher education, we have found much to applaud but also much that requires urgent reform," the members explained. "As Americans, we can take great pride in our Nobel Prizes, our scientific breakthroughs, our Rhodes Scholars. But we must not be blind to the less inspiring realities of post-secondary education in our country." Specifically, the Commission offers a series of recommendations designed to improve accessibility, affordability, and accountability:

- expand higher education access and success by improving student preparation and persistence, addressing non-academic barriers, and providing significant increases in aid to low-income students;

- restructure the entire student financial aid system to combat the escalating cost of higher education, adding new incentives to manage costs and measure performance;
- create a "culture of accountability and transparency" across higher education, with new systems of data measurement and a publicly available information database;
- embrace a "culture of continuous innovation and quality improvement" by developing new pedagogies, curricula, and technologies, particularly in math and science literacy;
- formulate a national strategy for life-long learning so all citizens understand the importance of participating in higher education throughout their lives; and
- increase federal investment in areas critical to global competitiveness and re-commit to attracting the brightest minds from across the U.S. and around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/pre-pub-report.pdf>.

(Note: On September 26, the Secretary will detail her action plan for higher education at the National Press Club.)

In other higher education news:

- The Secretary announced that the national student loan default rate is 5.1 percent, an increase from last year's record-low rate of 4.5 percent but 77 percent less than the all-time high of 22.4 percent. All of the nation's colleges and universities have default rates low enough to remain eligible for federal financial aid programs. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html>.
- A report from the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, "Mortgaging Our Future," focuses on how financial barriers created by rising college prices and insufficient need-based grant aid lower bachelor's degree attainments and undercut America's competitiveness in the global economy. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfa/mof.pdf>.
- Dr. Arthur Levine, former president of Columbia University's Teachers College, has released the second report in his four-part series on schools of education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.edschools.org/>.



GLOBAL LITERACY

Earlier this week, First Lady Laura Bush hosted the first White House Conference on Global Literacy at the New York Public Library. The conference showcased initiatives being used in developing countries with high illiteracy rates, including work supported by

the U.S. government, the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and private entities. Panels focused on three areas of literacy: Mother-Child Literacy and Intergenerational Learning; Literacy for Health; and Literacy for Economic Self-Sufficiency. Next, UNESCO will hold regional conferences, gathering regional experiences, disseminating effective practices, and mobilizing partners and resources. More than 771 million adults around the world cannot read. Eighty-five percent of them live in just 35 countries, concentrated in regions of poverty, and over two-thirds are women. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.globalliteracy.gov/>. (Note: The Secretary moderated one of the panels. Her remarks are at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/09/09182006.html>.)



INTERNATIONAL REPORT

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) "Education at a Glance," which tracks 30 industrialized nations, America's international standing in education continues to erode. For example, the U.S. graduation rate is pegged at 75 percent, placing it 17th out of 22 countries, behind the OECD average of 81 percent. Similarly, several countries have surpassed the U.S. in individuals with a college degree; the U.S., at 39 percent, now ranks seventh, behind Canada (53 percent), Japan (52 percent), and Korea (49 percent). Also, the U.S.'s 54 percent "survival rate" (percentage of individuals who enroll in college and ultimately receive a degree) is one of the OECD's lowest and well below the OECD average of 70 percent. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2006/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"By investing in literacy and education, governments build their economies. When people read, they're more likely to participate in business and trade, which leads to greater economic development. And literacy helps both men and women provide for themselves, their families, and their communities. Countries prosper with an educated workforce."

-- First Lady Laura Bush (9/18/06),

White House Conference on Global Literacy



UPCOMING EVENTS

To give the public an overview of Part B regulations implementing the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will be holding a series of community-based meetings. These meetings, which start next week, are free, and no registration is required. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/cbpm/>.

October 30 and November 1, the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) will host its fifth Celebrate Our Rising Stars Summit in Washington, D.C. The theme is "Strategies to Close the Achievement Gap." There is a registration fee. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE TO GO <http://www.oelasummit.org/>.

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

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