

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

February 28, 2003

...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.nochildleftbehind.gov/>)

On January 12, Secretary Paige announced \$17 million in grants to fund projects that improve the quality of assessment instruments and systems used by states to measure the achievement of all students -- especially those with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The grants are going to consortia of State Education Agencies (SEAs) and other organizations, including institutions of higher education and research institutions. Of the nine grants, which range from roughly \$1.4 million to \$2.3 million, four projects address the assessment of English proficiency, two focus on appropriate test design and accommodations for LEP students, one examines accommodations for special education students, one aims to improve the technical quality of alternate assessments for those with severe disabilities, and one seeks to enhance state capacity to evaluate and record the alignment between state academic standards and assessments. These funds are in addition to the \$370 million in grants provided last summer to all SEAs to help meet the testing requirements under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/02-2003/02122003a.html>.

The Department recently updated its non-regulatory guidance for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (after-school) program. The document is designed to help SEAs and eligible public and private schools and organizations understand how they can successfully participate in this initiative. Since the time that the previous version was released, in May 2002, the agency has clarified and expanded the guidance in response to inquiries received from the field. The *No Child Left Behind Act* transferred administration of the program to states. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/21stcclc/>.

A February 20 "dear colleague" letter, from Undersecretary of Education Gene Hickok and Agriculture's Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Eric Bost,

explains "for purposes of disaggregating assessment data and for identifying students as 'economically disadvantaged' in implementing supplemental educational services and the priority for public school choice, school officials may deem all students in [schools that offer all students lunch at no charge] as 'economically disadvantaged,'" regardless of whether they are actually poor. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SASA/22003.html>.



IDEA REAUTHORIZATION

To guide the Department in its work toward reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the landmark statute that provides for the education of nearly 6.5 million students with disabilities, Secretary Paige unveiled a set of key principles. "Our goal is to align IDEA with the principles of *No Child Left Behind*," Paige said, "by ensuring accountability, more flexibility, more options for parents, and an emphasis on doing what works to improve student achievement." Those principles are:

- **Stronger Accountability for Results.** Under NCLB, states are responsible for implementing a single accountability system for all students. Consequently, IDEA should ensure that special education students have access to and make progress in the general curriculum and are appropriately included in the accountability systems.
- **Simplify Paperwork for States and Communities and Increase Flexibility for All.** Focusing on results will increase the time spent by teachers on teaching and, in turn, minimize time currently spent on non-instructional and procedural tasks. Also, states and localities should have the flexibility, for example, to create intrastate risk pools for high cost children or to improve professional development opportunities.
- **Doing What Works.** Half of the children currently served under IDEA have learning disabilities, and about 90 percent of them exhibit reading difficulties. IDEA should ensure the revision of regulations that result in the misidentification of students as having disabilities because they did not receive appropriate instruction in their early years.
- **Increase Choices and Meaningful Involvement for Parents.** IDEA should help parents, teachers, and schools choose appropriate services and programs for those with disabilities, including the charter and private schools of their choice.

IDEA comes up for reauthorization this year. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/02-2003/02252003.html>.



CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

Written and endorsed by a distinguished and diverse group of more than 50 scholars and practitioners, "The Civic Mission of Schools" summarizes the evidence in favor of civic education in schools; analyzes trends in civic and political engagement; identifies promising approaches to civic education; and offers recommendations to educators, policymakers, funders, researchers, and others. Americans under the age of 25 are less likely to vote than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades. Surveys show that they are not as interested in political discussion and public issues as past generations were at the same age. And, the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress found that almost one-third of seniors lack a "basic" grasp of the structure and operations of American government. "As a result, many young Americans are not prepared to participate fully in...democracy now, and when they become adults." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/>.



NAEP 2000: SCIENCE ASSESSMENT

Speaking of NAEP, the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released additional findings regarding the 2000 science assessment at grades 4, 8, and 12. The report provides average scores and achievement level performance at the national and state level, as well as results for subgroups defined by various background and contextual characteristics. The reports also contains results from a second sample in which testing accommodations were provided to students with special needs. Between 1996 and 2000, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the average science scores of fourth- or eighth-grade students. However, the average score of twelfth-graders fell from 150 in 1996 to 147 in 2000. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003453>.

Also: The TIMSS web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>) has changed to reflect its new name -- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study -- and to provide users with updated information. Along with new search capabilities, the site now offers downloadable materials designed specifically for educators to use in mathematics and science lessons and assessments.



GRANTS FORECAST

Be sure to review the revised (as of February 27) FY 2003 Grants Forecast (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/grants/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 the Department's principal program offices -- and will be updated regularly through July 2003. (This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the U.S. Department of Education.)



LITERACY DECADE

In New York, Secretary Paige helped launch the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Literacy Decade (2003-12). UNESCO reports 860 million adults are illiterate, over 100 million children have no access to school, and countless children, youth, and adults who attend school or other education programs fall short of the required level to be considered literate in today's complex world. Besides appealing to "all governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to the efforts to increase literacy," the UN tasks UNESCO to "take a coordinating role in stimulating and catalyzing the activities at the international level..." After a 19 year absence, the U.S. is poised to rejoin UNESCO. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.unesco.org/education/unlitdecade/>. (Secretary Paige's remarks are available at <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/02-2003/02132003.html>.)



QUOTE TO NOTE

"We have already exceeded the high-tech-someday that [1983's] *Nation at Risk* envisioned. We need look no further than our morning paper to see that our future -- and the future of our children -- is inextricably linked to the complex challenges of the global community. So...it is paramount that America graduate greater numbers of

well-educated young people. Our future depends on them to lead the way in developing strategies and technologies that will keep us safe and prosperous for generations to come. A rising tide lifts all boats, and nowhere is that more true than here. By raising the bar for achievement in our nation's schools, we raise the quality of high school graduates. And that increases the number of students capable of winning admission to the college of their choice, based on their talent and potential -- not admissions quotas and double standards."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (2/26/03)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Because of last week's snow storm, the "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast originally scheduled for February 18, on helping children become good citizens, has been rescheduled for March 18. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/event-flyer.asp?intEventID=165>.

From March 8-24, the Corps of Discovery II -- a mobile national park offering living history reenactments, interpretive programs, and various cultural and nature lessons -- will be on the Washington, D.C., Mall, as part of the bicentennial of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's journey through the Louisiana Territory. The central feature of Corps II is the "Tent of Many Voices." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.nps.gov/lecl/>.

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

Deputy Assistant Secretary -- Terri Rayburn, (202) 401-0404, <mailto:Terri.Rayburn@ed.gov>

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

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