

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

September 9, 2005

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



HURRICANE KATRINA

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, following the initial effort by federal, state, and local authorities to provide basic support like food, shelter, and medical care, the Education Department has taken concrete steps to help Gulf Coast states, districts, schools, and hundreds of thousands of displaced and affected students and teachers regain a sense of "normalcy."

- First, in an August 31 conference call with media, Deputy Secretary Ray Simon and Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Henry Johnson pledged "the red tape will be put in the drawer," including relief from key requirements under the *No Child Left Behind Act* and federal student aid. "The Secretary has authority to enter into flexibility agreements, to grant waivers for occurrences such as this," the Deputy Secretary said. "One thing we certainly will do is to allow states to apply for flexibility on behalf of their districts.... We'll make this process as seamless and quick as possible." (Later, in a September 7 letter to Chief State School Officers, <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/050907.html>, the Secretary specified four core areas where flexibility and/or resources are available: waivers and modifications, highly qualified teacher requirements, the reallocation of funds, and supplemental appropriations. Requests will be evaluated on an individualized, case-by-case basis.)
- Second, as states and districts began to address the needs of displaced students, the agency encouraged them to review previously issued guidance on the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html#guidance>), which ensures homeless children a free, appropriate public education *and* requires districts and schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success at school. Also, the Department encouraged colleges and universities to admit students from

affected institutions in a manner that permits them to receive federal student aid (<http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/katrina.html>).

- Third, on September 6, Secretary Spellings unveiled a web site, Hurricane Help for Schools (<http://www.ed.gov/Katrina/>), aimed at getting supplies to schools serving students affected by Katrina. On one part of the web site, schools are able to post their contact information and the supplies the students need. Companies and organizations are able to view these needs and contact the schools to meet them, or, on another part of the site, they may post what supplies or resources they can offer. Also, the Secretary has convened a task force of 50 national education organizations to coordinate and deploy resources.

Meanwhile, the agency is in ongoing contact with state and local education officials and will act promptly as issues arise. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/hurricane/factsheet.html>. (Secretary Spellings' September 6 "Ask the White House" chat, detailing the response effort, is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ask/20050906.html>.)



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

Continuing her "common-sense approach" to implementing the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Secretary Spellings announced new flexibility for four school districts in Virginia and the Chicago Public Schools. Under the Virginia pilot program (see <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/letters/acva5.html>), Alexandria, Henry County, Newport News, and Stafford County will be allowed, essentially, to reverse the order of the sanctions spelled out in the law, offering students supplemental educational services (in lieu of public school choice) during the first year that a Title I school is identified "in need of improvement." (Then, if the school is identified for a second year, it would have to offer both choice and supplemental services.) Virginia is the first state to earn such flexibility, but the Department plans to begin several pilot programs in a number of districts across the country, to test the effectiveness of switching choice and supplemental services on student achievement and how students and their families use those options. Under the Chicago Public Schools' agreement (see <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09012005.html>), the district will be allowed to serve as a supplemental service provider, even though it has been identified

"in need of improvement," and thus, normally, would be prohibited from being a provider. Similar agreements are also being negotiated for nine other big-city districts, to ensure even more students are receiving supplemental services.

And last week, at a school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Secretary Spellings distributed tool kits for Hispanic families, with valuable information in English and Spanish on everything from *No Child Left Behind* benefits and services to tips for helping children be successful students. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/toolkit/>. (Copies of the tool kit may be ordered from ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS or <http://www.edpubs.org/>.)



STATE TABLES

State tables showing Fiscal Year 2001-05 enacted appropriations and the FY 2006 budget request under formula-allocated and selected student aid programs have been updated. These tables show final allocations for the following *No Child Left Behind* programs:

- Title I (Grants to LEAs, Reading First, Even Start, Neglected and Delinquent, and Comprehensive School Reform)
- Improving Teacher Quality State Grants
- Math and Science Partnerships
- Educational Technology State Grants
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- State Grants for Innovative Programs
- State Assessments

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/>.



SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

Yesterday, Secretary Spellings joined First Lady Laura Bush to honor a Des Moines, Iowa, American Star of Teaching and proclaim several new initiatives aimed at

supporting teachers, including a teacher training corps and a technology partnership for teachers in urban areas who focus on math and science. The corps will consist of teachers and practitioners who will provide on-site technical assistance to districts; for example, it could offer an in-service program for a district's high school math teachers. The partnership with TechNet, a group of technology companies, will create math, science, and technology workshops in urban centers. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09082005a.html>.



SAT SCORES

The national average math score for the SAT exam increased from 518 (on a scale of 200 through 800) in 2004 to 520 this year -- 14 points better than 10 years ago and an all-time high -- despite a record-number of test takers and the largest percentage of minority test takers to date. Not surprisingly, these gains have been accompanied by students taking more demanding classes like pre-calculus, calculus, and physics. Since 1995, there has been an 11 percentage point increase in the number of students taking pre-calculus (37%-48%) and a five percentage point boost in calculus (22%-27%) and physics (46%-51%). At the same time, average verbal scores remained unchanged from last year -- at 508 -- and just four points better than a decade ago. One possible explanation? Although 85 percent of students had taken four or more years of English, only 65 percent had had course work in grammar, down from 78 percent 10 years ago, while 62 percent had had course work in composition, down from 73 percent 10 years before. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.collegeboard.com/press/article/0,3183,46851,00.html>. (The Secretary's statement is available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/08/08302005.html>.)



CONSTITUTION DAY

To mark the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787, Congress has mandated that every school and college receiving federal funds take a day to teach the document. (This year, because the 17th falls on a Saturday, schools will be observing Citizenship Day/Constitution Day on Friday, September 16, or Monday, September 19.) And, to assist students and teachers in their studies, the Department's

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) web site has posted an array of online resources. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/free/constitution/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"As the new school year begins, our thoughts and prayers are with the hundreds of thousands of school-age children and their families who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. President Bush has directed federal agencies to do everything in their power to support the victims of this heart-wrenching tragedy. At the U.S. Department of Education, we are committed to working closely with state officials all across the country to help them enroll students, including students with disabilities, displaced by the hurricane. Experts tell us these children will benefit greatly from the structure and normalcy provided by school."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (9/6/05)



UPCOMING EVENTS

At 12:30 p.m. ET on September 21, Secretary Spellings will deliver her first Back-to-School Address at the National Press Club. As in years past, it will be broadcast live over the Internet. Instructions for viewing the broadcast will soon be posted at <http://www.ed.gov/>.

On October 20, communities around the country will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool!*, bringing attention to the need for afterschool programs that keep kids safe, help working families, and improve academic achievement. An Afterschool Alliance project, the rally is sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool and supported by the Department's 21st Century Community Learning Centers. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/index.cfm.

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

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