

Archived Information



ED REVIEW

January 27, 2006

...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/>)

January 20 marked Secretary Spellings' first year as the nation's chief educator. Below are excerpts from articles on the occasion.

"Taking over as education secretary a year ago, Margaret Spellings promised to enforce the *No Child Left Behind* law with flexibility not previously seen much from Bush administration officials, including her.... She has given state leaders leeway in how and when they measure student progress, improve teacher quality, test children with disabilities, provide tutoring to poor kids, and cope with hurricane evacuees.... 'We're on the way to keep that promise,' Spellings said in an interview with *The Associated Press*, talking about cooperation with states. What she wants in return is results, mainly better test scores among poor and minority children." (Ben Feller, "Spellings Not Subtle About Change in Tone," *Associated Press*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/19/AR2006011900361.html>)

"It's hard to imagine most of her predecessors as education secretary, regardless of how in tune they were with children, flopping to the floor with students [as Spellings did in December at Guilford Elementary School in Maryland]. It's just a small example of the way Ms. Spellings has put a more engaging and accessible face on the U.S. Department of Education during her first year as its helm. She took over at the agency from Secretary Rod Paige on January 20 of last year, becoming the first mother with school-age children to hold the post.... 'I would not do anything differently last year,' she said in an interview in her office on January 9 -- the day that she and President Bush marked the fourth anniversary of [*No Child Left Behind*]. 'I think we're in the right place.'" (Michelle Davis, "Yearly Progress," *Education Week*, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/01/18/19spellings.h25.html> -- free registration required)

"On the issue that absorbs educators nationwide -- *No Child Left Behind* -- Spellings has sought to project a new pragmatism in her first year.... 'It was, in my opinion, absolutely right to take a hard line and to take an aggressive approach on implementing *No Child Left Behind* in the beginning,' Spellings noted last week. 'Of course it was. But should we learn as we go? That's equally true.'.... In the coming year, Spellings said she wants to examine what states are doing to improve schools that repeatedly fail to meet standards." (Nick Anderson, "The No Child Law's Flexible Enforcer," *Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/23/AR2006012301215.html>)



HURRICANE RELIEF (<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/>)

Visiting with leaders of eight major New Orleans institutions of higher education affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Secretary Spellings announced the availability of an additional \$30 million in education aid -- on top of the \$200 million appropriated by Congress -- to help Gulf Coast colleges and universities that were directly impacted by the hurricanes, as well as other postsecondary institutions around the country that enrolled displaced students. The \$30 million is unspent federal financial aid that is being redirected. "Institutions of higher education are a vital component in the rebuilding of New Orleans," she stated. "We know that much work remains to be done, and we stand ready to help...." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/01/01182006.html>. (Note: The \$200 million, part of the Hurricane Education Recovery Act, includes \$190 million for Louisiana's and Mississippi's boards of higher education and \$10 million for the 99 institutions that enrolled displaced students.)



EVIDENCE-BASED HELP DESK

The What Works Clearinghouse, established by the Department's Institute of Education Sciences, recently launched an Evidence-Based Education Help Desk (<http://whatworkshelpdesk.ed.gov/>). The Help Desk's mission is to provide policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers with easy-to-use resources to advance evidence-based education. Specifically, the Help Desk offers resources to assist in conducting rigorous evaluations of education programs, sponsoring evaluations, and identifying and

implementing evidence-based programs. Knowledgeable moderators are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, by phone (1-866-WWC-9799) or by email (info@whatworks.ed.gov), to navigate users through what is available.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

It's a new year, which usually means new grant competitions. This year is no exception. For example, the popular Early Reading First Program supports local efforts to enhance the oral language, cognitive, and early reading skills of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies, materials, and professional development. The competition is open to high-need school districts (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/eligibility.html>) and organizations (public or private) within those districts. The deadline for transmittal of pre-applications is February 21, while the deadline for applications is May 8. The AP Test Fee Program, whose competition is limited to states, covers all or part of the cost of test fees for needy children who are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Applications are due February 21. The Charter Schools Program seeks to expand the number of high-quality charter schools by providing financial assistance for planning, program design, initial implementation, and proper evaluation. The competition is open to states with a charter law and charter schools within states that elect not to participate or do not have an application approved. The deadline for applications is March 10. <http://www.ed.gov/GrantApps/> lists all competitions that are currently underway and provides links to electronic application packages, forms, and other critical information.



PERSONNEL CHANGES

And with the new year comes new personnel. First, President Bush appointed current Chief of Staff David Dunn as acting Undersecretary of Education (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/01/01182006a.html>). In this role, he will administer policies, programs, and activities related to postsecondary education, federal student aid (including the President's financial reforms for the Pell Grant program), and vocational and adult education. Dunn has served as the agency's Chief of Staff since January 2005, and he will continue in that capacity. Second, in response to the depart-

ure of Nina Rees (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/01/01122006.html>), Secretary Spellings named Chris Doherty as acting Deputy Undersecretary for Innovation and Improvement. Doherty, who previously directed the Reading First Program and served as Deputy Secretary Ray Simon's Chief of Staff, will oversee the Department's "nimble, entrepreneurial arm," which makes strategic investments in promising practices through discretionary grant programs and coordinates the public school choice and supplemental education service provisions under *No Child Left Behind*. Third, former New Hampshire lawmaker and health care consultant Rogers Johnson is the Department's new director of Intergovernmental Affairs. He will work closely with state and local elected officials on a variety of education issues.

Note: Speaking of local elected officials, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has released "Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success." FOR A COPY, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.usmayors.org/74thWinterMeeting/edguide2006.pdf>.



NCES REPORTS

How about some insightful statistical analyses? The Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) continues to churn out perceptive reports, based on its ongoing surveys. Among the latest:

- "Parents' Reports of School Practices to Provide Information to Families: 1996 and 2003." This report examines seven school practices to promote parent involvement (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006041>).
- "Teacher Professional Development in 1999-2000: What Teachers, Principals, and District Staff Report." This report looks at how teacher professional development was organized and managed, what kinds of activities were available to teachers, and which ones they participated in (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006305>).
- "Public Elementary and Secondary Students, Staff, Schools, and School Districts: School Year 2003-04." As the title suggests, this report has data about students enrolled in public education, as well as numbers and types of teachers, other staff, schools, and districts (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006307>).

Also, NCES has updated its rural education site: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"I want to talk about 'math phobia.' People think, oh, I don't want my daughter to be an engineer, she'll be a freak. And of course that's not true. She'll be successful.... And we hear mom from the soccer field say, 'You know, I don't want my kids to be stressed out; they're not developmentally ready to take algebra yet.' This sort of thing, that kind of thing, is insidious. That doesn't add up to building demand for vigorous coursework, math and science competency, and so forth. So I want you all to be a part of the demand for change at the grassroots level for the kinds of things that we must do, if your company is going to be successful, and if our country is going to be successful."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (1/12/06),
addressing the Microsoft Women's Conference in Seattle



UPCOMING EVENTS

Just a reminder: the President's will deliver his State of the Union address on January 31. And, on February 6, the President will release his Fiscal Year 2007 budget request.

Based on an essay competition, 10 students from each state and territory will be awarded a free trip to North Dakota to participate in the Lewis & Clark Youth Rendezvous (August 13-18). The deadline for essays is February 28. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.lcyouthrendezvous.com/>.

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

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