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ED REVIEW

December 15, 2006 (Happy Holidays!)

...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/>)

This week, Secretary Spellings visited the Golden State to discuss supplemental educational services (SES) offered under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the future of American higher education, and the importance of preparing all students to succeed in the 21st century global economy. On December 11, accompanied by U.S. Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent David Brewer, she toured two classrooms and convened a roundtable at Noble Avenue Elementary School, a Title I school in need of improvement serving mostly Hispanic and low-income students. "When it comes to getting students enrolled in free tutoring, Noble Avenue is a shining example for others to follow," the Secretary said, noting the school's high SES participation rate: 51%. "These programs help children achieve academic success and prepare for great lives." She also announced the Department will hold similar roundtables in 13 other U.S. cities, to discuss the most effective ways to implement SES (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12112006b.html>). Later that day, at Town Hall Los Angeles (an executive speaker forum), the Secretary talked about reauthorizing *No Child Left Behind* and making higher education more accessible, affordable, and accountable: "With NCLB renewal and higher education reforms before Congress, it's an opportunity to build upon the promise we made five years ago -- that every child counts. And more than that it's an opportunity to strengthen the promise this nation has made for centuries that every child deserves an education" (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2006/12/12112006.html>). Then, on December 12, the Secretary moved up the coast to meet with 100 business leaders in Silicon Valley. "The world is building 21st century learning environments, while America is focused on fixing 20th century schools," she said. "Technology can provide a platform to transform education to meet the demands of the 21st century. With education so critical to our country's future, we must focus the same level of energy, effort, and investment into

transforming this critical sector"

(<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12122006.html>).

Last week, the Secretary had the honor of announcing the winners of the prestigious 2006-07 Siemens Competition in Math, Science, and Technology. Dmitry Vaintrob of Eugene, Oregon, won the individual \$100,000 prize for research in an abstract area of math called string topology, while a group of students from Oak Ridge High School in Tennessee won the top team prize for developing a technique that could help scientists engineer biofuel from plants. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.siemens-foundation.org/competition/>. (Finalist presentations are posted at <http://www.mapdigital.com/events/siemens/sc06/>.)

Also, four new states have been selected for participation in the State Scholars Initiative, a business-education partnership designed to increase the number of students who take a rigorous high school curriculum. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12142006.html>.



HOLIDAY BOOK DONATION

In separate events, Deputy Secretary Ray Simon (12/13, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi) and Director of Regional Services Camille Cain (12/14, Lake Charles, Louisiana) announced the donation of 200,000 books under the Gulf Coast Holiday Book Donation. This initiative, a joint venture between the Department and non-profit First Book, is designed to replenish reading materials in hurricane-affected communities across the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Adding in the summer (250,000) and back to school (200,000) drives, more than 650,000 books have been sent to the region. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12132006.html>.



PERSONNEL CHANGES

Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Henry Johnson is retiring, effective December 31. He will return to his native state of North Carolina to do

consulting work. "For more than 30 years, Henry Johnson has dedicated his life's work to seeing that America's children have an equal opportunity to succeed in school and in life," the Secretary said in a statement. "His counsel and experience were invaluable to me, as he worked tirelessly to help states and school districts implement the *No Child Left Behind Act*. His efforts brought our nation closer to realizing its dream of a first-rate, world-class education for all students." In addition to his K-12 responsibilities, Johnson deftly coordinated the Department's response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12082006.html>.

Meanwhile, the Senate has confirmed Sarah Martinez Tucker as Undersecretary of Education. As the agency's third-highest ranking official, Tucker will administer policies, programs, and activities related to higher education, federal student aid, and vocational and adult education. She will also implement the work of the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12112006.html>.



NCES REPORTS

"Dropout Rates in the United States: 2004" is the most recent in a series of reports by the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on high school dropout and completion rates that started in 1988. It presents estimates of rates for 2004 and provides data about trends in rates over the past three decades (1972-2004). Among other findings, the report shows that students in low-income families were approximately four times more likely to drop out of high school between 2003 and 2004 than their peers from high-income families. Also, estimates of on-time graduation from public high schools jumped in 43 states between the 2001-02 and 2003-04 school years, with 15 states showing increases of three percentage points or more. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007024>.

"Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006," issued by NCES and the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, finds that the victimization rate of students ages 12-18 at school declined from 73 incidents per 1,000 students in 2003 to 55 incidents per 1,000 students in 2004. Also, between 2003 and 2005, the percentage of students reporting theft declined from four to three percent. On the other hand, over the same period, there was no measurable drop in the percentage of students reporting

violent crime, and drugs and weapons continue to pose problems within schools. This is the ninth in a series of reports; in every year, students were more likely to be victims of serious crime away from school than at school. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007003>. (The Secretary's statement is available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/12/12042006a.html>.)

"Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools" provides a first look at 2003-04 School Survey on Crime and Safety data -- one of the many resources utilized in the "Indicators" report. It focuses on three themes: frequency of criminal incidents at school, use of disciplinary actions, and efforts to prevent and reduce crime at school, as reported by school principals. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007302>.



NCES KIDSZONE

How about something for the kids? The NCES Students' Classroom has been redesigned and is now known as KidsZone (<http://nces.ed.gov/NCESKids/>). It features activities like Chances, which teaches students about probability; Dare to Compare?, with 230 questions from the Civic Education Study and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study; and Mathematicians are People Too, pairing students with a famous mathematician and his or her discoveries.



BARNEY CAM V

Earlier this month, the White House unveiled "Barney's Holiday Extravaganza," the fifth installment of "Barney Cam," which features the President and First Lady's Scottish terriers touring the White House to provide viewers with a dog's eye view of the holiday decorations. This year, Barney plans a major production but is told by OMB Director Rob Portman and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, "We're out of money. You're going to have to get creative." Therefore, he holds open auditions, casting Karl Rove but rejecting Secretary Spellings (despite the dancing advice of Emmitt Smith). He also tries to claim the press room but is rebuffed by Press Secretary Tony Snow. Finally, at the recommendation of the First Lady, the dogs unite for

more traditional holiday fun. The video concludes with clips from the extravaganza, including a red carpet interview with Dolly Parton. Don't miss the amazing soundtrack by the U.S. Marine Band! FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/holiday/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"I was in New York to present awards as part of the Siemens Competition to a group of students who had won scholarships for their inventions and research. One student talked about how sometimes he worries about the future, worries about the world he's inheriting. But after being around kids who were pouring their idealism, energy, and intelligence into finding cures for diseases, improving renewable energy sources, and developing inventions to help others, he said it gave him great hope that the world is going to be O.K. That's what education provides -- hope."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (12/11/06),
speaking at Town Hall Los Angeles



UPCOMING EVENTS

On January 18, the White House and several Cabinet agencies will host a conference in Seattle to help faith-based and other community organizations learn more about the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The conference is free, but pre-registration is required. Please register by January 12. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.fbc.gov/>.

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

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