



ED REVIEW

December 8, 2000

...a bi-weekly update on Education Department activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY IDEA

This week marks the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law that ensures all children receive a free, appropriate public education regardless of the level or severity of their disability. In celebration, the Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) launched a new "Lessons for All" web site (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA25th/>), packed with information on IDEA's history, its impact on the lives of children with disabilities, and stories from students and community members who have benefited from the act. In addition, the Department released its "22nd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of IDEA" (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/OSEP2000AnlRpt/>). The report shows a record 55.4 percent of America's disabled students are graduating from high school, while dropout rates are falling (31 percent in 1997-98, down from 32.7 percent the previous school year) and more disabled students are attending regular classes alongside non-disabled students (a record 46.4 percent of students with disabilities were served in regular classrooms at least 80 percent of the day).



AGENDA PROJECT

On November 29, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education Lee Fritschler issued the results of his office's Agenda Project -- a January-June 2000 dialogue with the nation's higher education community on the federal role in postsecondary education. The issues and opportunities identified by college and university presidents and faculty, trade and proprietary school executives, Congressional staff, students, parents, teachers, business and technology leaders, community members, and others are presented under five themes: Ensuring All Students Are Prepared to Go to College and

Succeed; Examining the Roles and Responsibilities in Paying for College; Improving Teacher Quality; Integrating Technology and Distance Education into the Curriculum; and Revitalizing International Education. In turn, the Department's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) has identified 12 strategies to improve how OPE serves its stakeholders and more than 30 steps OPE should take. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/AgProj/report/index.html>.

Also: A new report card from the independent National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education grades states on their performance in higher education. States are evaluated (using A through F) in five key areas: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, and benefits. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://measuringup2000.highereducation.org/>.



NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS

Last week, Secretary Riley honored 27 schools as New American High Schools (NAHS). Since 1996, the Education Department's New American High Schools initiative has showcased and supported outstanding high schools that have committed to extensive reform efforts, raised academic standards for all students, and achieved results. There are now 69 NAHS, representing every region of the country (urban, suburban, and rural). Among the benefits of designation are national recognition and the opportunity to serve as a reform leader, a small stipend for outreach to other schools, access to technical and expert assistance, participation in a network with other NAHS, and the opportunity to inform policy and practice at a state and federal level. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/nahs/>.



RESEARCH: KINDERGARTEN AND TIMSS

According to a new report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), children from all backgrounds significantly improve their reading and math performance and increase their readiness for future schooling during kindergarten. Moreover, the gains are about the same regardless of background. However, significant gaps remain in more advanced skills (such as recognizing words by sight or solving math problems) between at-risk children and their peers. "This report clearly shows that kindergarten

benefits all children," said Secretary Riley. "But it also reminds us that a half-day of kindergarten and regular school cannot do everything. The challenge for at-risk students raises compelling questions." "The Kindergarten Year" is the second in a series of planned reports from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, which provides primary data on children attending public and private schools. Future studies will continue to follow the same sample of children through fifth grade. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001023>.

"Pursuing Excellence: Comparisons of International Eighth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement from a U.S. Perspective, 1995 and 1999," another report from NCES, assesses eighth-graders' knowledge of math and science in 38 nations, following-up on the 1995 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). In 1999, for math, U.S. students performed better than the international average in fractions and number sense; data representation, analysis, and probability; and algebra. They performed at the international average in measurement and geometry. In 1999, for science, U.S. students performed better in earth science; life science; chemistry; environmental and resource issues; and scientific inquiry and the nature of science. They performed at the international average in physics. Overall, U.S. eighth-grader performance was about the same in 1999 as in 1995. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/TIMSS/>.



PROMOTING HEALTH

Secretary Riley and Health and Human Services' Secretary Donna Shalala recently delivered to President Clinton an interagency report on physical activity for children. "Promoting Health for Young People through Physical Activity and Sports" lists strategies to promote participation in physical activity through family activities, afterschool care programs, community-based youth sports and recreation programs, and media campaigns. It also discusses the need to promote walking and bicycling by creating more sidewalks, bicycle paths, trails, and community recreation facilities. A major emphasis of the report is the importance for all children, from early childhood through grade 12, to participate in quality physical education classes every school day. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/presphysactrpt/>.



NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

On November 30, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) announced that 4,694 primary and secondary school teachers from 49 states and the District of Columbia have earned the highest professional credential in their field -- National Board Certification -- for the 1999-2000 school year. This record number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) almost doubles last year's announcement of 2,970, bringing the current total to 9,498. Per state, North Carolina led the way with 1,115 new NBCTs, followed by Florida (699), California (440), and Mississippi (389). North Carolina also has the most NBCTs overall with 2,377. In support of candidates, 39 states and nearly 200 school districts have offered a variety of incentives, including fee assistance and salary increases for teachers who achieve certification. Foundations, corporations, and other private entities are also providing substantial support. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.nbpts.org/>.



VIRTUAL SAFETY

With a briefing paper and a new web site, the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) has launched its "Safeguarding the Wired Schoolhouse" initiative, designed to help school leaders understand their technological options for managing the content students access over the Internet. The briefing paper examines school districts' options for providing appropriate Internet access and content management. It also explains the history behind filters, how they were developed, how to write an acceptable-use policy, how monitoring and filtering work, and more. The web site offers a checklist of questions school leaders should ask before deciding whether to manage content and when evaluating the various types of filtering products available. Eventually, CoSN plans to add a downloadable PowerPoint presentation for schools to use. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.safewiredschools.org/>.



ECONOMIC AND MORAL IMPERATIVE

"The benefits of the IDEA stretch far beyond just those with disabilities. The new technologies and teaching methods developed to assist students with disabilities are improving education for all students. Three-quarters of children with disabilities are learning in classrooms alongside their non-disabled peers, contributing to the diversity that is one of America's greatest strengths.... In this time of record prosperity, with more opportunities for success than ever before, we must ensure that all of our children have the education that will allow them to go to college, get good jobs, and play active roles in their communities. America's ongoing commitment to this principle, embodied in the IDEA, is both an economic and moral imperative for our future."

-- President Clinton (11/29/00)



UPCOMING EVENTS

On December 14, Senator Bob Kerrey (NE) and Representative Johnny Isakson (GA) will present the findings and recommendations of the Web-Based Education Commission. Since November 1999, the 16 members of the commission (selected by the President, Secretary of Education, and congressional leadership) have been meeting with education, business, technology, and policy experts to establish a roadmap to help local, state, and federal education officials and policymakers better address the challenges brought about by the Internet and other emerging technologies. The press conference will be web cast on <http://www.webcommission.org>. The commission's final report, "The Power of the Internet for Learning: Moving from Promise to Practice," will be posted on the site after the press conference.

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

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