



ED REVIEW

December 19, 2003 (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/>)

Superintendents now have a direct link to the U.S. Department of Education for quick, concise, and targeted responses to questions about *No Child Left Behind*: 1-888-NCLB-SUP (1-888-625-2787). The resource line will be staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET. During off-hours, or when the lines are busy during the week, superintendents will be able to leave messages. Also, technology-savvy superintendents may send email inquiries to a dedicated Inbox: NCLBSUP@ed.gov. Staff will ensure that all issues are addressed as efficiently as possible. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/12/12182003.html>.

A new guide released by the Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), "Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence," is designed to be a "user-friendly" resource for state and local education officials and educators seeking to improve educational and life outcomes for the children they serve. It was developed for IES by the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization with a mission to advance government policy based on rigorous evidence of program effectiveness, and presented at a recent two-day conference of stakeholders sponsored by the Coalition and the Council of Chief State School Officers. "Perhaps the most effective resource we have for improving American schools is scientifically-valid knowledge," Secretary Paige said, "about which strategies work and which don't work. The User-Friendly Guide offers...concrete, easily-accessible assistance in finding and using strategies that have been validated in rigorous studies." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousavid/>.

Earlier this week, the Secretary addressed the Greater Houston Partnership concerning criticisms of Houston schools. "Because those who are fighting against [the *No Child*

Left Behind Act] have targeted Houston, and are targeting you and your children, you have a right to know what is happening," he stressed. "For better or worse, Houston has become the epicenter of this discussion, the battleground of a new struggle for freedom." FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2003/12/12152003.html>.



URBAN DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

The National Assessment of Educational Progress' 2003 urban district assessment offers a wealth of data about the reading and math performance of fourth- and eighth-graders in ten large urban systems: Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, San Diego, and Washington, D.C. The scores are compared with the average scores for public school students nationally and for those attending public schools in "large central cities" (with a population at or above 250,000). Among the findings:

- Six of the districts took part in the first urban district assessment in 2002. Two of them -- Atlanta and Chicago -- showed reading gains from a year ago.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg students exceeded the national public school average in math in both grades and matched those in reading. Student performance in the other nine districts was below the national average in both subjects and grades.
- On the fourth-grade reading assessment, African-American students scored above the national average in four of the districts and Hispanic students scored above the national average in five of the districts.
- Although representing a small portion of the urban school population, white fourth-graders had reading and math scores at or above the national average in six of the districts.
- Low-income fourth- and eighth-graders in Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Houston, and New York City had higher average scores in math than their peers in large central cities. However, only Houston and New York City's low-income students bested the national average.

The three million students in the ten districts account for six percent of the country's public school enrollment. One out of six of the nation's limited English proficient students, one out of seven minority students, and one out of eight low-income students are

in the participating districts. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.



IDENTITY THEFT

During a press conference at Howard University, Secretary Paige urged college students to be cognizant of the growing problem of identity theft and detailed several action steps the Department is taking to help combat the problem. First, the Department is launching a new web site, <http://www.ed.gov/misused/>, with comprehensive information for students and families, from tips for protecting one's identity to advice on how one can detect identity theft. Second, the Department has a hotline -- 1-800-MIS-USED -- for anyone who suspects student loan fraud. In addition, the agency's student aid publications have information about identity theft, as will, in the future, student loan billing statements. This year, identity theft affected almost 10 million people and cost victims some \$5 billion. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/12/12112003.html>.



PRE-K STUDIES

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' "State-Funded Pre-Kindergarten: What the Evidence Shows" (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/state-funded-pre-k/report.htm>) reviews states' level of support for pre-kindergarten programs, the quality and effectiveness of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs, and state efforts to build integrated, comprehensive early childhood systems for children from birth to age five that have a focus on school readiness. The conclusion? While there is variation across states, "most state-funded pre-kindergarten programs meet widely accepted and research-based quality standards, offer key expanded services to meet children's health and nutrition needs, and involve parents in their children's education."

The National Bureau of Economic Research's "Getting Inside the Black Box of Head Start Quality: What Matters and What Doesn't" (<http://papers.nber.org/papers/W10091>) matches administrative data with data from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, including test scores, behavior problems, and grade repetition. Its conclusion? Former Head Start children have higher reading scores and are less likely to have been

retained in grade where Head Start spending was higher. Moreover, holding per capita expenditures constant, children in programs that devoted higher shares of their budgets to education and health have fewer behavior problems and are less likely to have been retained in grade.



GRANTS FORECAST

Be sure to review the revised (as of December 10) FY 2004 Grants Forecast (<http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-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 2004. (This document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the U.S. Department of Education.)



BARNEY CAM II

First Lady Laura Bush recently unveiled "Barney Cam II: Barney Reloaded," the much-anticipated sequel to last season's "Barney Cam," which featured the President's Scottish Terrier touring the White House to provide viewers with a dog's eye view of the holiday decorations. This year, Barney is "tasked" by Chief of Staff Andrew Card for a very important responsibility: decorating the White House Christmas trees. The video credits cameos by the President, Mrs. Bush, many senior White House officials, and former Press Secretary Ari Fleischer (playing cards). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.whitehouse.gov/holiday/>.

Also: At the same site, every weeknight at 8:00 p.m., bedtime stories will be read by administration officials. On December 17 (archived), Secretary Paige read Dr. Seuss' "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."



QUOTE TO NOTE

"Average scores for all but one of the cities [participating in the urban district assessment] are below the national average in reading and mathematics, reflecting the tough road ahead.... The achievement gap in these districts is something that I find truly worrisome. It is a problem nationally, but in a few of the districts tested it is abysmal, double the national average at the fourth-grade reading level for blacks versus their white peers. As a nation, we must stand united against a culture that mocks academic success in certain communities. We must not allow the culture of mediocrity to take away some of our most promising, bright young minds simply because of their skin color, accent, or accident of geography."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (12/17/03)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Childnet International is inviting the best young web developers from around the world to enter a competition to win a place at the Cable & Wireless Childnet Academy 2004. The competition is open to young people (aged 18 or under) who are developing exciting online projects -- either as individuals or in conjunction with a school or not-for-profit. The competition is also open to those with innovative ideas for using technology to benefit other young people. Winners will receive an all-expenses paid trip for two to attend the Academy, which will take place in London in April 2004, and a grant from a web fund to help them further enhance their web project. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.childnetacademy.org/>. (Note: The Academy web site boasts over 60 previous award winning projects.)

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

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