

The NEGP WEEKLY

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A Weekly News Update on America's Education Goals and school improvement efforts across America from the National Education Goals Panel

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STATE POLICY NEWS

Measuring Early Learning: A How-To Report *(Goal One: Ready To Learn)*

A new paper published by Mathematica addresses state and education leaders' concerns on how to assess the readiness of entering kindergarteners to succeed in school. "Instrumentation for State Readiness Assessment: Issues in Measuring Children's Early Development and Learning" reviews the concept of school readiness, considers the current education and policy context of school readiness and addresses key concerns for selecting instrumentation to assess early readiness. Specifically, the paper discusses what can be known about children's readiness and how do we choose among available instruments.

The paper also offers a broad framework for assessing readiness that is based on the outcomes of children's vast and varied experiences during their first five years of life.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit Mathematica at <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/redirect.asp?strSite=assapaper.pdf>.

State Testing Systems: Not Meeting "No Child Left Behind" Goals *(Goal One: Ready To Learn)*

An EDUCATION WEEK survey finds that most states will have to "retool" their state testing programs to meet new federal mandates detailed in the "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 (Olson, 1/9). "I think it's

The NEGP WEEKLY is a publication of:
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1255 22nd Street NW,
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037;
202-724-0015

What is the National Education Goals Panel?

The National Education Goals Panel is a unique bipartisan body of state and federal officials created in 1990 by President Bush and the nation's Governors to report state and national progress and urge education improvement efforts to reach a set of National Education Goals.

Who serves on the National Education Goals Panel and how are they chosen?

Eight governors, four state legislators, four members of the U.S. Congress, and two members appointed by the President serve on the Goals Panel. Members are appointed by the leadership of the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the U.S. Senate and House, and the President.

What does the Panel do?

The Goals Panel has been charged to:

- Report state and national progress toward the National Education Goals.
- Work to establish a system of high academic standards and assessments.
- Identify promising and effective reform strategies.
- Recommend actions for state, federal and local governments to take.
- Build a nationwide, bipartisan consensus to achieve the Goals.

The annual Goals Report and other publications of the Panel are available without charge upon request from the Goals Panel or at its web site www.negp.gov. Publications requests can be made by mail, fax, e-mail, or on-line.

going to be a big change for a lot of states because they haven't been doing annual testing," said Margaret Goertz, co-director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

The legislation requires states to give annual reading and math tests to all students in grades 3-8 no later than the 2005-2006 school year. While states are permitted to select and design their own exams, the tests must be aligned with the state academic standards.

For more information on the EDUCATION WEEK survey, visit the paper at <http://www.edweek.com> and search for the January 9 issue. Also visit EDUCATION WEEK for its "Quality Counts" report that surveyed all 50 states and the District of Columbia about their assessment practices for the current school year.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

Seattle School Goals: Reaching Beyond State Requirements (Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

Earlier this month, the Seattle School Board unanimously voted in favor of a target of 80 percent of students to meet state standards in fourth-, seventh- and 10th-grade math and in seventh- and 10th-grade reading (Ervin, SEATTLE TIMES, 1/9). The Board previously had voted in favor of a target of 90 percent of students to meet the fourth-grade reading standard.

These standards exceed minimum state requirements. According to the paper, Seattle's goals require far more rapid improvement in student performance than the minimum goals set by the state Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (the A-plus Commission). The commission's minimum is a 25 percent reduction over three years in the number of students failing to meet the standard.

The paper reports that "to meet the 80 percent goal for math and secondary-school reading, student achievement must be raised dramatically over a relatively short period of time." Currently, less than 30 percent of seventh-

The National Education Goals Panel

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State Representative Douglas R. Jones of Idaho

State Senator Stephen Stoll of Missouri

graders passed the state exam in math last spring. Some question the district's ability to achieve these lofty goals. Chris Jackins, an independent citizen watchdog of the school district, said that at current rates of improvement, none of the district's middle schools would meet the 2004 math goals, writes the paper. "Are these goals based upon a detailed analysis of the district's programs and track record, or have the goals been picked to look good to the public?" he queried.

For more information on Seattle schools, visit <http://www.seattleschools.com>

Pre-School Assessment: "New Frontier" For Chicago (Goal One: Ready To Learn)

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley unveiled several initiatives designed to better prepare children for entering school (Spielman and Rossi, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 1/9) The programs center on an assessment program for pre-school children and a televised "virtual pre-K" for more than 100,000 children in the care of parents, grandparents and baby-sitters.

Michael Scott, Chicago School Board president, said Daley's plan shapes a "new frontier" in school reform. Cable access and the City Colleges of Chicago's, the city's community college system, channel are among the vehicles that could be used.

"Curriculum, lesson plans, daily activities—it'll be like being in a classroom, but observing," he said.

The paper reports that still to be determined is whether pre-school students would be tested, or merely observed.

"I think you do it through testing. In our programs, we have that," Scott said. "However, there are other programs that aren't structured to do that. They're really more baby-sitting services. In those instances, maybe a portfolio is more practical."

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



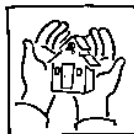
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



Goal 5: Mathematics and Science



Goal 6: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning



Goal 7: Safe, Disciplined and Alcohol- and Drug-free Schools



Goal 8: Parental Participation

For more information, visit the Chicago Public Schools at <http://www.cps.k12.il.us/>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

Ed-Flex: Maryland Joins Program (All Goals)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced this week that the state of Maryland has received Education Flexibility (ED-Flex) partnership authority. Previously a demonstration state for the Ed-Flex program, Maryland now has the authority to waive certain federal requirements to improve schools.

Currently, 10 states have Ed-Flex authority: Colorado, Delaware, Kansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont and Maryland.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov>

Excellence In Special Education: First Meeting (Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

President Bush's Commission on Excellence in Special Education held its first meeting this week. The 19-member commission is charged with producing a final report to the president by this summer that contains findings and recommendations in several areas, including:

- * The effectiveness and cost of special education and appropriate role of the federal government in special education programming and funding;
- * How federal resources can best be used to improve educational results for students with disabilities;
- * The creation of a special education research agenda;
- * The impact of providing appropriate early intervention in reading instruction on the referral and identification of children for special education.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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“Why Public Schools Lose Teachers:” It’s Not Just Lack Of Money *(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)*

A new paper issued by the National Bureau of Economic Research examines factors that contribute to teachers switching public schools or leaving the teaching profession entirely. The paper, “Why Public Schools Lose Teachers,” underscores the difficulties many school districts face to recruit and retain teachers and the anticipated retirement of a ‘substantial fraction’ of public school teachers.” Particular note is given to more vulnerable schools in urban areas serving economically disadvantaged and minority students.

Results indicate that teacher mobility is more strongly related to characteristics of students, especially race and achievement, than to salary.

The study is based on three years of data on 375,000 primary school teachers in Texas between 1993 and 1996.

The report is available from the National Bureau of Economic Research for \$5.00. Visit www.papers.nber.org/papers/html

FEATURE STORY

Dispelling The Myth: Poor Kids Can Perform Well In School

A new report finds that over 4,500 high-poverty and/or high-minority schools nationwide scored in the top 1/3 of all schools in their states - often out-performing predominantly white schools in wealthy communities. "For too long, too many people have believed that poor and minority children simply cannot achieve at the same level as white and middle-class students," said Craig Jerald, senior policy analyst at the Education Trust and author of the report. "That's simply not the case."

"Dispelling the Myth Revisited," issued by the Washington, D.C.-based Education Trust, provides a state-by-state and national analysis of high-poverty and high-minority schools that score in the top 1/3 of all schools in their states. It evaluates over one million school-level test scores in 47 states and the District of Columbia and identifies the schools in each state with math and/or reading achievement levels in the top 1/3 of all schools that also ranked in the top 1/3 of the state for poverty levels and/or African American and Latino enrollments.

Findings of the report include:

- * Schools on the high-performing, high-poverty list have about twice the rate of low-income students compared with all public schools nationally, and score in the top 1/3 of schools in their respective states.
- * Schools on the high-performing, high-minority list have more than twice the rate of African American and Latino students compared with all public schools nationally, and score in the top 1/3 of schools in their respective states.
- * Nearly half of the schools in the analysis — 46% — scored in the top 1/3 in their states in both math and reading or language arts.
- * The overwhelming majority of schools in the analysis are regular neighborhood public schools.

The Education Trust also released an interactive Web site, "Dispelling the Myth Online," which is a searchable database that allows viewers to generate instant lists of schools based on users' own search criteria.

Some critics caution that the schools were identified based on one year's test scores, "and studies have suggested that scores can fluctuate widely from one year to the next, especially in smaller schools," reports EDUCATION WEEK (Archer, 1/9). "What they need to do is not obfuscate the fact that poverty is a huge obstacle to achievement," said Tom Loveless, director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution. "It is very difficult to get high-poverty schools up to high levels of achievement."

But Katie Haycock, director of the Education Trust said, "Our new analysis identifies not

hundreds, but thousands of high-achieving high-poverty and high-minority schools. Naysayers can no longer dismiss such schools as mere outliers.”

For more information, visit the Education Trust at <http://www.edtrust.org>.

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www.negp.gov

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