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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

CONTENTS:

STATE POLICY NEWS.....Page 1

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS.....Page 2

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS.....Page 3

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PRACTICE...Page 4

FEATURE STORY.....Page 5

STATE POLICY NEWS

Latchkey Kids: Seeking Options In Massachusetts

(Goal Six: Safe And Drug-Free Schools)

While most parents surveyed in a poll conducted by Massachusetts 2020 favor after-school programs, the state of Massachusetts offers few options (Gomstyn, BOSTON GLOBE, 1/23). Consequently, more than one-fifth of Massachusetts's school children, many as young as six, return home after school to an empty house because parents are at work.

Chris Gabrieli, chairman of Massachusetts 2020, a nonprofit group that advocates for more quality after-school and summer programs, said to his surprise the survey found that "parents of all races and all economic backgrounds echoed the same concerns regarding their children's after school activities," there is little if anything to choose from, reports the paper.

After-school programs are critical because between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m. violent juvenile crime triples, according to the FBI.

For more information on after-school programs, visit the After School Alliance at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>.

Look And See: Teacher Credentials In Full View Online

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

The Teacher Certification Inquiry Web site shows the credentials of every teacher and administrator in Kentucky (Blackford, HERALD-LEADER, 1/16). "This

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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.

is about public information," said Mary Ellen Wiederwohl, spokeswoman for the Education Professional Standards Board. "It's also a tool for districts."

The web site was partly created to address the problem of "out-of-field" teaching, in which teachers teach a subject for which they are not trained, reports the paper. This year, only 18 teachers are teaching out of field, whereas in 1998 about 10 percent of Kentucky teachers were teaching out of field.

For more information, visit the Teacher Certification Inquiry Web site at <http://www.kde.state.ky.us/otec/epsb>

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

Zero-Tolerance: To Be Or Not To Be, In Milwaukee *(Goal Six: Safe And Drug-Free Schools)*

The Milwaukee School Board, unable to decide how far to go with its zero-tolerance policy for drug and alcohol use, decided to organize a public forum to debate the district's entire school discipline policy (Schulhofer-Wohl, Milwaukee JOURNAL SENTINEL, 1/23).

At a recent board meeting, some school officials argued against zero-tolerance, saying school leaders "need the option of leniency when it would better serve a child's needs," writes the paper. "No one should be denied an education because of a mistake such as using drugs or alcohol," said Shamaura Ward, a senior at Metropolitan High School. Others held that holding students, teachers, and parents to such a high standard is the correct response for drug and alcohol use.

In the end, board members recommended that a citywide group reviews all discipline procedures and policies and report back to the board by March.

For more information, the National Center for Education Statistics has data on public schools with zero-tolerance policy at <http://www.nces.ed.gov>.

The National Education Goals Panel

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U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont

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State Representative Mary Lou Cowlshaw of Illinois

State Representative Douglas R. Jones of Idaho

State Senator Stephen Stoll of Missouri

“Dying On The Vine:” Class Size Reduction In California (Goal Three: Student Achievement And Citizenship)

Class size reduction is “dying on the vine,” laments Jim Fleming, superintendent of California’s Capistrano Unified School District. According to the L.A. TIMES, for the first time a few school districts are opting out of the state’s “popular” class size reduction program, “citing their worsening financial picture.” (Garrison, 1/21).

The TIMES reports that up until this year, the state’s 900 eligible school districts participated in the voluntary program. Under the program, class sizes are capped at 20 in first through third grade and some kindergartens. Parents and teachers have enthusiastically supported the program that went into effect six years ago.

But money woes are causing some school districts to withdraw from the program. “Nobody wants to do it,” said Mike Boyd, head of business services for Riverside’s Val Verde Unified. “It’s not the right thing to do, but it’s the right thing to do to keep us fiscally solvent.”

For more information, visit the California Department of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/csr>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

Bush And Kennedy: Like Minds On Early Childhood? (Goal One: Ready To Learn)

President Bush and Senator Edward Kennedy have found common ground on early childhood education, and may be working to “laying the groundwork for a potentially significant compromise” on early childhood legislation, writes the Boston GLOBE (Kornblut, 1/22). “They both share an approach

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



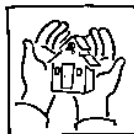
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

about the role of the government, the responsibility of the government, to help education children," said Ari Fleischer, White House press secretary.

For more information on early childhood programs, visit I Am Your Child at <http://www.iamyourchild.org>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Girls' Club: Lures Girls Keen On Math And Engineering (Goal Five: Math And Science)

Science teacher Gail Green's after-school math and science club is a big hit among middle school girls at Keller Junior High School in Schaumburg, Illinois (Benoit, Chicago TRIBUNE, 1/16). Girls in Engineering and Math (GEMS) was created by Green to address what she observed as a "lack of student interest in science and math," reports the paper.

The 7th- and 8th-grade girls listen to guest speakers, solve problems, work on group projects and take field trips. Green said she incorporates ideas for the club from the work of groups including the Women in Engineering Program Advocacy Network and the Program for Women in Science in Engineering at Iowa State University.

For more information on girls and school, visit the American Association of University Women at <http://www.aaus.org>.

New State Of Suspension: Students In Trouble Now Learn

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship and Goal Six: Safe and Drug-Free Schools)

Many schools across the Washington, D.C., area have put a new face on student suspensions (Wax, WASHINGTON POST, 1/12). In the past, suspension usually meant sitting home doing nothing or sitting in a study hall doing nothing.

However, many school leaders soon realized that at-risk students should not be banned from learning. New programs have shot up in the D.C. metro area that provide students suspended from school for drug use, fighting or other infringements with a full academic slate.

Alexandria, Virginia, students suspended from school meet in one building where they get a full day of counseling and academics. According to the POST, students in Fairfax, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Maryland, offer similar programs. In Washington, D.C., students who are suspended attend an alternative center.

For more information on student suspension, visit the Education Commission of the States at <http://www.ecs.org> and search for “student suspension.”

FEATURE STORY

States And ESEA: Admirable Goals, But Can States Comply? *(All Goals)*

While state leaders applaud the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), with its focus on accountability and results, some are scratching their heads over how to comply with several of the law’s mandates (Olson, EDUCATION EEK, 1/16).

ESEA’s testing requirements are particularly troublesome. The law requires that each state test all students in grades 3-8 in reading and math every year. Currently, only nine states administer a standards-based test in reading and math in all of those grades, reports the paper. Some states must simply add a few grades to be tested, while other states will be forced to retool their entire testing system. Alexa Pochowski, Kansas’ assistant commissioner of education, said her state is “not looking at this as a burden, but as an opportunity.” Kansas tests students in math in grades 4, 7 and 10 and in reading in grades 5, 8 and 11, writes ED WEEK.

Other state officials are concerned they will not be able to meet the law’s teacher-quality goal, which states that a “highly qualified” teacher will be in every classroom by the 2005-2006 school year. “Will we have a qualified teacher in every classroom by 2005? No, of course not,” said a Colorado official. “There are [complex] reasons, and those reasons will not be waved away. But it’s the right direction to point in.”

The school choice provision of ESEA, which states that low-performing schools that fail to make adequate progress for two consecutive years must permit their students to transfer to other, higher-performing schools within a district, with the district providing transportation, is worrisome for rural educators. “In Wyoming, you can be in school, and there may not be another school for 30 miles in each direction,” said Scott Marion, Wyoming’s state testing director.

For more information, visit EDUCATION WEEK at <http://www.edweek.com> and search for the 1/16 issue.

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