

The NEGP WEEKLY

January 25, 2001

Volume 2 — No. 88



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

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: INDEX POINTS UP IN CALIFORNIA

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The statewide median Academic Performance Index (API) score is up in California at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Results of the Stanford 9 test, given in spring 2000 as part of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, were used to calculate each school's API for 2000.

The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and progress of schools. It is a numeric index that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1,000. The 2000 API establishes this year's baseline for a school's academic performance and sets an annual target for growth. The state has set 800 as the API score that schools should strive to meet.

The API score for 2000 results are:

- > elementary schools statewide median API of 675 is up from 629 in 1999;
- > middle schools statewide median is 657, up from 633
- > high schools median of 636 is up from 629.

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

FACT OF THE WEEK

Between 1992 and 1998, 8 states (out of 44) significantly increased the percentage of public school 4th graders who scored at or above Proficient in reading. These states were: Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, and the Virgin Islands.

—The National Education Goals Report: Building a nation of learners, 1999

The NEGP WEEKLY is a publication of:
The National Education Goals Panel
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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 Goals 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.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES: DOES PENNSYLVANIA FUND THEM ADEQUATELY

(Goal Six: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning)

Last fall, the Keystone Research Center, located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, released a report that urged state leaders to more adequately fund the community college system. The non-partisan think tank argued in its report, *Does Pennsylvania Invest Adequately in Its Community Colleges?* that community colleges nationwide are becoming more critical as higher education institutions "from the perspectives of employers, workers and regional economies" because of the systems emphasis on workforce education and training.

The report provides a state-by-state review of funding for community colleges, and found Pennsylvania to be at the bottom on numerous indicators. Researchers point out that two neighboring states, Ohio and New Jersey, in recent years boosted community college appropriations by about 20 percent, compared to only a 10.6 percent increase for the Keystone state.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit the Keystone Research Center at <http://www.keystoneresearch.org>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW YORK MAYOR: CALLS FOR EXTENDING THE SCHOOL WEEK

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Goal Five: Math and Science)

In his state of the city address last week, New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani has called for extending the school week to include Saturdays and Sundays in an attempt to help student struggling to learn English and science.

In his address, Giuliani also urged for the expansion of summer school, suspension centers at every school for disruptive students and libraries in 21,000 classrooms citywide that accommodate K-8 students.

For more information, visit the Mayor Giuliani's web site at <http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us> Click on major addresses.

The National Education Goals Panel

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Illinois

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PRINCIPAL POWERS: STRUGGLING FOR AUTHORITY IN ARIZONA

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Last November's election ushered in a new state referendum in Arizona that calls for making principals "operationally and financially independent" of their districts. The law, set to take effect in June, is being challenged by some and even supporters question whether the law is workable, writes EDUCATION WEEK (Stricherz, 1/17).

According to the paper, the law's authors wanted to go beyond the state's "expansive systems of charter schools" to further decentralize school authority by "cushioning designated principals from district bureaucracies." Senator Tom Smith (R), a co-sponsor of the law, explained that his motivation for sponsoring the bill was Arizona's near-bottom ranking of sending money directly to the classroom.

For more information, visit the Arizona Legislature at <http://www.azleg.state.az.us>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

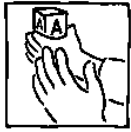
**E-RATES AND LEARNING:
DISADVANTAGED KIDS GAIN**
(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The E-rate program has been found to provide new learning opportunities to the nation's most disadvantaged students, according to two reports released by the U.S. Department of Education. The first study found that schools located in Empowerment Zones, low-income communities targeted for economic development are taking advantage of the E-rate program at rates 16 percent higher than similar schools in other communities.

A second study revealed that Bureau of Indian Affairs schools raised their participation in the program from 35 percent in the first year to more than 95 percent in the program's second year of operation.

The E-rate is a federal program designed to improve access to the Internet and telecommunications services

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

to schools and libraries by providing discounts.

For more information on both of these studies, E-Rate and American Indian-Service Schools: Who Applies and Who Gets Funded? and Empowerment Zones and E-Rate Application Rates can be obtained at the U.S. Department of Education's web site <http://www.ed.gov/Technology> or at the Urban Institute's web site at <http://www.urbaninstitute.org>.

TITLE ONE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: PERPLEXING RESULTS

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Researchers are perplexed over findings from a study examining Title I students' achievement on both state assessments and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). More than half of the nine states reporting three years of assessment data on math and reading showed increases in the number of disadvantaged students performing at or above state-set proficiency levels. Yet, NAEP found few gains in performance and a widening gap in student performance since the late 1980s between high- and low-poverty schools. According to NAEP data, students' scores remained flat in reading and were slightly improved in math.

According to the report, some of the explanation for the inconsistent achievement findings may be attributed to Title I law. Under the law, states may set their own standards and decide how the standards are assessed and at which grade levels. This makes it difficult to meaningfully compare states on how well their students are doing.

For more information and a copy of the report High Standards for All Students: A report from the National Assessment of Title I on Progress and Challenges Since the 1994 Reauthorization visit: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/eval/ed_for_disadvantaged.html#titlei

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

HIGH-STAKES TESTING: AERA STAKES OUT A POSITION (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) recently released a 12-point position statement on high-stakes tests. AERA's position statement describes a set of conditions "essential to sound implementation of high-stakes educational testing programs." Under the AERA policy, testing programs should meet all of the following conditions:

- > Protection against high-stakes decisions based on a single test
- > Adequate resources and opportunity to learn
- > Validation for each separate intended use
- > Full disclosure of likely negative consequences
- > Alignment between the test and the curriculum
- > Validity of passing scores and achievement levels
- > Opportunities for meaningful remediation
- > Appropriate attention to language differences
- > Appropriate attention to students with disabilities
- > Explicit rules for which students are to be tested
- > Sufficient reliability for each intended use
- > Ongoing evaluation of effects of testing

For more information and a copy of the position statement, visit the American Educational Research Association at <http://www.area.net>.

EARLY HEAD START ENROLLMENT: BENEFITS CHILDREN (Goal 1: Ready to Learn)

Children enrolled in the Early Head Start program performed significantly better in cognitive, language and social-emotional development compared to children not participating in the program, according to a study released last week by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' administration for children and families. Early Head Start provides child and family development services to pregnant women and infants and toddlers from birth to age 3.

Major finding of the evaluation of two-year-old children in the program include higher scores in standardized tests of infant and toddler development and reports of larger vocabularies and the ability to speak in more complex sentences.

For more information on the report and the Early Head Start program visit the Department of Health and Human Services' administration for children and families at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>. Click on ACF Press Room.

FEATURE STORY

BUSH ON EDUCATION: LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

(All Goals)

President George W. Bush launched his term in the White House by making education the first initiative he brought before Congress. The WASHINGTON POST reports that Bush's proposal calls for giving states more flexibility and funding, while calling for more accountability by annually testing of students (Milbank, 1/24).

"We share a moment of exceptional promise - a new administration, a newly sworn-in Congress - and we have a chance to think anew and act anew," Bush told education experts gathered in the East Room of the White House earlier this week as he introduced his education plan called Leave No Child Behind. Bush, who released his plan on the same day Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) unveiled a somewhat similar education proposal, added: "Both parties have been talking about education reform for quite a while. It's time to come together to get it done."

According to Bush's document Leave No Child Behind, the White House is calling for:

- > Increased accountability for student performance: state, districts and schools that improve achievement will be rewarded, while failure will be sanctioned. Parents will know how well their child is learning and schools will be held accountable with annual state reading and math assessments in grades 3-8.
- > Focus on what works: federal dollars will be spent on effective, research-based programs and practices. Funds will be targeted to improve schools and enhance teacher quality.
- > Reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility: additional flexibility will be provided to states and school districts and flexible funding will be increased at the local level.
- > Empower parents: parents will have more information about the quality of their child's school. Students in persistently low-performing schools will be given choice.

Numerous policies are outlined in the Bush plan, which overall stresses accountability and high standards, closing the achievement gap, expanding flexibility to the states and reducing bureaucracy, improving teacher quality and promoting informed parental choice.

Bush also underscores the importance of developing early literacy skills. His program introduces a new Reading First initiative, in which states that establish a comprehensive reading program "anchored in scientific research from kindergarten to second grade" would be eligible for grants.

The reading plan has an early childhood component, the Early Reading First initiative. States participating in the Reading First program would have the option to receive funding from the new Early Reading First program to implement research-based pre-reading methods in preschools, including Head Start programs.

From the report: "Too many of our children cannot read. Reading is the building block, and it must be the foundation for education reform."

According to the POST, President Bush and Senator Lieberman had “kind words” for each other’s education proposal. At a meeting between Bush and education leaders from both parties in Congress, agreement was struck on a variety of issues, including early intervention for disadvantaged students, more Pell grants for higher education and improved teacher qualifications, reports the POST. The more controversial issue of vouchers appears to be on the back burner of the Bush administration - an issue that would draw heat from many Democrats. Lieberman told the POST: “That’s the moment of decision the president is going to come to, whether the voucher component of his bill is worth sacrificing all the rest that we can accomplish.” Bush aides said that vouchers “would be a last resort if efforts to fix public schools failed.” According to the paper, Bush noted, “Our goal is to improve public education.”

For more information and a copy of President Bush’s Leave No Child Behind, visit either the U.S. Department of Education web site at <http://www.ed.gov>, or the White House web site at <http://www.whitehouse.gov>. At both sites, click on Leave No Child Behind.

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1255 22nd Street NW, Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037;
202-724-0015

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www.negp.gov

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