

# 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

### **SAGE ADVISE: STUDY OF WISCONSIN CLASS-SIZE INITIATIVE**

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

To make the most of class-size reductions in early grades, teachers should focus on basic skills when they meet with students in one-on-one situations, ask children to discuss and demonstrate what they know and have a firm, but nurturing, approach to classroom management, according to a new study of Wisconsin's four-year-old class-size reduction initiative.

Wisconsin's Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program began as a pilot project in 1996. The program's goal for low-income students is a student-teacher ratio of 15-to-1.

The recent study, conducted by Center for Education Research, Analysis and Innovation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, also found that teachers of higher achieving first-grade students also established routines, set goals and provided frequent feedback.

For more information, visit the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us>.

### **\*\*FACT OF THE WEEK\*\***

Between 1992 and 1996, 39 states (out of 51) significantly increased the percentages of high school graduates who immediately enrolled in 2-year or 4-year colleges in any state.

—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](http://www.negp.gov). Publications requests can be made by mail, fax, e-mail, or on-line.

## **“BONUS-BABY” TEACHERS: TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN** (Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

The Boston HERALD reports that one-fifth of Massachusetts' first group of “bonus baby” teachers last only one year in the classroom (Battenfeld, 1/26). Under a state initiative launched in 1998, potential teachers are tempted into the field by cash incentives. In the fall of 1999, 59 teachers received \$8,000 bonuses each. By the end of the 2000 school year, 12 either quit or were not rehired. Teachers who stay qualify for bonuses of \$4,000 increments for the next three years.

The program was begun to stem the tide of a teacher shortage, but, according to the paper, has not lived up to its expectations. Out-of-state recruiting efforts have not produced the number of teachers expected by state leaders.

For more information, visit the Massachusetts Department of Education at <http://www.doe.mass.edu>.

## COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

### **ADMINISTRATIVE BONUSES: TIED TO STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN OAKLAND**

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Oakland school chief Dennis Chaconas' new plan to boost student achievement in the city's schools has tied top school administrators bonuses to student achievement. Administrators already will receive a nine percent increase in pay. But, they can earn up to an additional three percent - one percent each for increases in reading, math and language arts, reports EDUCATION WEEK (Stricherz, 1/24)

The paper notes several other of Chaconas' “aggressive moves” to improve the schools including the replacement of a third of the district's 90 principals, new standards for principals' job evaluations and the elimination of 12 top central office jobs. He also requires schools to use phon-

## The National Education Goals Panel

### GOVERNORS

Tommy Thompson,  
Wisconsin, Chair, 1999

John Engler  
Michigan

Jim Geringer  
Wyoming

James B. Hunt, Jr.  
North Carolina

Frank Keating  
Oklahoma

Frank O'Bannon  
Indiana

Paul E. Patton  
Kentucky

Cecil H. Underwood  
West Virginia

### MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Richard W. Riley  
U.S. Secretary of Education

Michael Cohen  
U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education

### MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman  
New Mexico

U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords  
Vermont

U.S. Representative William F. Goodling  
Pennsylvania

U.S. Representative Matthew G. Martínez  
California

### STATE LEGISLATORS

Representative G. Spencer Coggs  
Wisconsin

Representative Mary Lou Cowlshaw  
Illinois

Representative Douglas R. Jones  
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll  
Missouri

ics and called for teachers and other staff to receive a 13 percent pay hike this school year.

For more information on the Oakland public schools, visit <http://www.greatschools.net> and click on California, then type in Oakland.

### **TOP FORM: LOUISVILLE'S ENGELHARD ELEMENTARY**

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Four in five students at Louisville's Engelhard Elementary school qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, yet the school continues to shine academically (AP/Lexington HERALD-LEADER, 1/26). Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit last month toured Englehard and several other high-performing, low-income schools to "glean each school's secret," writes the paper.

According to Wilhoit, Engelhard has a dynamic principal, who is "relentless in keeping faculty focused" on instruction and helping every child do well. The school also has a nearly year-round schedule so there is no regression in academic skills during summer months.

For more information, visit the Kentucky Department of Education at <http://www.k12.ky.us>

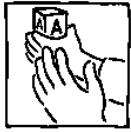
## FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

### **SENIOR YEAR: A LOST OPPORTUNITY?**

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and  
Goal Six: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning)

For many students, the senior year of high school is a "lost opportunity," according to the National Commission on the High School Senior Year. Despite the evidence that secondary school is failing to prepare far too many students for their next step in school or career, "the prevalent assumption persists that the senior year is a time to write off rather than a vital quarter of the high school learning experience," notes the commission's report, *The Lost Opportunity of Senior Year: Finding a Better Way*.

## THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



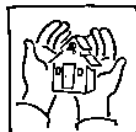
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

The Commission based their report on a review of the literature, eight focus groups of high school graduates and testimony from experts. The Commission now is holding regional meetings around the country with educators, administrators, parents and community leaders to discuss the problem and to find solutions. A final report will be released in June.

For more information, visit <http://www.commissiononthesenioryear.org>.

### FINAL DAYS: CLINTON'S "FLURRY" OF EDUCATION ACTION

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Goal Seven: School Safety)

EDUCATION WEEK reports on a "flurry of actions" by President Clinton during the waning hours of his presidency. One action is the creation of a Presidential Commission on Educational Resource Equity to examine disparities in resource allocations for schools. The 13-member panel will analyze the status of resource equity in education, determine how resource gaps affect individuals and the nation, study the effectiveness of targeted federal aid for low-income children and make recommendations for education policymakers.

Clinton also announced the creation of the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, which will serve as a "central hub" for federal information on youth-violence-prevention efforts. The Center also produced a resource guide for parents to help them distinguish between children's normal behavior and potential problems.

For more information on the Commission on Educational Resource Equity visit <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2001/wh-0115.html>. For more information on the Resource Center, visit <http://www.safeyouth.org>.

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

### **WELFARE-TO-WORK: EFFECT ON SCHOOLING**

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Goal Six: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning)

Targeting tax dollars to increase family income has a positive effect on student learning, according to a new study on welfare-to-work programs (Cleveland PLAIN DEALER, 1/23). The study, conducted by Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation, examined earlier research on 11 different programs that began in the early 1990s.

Some of the programs “simply required welfare recipients to get jobs, punishing them if they didn’t,” reports the paper. However, four of the programs examined offered a financial carrot, as well as a stick. For example, one program gave participants extra money if they worked full time. Children of welfare-to-work participants in these programs demonstrated improved school achievement.

“Now we ought to have a debate over what is the best way to maintain this level of total income,” said Ron Haskins, who was a lead House Republican staffer involved in writing the welfare-to-work legislation. He now works at the Washington, D.C.-based Brookings Institution.

For more information, visit the Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation at <http://www.mrdc.org>.

### **SCHOOL SCIENCE TEXTS: ERRORS ABOUND**

(Goal Five: Math and Science)

A review of 12 of the nation’s most popular middle school science texts found the books to be rife with errors. The two-year study conducted by researchers at the North Carolina State University and funded by a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, examined indicators including readability, attractiveness, quality of illustrations, and whether material such as laboratory activities, suggested home activities, exercises to test understanding and resource suggestions are appropriate.

The review offers specific critiques of each of the texts. It also compliments a 1999 report by Project 2061, a program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science that found middle school science texts did not adequately teach the fundamentals of science.

For more information and a copy of the North Carolina State University report, visit the Physical Sciences Resource Center at <http://www.psrc-online.org>. For more information on Project 2061, visit <http://www.project2061.org>.

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## FEATURE STORY

### MIDDLE DROP-OUTS: CONCENTRATED IN URBAN SCHOOLS

(Goal Two: School Completion)

A few hundred large, inner-city schools harbor the nation's worst drop-out rates, according to a series of studies commissioned by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard and Achieve Inc., a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based nonprofit group. The dropout problem is most severe in 34 cities, where about half of the schools graduate fewer than 50 percent of 9th grade-students by the end of their 12th-grade year.

"The solution is not that we have to fix every urban high school," said Robert Balfanz, a researcher at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University. "Dropouts are concentrated in these dropout factories."

Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, concurred. "We've said for a long time that if you target resources and energies more carefully, rather than general strategies across communities, you'd be a lot more effective."

Besides finding that the dropout rate is confined to 200 to 300 high schools in the nation's 34 largest cities, the studies also found that the dropout problem also is more prevalent in schools with student populations over 900, with predominantly black or Hispanic populations.

These findings caused researchers to suggest several strategies for lowering the dropout rates, including carving large schools up into schools-within-schools. Researchers also found that broad dropout-prevention initiatives fail to produce benefits. Instead, policies that target students by grade or by at-risk populations are far more effective.

One study cited the success of Cleveland, reports the Cleveland PLAIN DEALER (Stephens, 1/21). "It was the one major city that at least had the appearance of improvement and where there may have been real improvement," said Balfanz. Three Cleveland high schools have received federal grants to begin or continue schools-within-schools projects. One school, James F. Rhodes High School, places freshmen in a special "success academy," that gives them extended class periods and career counseling and "sequester[s] them in their on portion of the building with the same group of teachers and peers," reports the paper.

According to the PLAIN DEALER, last year only 36 freshmen at Rhodes High School failed to advance to the 10th grade, compared with the usual number of 150 to 200. "It creates an environment more friendly," said Clarence Gaines, facilitator for the Rhodes project. "The dropout rate really begins in the ninth grade. The key is to keep them on track."

"The Harvard study allows us to develop strategies exactly for those schools in the most need of assistance," said Michael Charney, professional issues director of the Cleveland Teachers Union. "We can change this. We cannot retreat ostrich-like and throw up our hands and say we can't do anything."

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For more information and a copy of the studies, visit the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University at <http://www.law.harvard.edu/groups/civilrights/publications/dropout.html>.

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