

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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FACT OF THE WEEK

Between 1992 and 1997, 13 states (out of 27) significantly reduced the percentages of students in Grades 9-12 who left school with out completing a recognized secondary program.

—Promising Practices: Progress Towards the Goals, 2000
<http://www.negp.gov/promprac/>

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STATE POLICY NEWS

NORTH CAROLINA'S HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM: DELAYED

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Earlier this month, the North Carolina Board of Education agreed to postpone the state's high school exit exam for two years. The goal is to allow for more time to field-test the exam. Beginning in 2005, the exit exam will count in each school's rating under North Carolina's accountability program and students will be required to pass the test to earn a high school diploma.

North Carolina is, however, proceeding with its plan to end social promotion of students ill prepared to enter the next grade. This year, students in grade 5 and next year 3rd and 8th graders, will be required to pass a test at the end of the year to move on to the next grade (Manzo, EDUCATION WEEK, 2/14).

For more information, visit <http://www.ncgov.com>, click on citizen and then K-12 education.

MATH AND READING TUTORS: PENNSYLVANIA PLAN TO PAY WITH STATE FUNDS

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

State funds would be used to pay for math and reading tutors for children in grades 3, 4 and 5 who perform below grade level in those subjects, under a new initiative submitted by Pennsylvania Governor Tom

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.

Ridge. "Tens of thousands of children will get another chance to master the basic skills of learning," Ridge said in his State of the State address.

His proposal calls for spending \$23.6 million in grants of up to \$500 each for private tutoring and other support to help students achieve at least at grade level in reading and math.

Ridge's education budget would increase state funding of K-12 education to \$6.4 billion, an increase of nearly 4 percent over fiscal year 2001 budget (Johnston, EDUCATION WEEK, 2/14).

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education at <http://www.pde.psu.edu>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

TEACHER RECRUITMENT: LOOKING FOR MID-CAREER PEOPLE IN SAN JOSE

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

The San Jose, California, school district is launching next month a Teaching Fellows program aimed at recruiting mid-career professionals to teach in impoverished schools (San Jose MERCURY NEWS, 2/12). The district has hired the New Teacher Project, an offshoot of Teach for America, to organize the fellows program.

While Teach for America targets recent college grads, the New Teacher Project seeks young to mid-career professionals. The recruits are expected to make at least a two-year commitment in the school district.

New Teacher Programs exist in 14 school districts nationwide - from New York to Baton Rouge. Advertising for the program highlights "blunt slogans and stresses how tough the job is" reports the paper. Or, they use catchy phrases such as, "The children of Compton deserve a Beverly Hills education."

Michelle Rhee, CEO of the New Teacher Project points out that "people are out there" who are inspired by the

The National Education Goals Panel

GOVERNORS

Tommy Thompson,
Wisconsin, Chair, 1999

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Missouri

against-all-odds teaching situations. Nationwide, the project gets about five applicants for every opening, notes the paper.

For more information or to apply for the San Jose Teaching Fellows program, contact Kate Folmar at kfolmar@sjmercury.com.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS: A REASSESSMENT (Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Teacher evaluations are being "re-evaluated" nationwide, writes the BOSTON GLOBE (Pappano, 2/11). Many schools are engaged in creating alternative evaluations that move beyond the principal-conducted surprise visits or brief observations of classroom life. Julie Belcher, an eighth-grade English teacher in Boston, called these traditional evaluations just "a snapshot, a glimpse" of a teacher.

New ways to evaluate teachers include teacher portfolios and projects that "resemble independent study projects," writes the paper. In many cases, teachers enter "counseling" sessions in which the principal and teacher meet for several conversations about teaching style and instructional strategies.

Ken Peterson, professor of education at Portland State University in Oregon, said teacher evaluations should include student work, parent surveys and student test scores. The paper also reports that Cincinnati's teacher's union last fall voted to tie pay to performance. Denver is following suit with a pilot program that links some teacher pay to student test scores.

For more information, visit the Cincinnati public schools at <http://www.cpsboe.k12.oh.us> or the Denver public schools at <http://www.denver.k12.co.us>.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



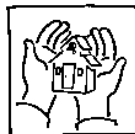
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

PAIGE'S FIRST TOWN MEETING: KEEPING SCHOOLS SAFE (Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige's first satellite town meeting featured strategies for keeping schools and communities safe. The broadcast aired February 20, live from 8:00pm to 9:00pm, EST, and presented the views of a national panel of guests who discussed ideas to promote safe and drug-free environments based on prevention, intervention and accountability.

Guests included: Wesley Mitchell, police chief of the Los Angeles United School District; Philip Grajko, associate superintendent of the Auburn, New York school district; Kirk Dominic, government relations director of the Atlanta-based Boys and Girls Club of America; Cathy Paine, mental health coordinator of the Springfield, Oregon public schools; and the Rev. Sandra Prather, executive director of Rainbow Outreach Ministries in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

To register or find a local broadcast for upcoming satellite town meetings, visit <http://ed.gov/registerevent>.

TURNING AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS: A DoED REPORT (All Goals)

The U.S. Department of Education recently released a new report on strategies for turning around low-performing schools. The report, School Improvement Report: Executive Order on Turning Around Low-Performing Schools, presents state-by-state data on the numbers of schools identified as in need of improvement through Title I and describes the factors that account for the variance in schools identified for improvement across the states.

The report highlights research and examples of promising practices associated with turning around low-performing schools. It also describes the school district, state, and federal roles in supporting efforts to turn around low-performing schools.

A sample of findings from the report include:

- > Flexibility measures written into Title I law allow each state to have a different system for assessing school progress and for determining which schools are low performing. These differences have resulted in states identifying very different percentages of Title I schools as low performing. Percentages range from 1 percent to 76 percent.
- > The limited research on the change process does make clear that in order to succeed, reform efforts need to be adapted to the needs of the individual school and involve the entire school community. Schools that engage in successful reform efforts also appear to share a four-step process involving a needs assessment, a planning phase, an implementation phase, and a period of assessment and evaluation.
- > Low-performing schools are usually the ones least likely to have the capacity to turn themselves around. They need critical external support to adopt research-based strategies for creating effective schools, and they need more information and better guidance on what it takes to turn around a failing school. In many cases schools not only do not get the help they need, they do not even know why they have been identified as low performing.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/LPS/sirptfinal.doc>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

DARE TO CHANGE: ANTI-DRUG PROGRAM MOVES IN NEW DIRECTION (Goal Seven: Safe and Drug-Free Schools)

One of the nation's most widely used drug-prevention program is undergoing major changes to make it more effective. Drug Abuse Resistance Education, popularly known as DARE, will incorporate new strategies and gear its message to older students.

DARE was founded by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1983. Zili Sloboda, former director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, is developing the new curriculum at the University of Akron in Ohio. The program's focus will shift from its current population of 5th graders to 7th-grade students, with a booster program in 9th grade. It will continue to use police officers, but more in the role of coach, less as lecturer.

The NEW YORK TIMES reports that the new DARE program will "work largely on changing what are known as 'social norms' among students." Research suggests that traditional prevention programs could lead students to "overestimate how many of their peers use drugs" and peer pressure could cause students to seek out drugs, rather than stay away from them. So, the new DARE will be careful not to paint a picture of widespread drug use.

For more information on drug-abuse prevention, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse at <http://www.drugabuse.gov>.

UNDERSTANDING READING: NEW REPORT GUIDES FEDERAL RESEARCH (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

A reading study group assembled by the RAND Corporation calls on the U.S. Department of Education's office of educational research and improvement (OERI) to "demand rigorous quantitative and qualitative studies" to form their reading agenda (Manzo, EDUCATION WEEK, 2/7). The report, Reading for Understanding: Towards an R&D Program in Reading Comprehension stresses the importance of comprehension in the reading process.

"The public discourse about improving reading achievement has oversimplified the issues by suggesting that once we all have children reading at grade 3, that is it - we're home free," said Catherine Snow, a Harvard University education professor who headed the 14-member panel.

For more information, visit RAND at <http://www.rand.org>.

FEATURE STORY

PROMISING PRACTICES: GOALS PANEL REPORTS ON PROGRESS (All Goals)

Promising education practices are featured in the National Education Goals Panel's report Promising Practices: Progress Toward the Goals 2000. Twenty states are highlighted in the annual report, which details successful practices and policies in place in states that have made significant progress and demonstrated high achievement in one or more of the eight National Education Goals.

"For too long 'success' in education has been self-proclaimed," writes Governor Tommy Thompson (R-Wisconsin), former chairman of the National Education Goals Panel, in the report's introduction. "It's time to replace rhetoric with data in determining what works. More attention needs to be paid to what we can learn from the 'natural experiment' of state educational reform. I want state policy makers to read Promising Practices, identify successful strategies and adapt the ideas that work."

The states noted in Promising Practices are:

- > Connecticut, Florida and Massachusetts for their promising practices to reduce the number of infants born with health risks as part of Goal 1: Ready to Learn.
 - > Iowa, Georgia and New York for their efforts to increase high school completion as part of Goal 2: School Completion.
 - > Connecticut, New York, Virginia for their promising practices in improving Advanced Placement performance as part of Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship.
 - > North Carolina, Florida and Pennsylvania for their promising practices in providing teacher support as part of Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development.
 - > Tennessee, Alaska and Vermont for their promising practices in providing math re-
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sources as part of Goal 5: Mathematics and Science.

- > South Carolina, New York and California for their promising practices in increasing participation in higher education as part of Goal 6: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.
- > North Dakota, Oklahoma and Wyoming for their promising practices in reducing the number of classroom disruptions by students as part of Goal 7: Safe Schools; and
- > Colorado, California and Kentucky for their promising practices in increasing the influence of parents as part of Goal 8: Parental Participation.

Minnesota also was singled out for its high level of achievement and significant improvement, particularly in the area of student performance in science. The state's promising practices in science recently were highlighted in another Goals Panel report called Minnesota and TIMSS: Exploring High Achievement in Eight Grade Science. The findings are summarized in Promising Practices.

"Promising Practices is really a report on the lessons we can learn from the states," said Emily Wurtz, acting executive director of the Goals Panel and author of Promising Practices. "We listened to state educators tell us what works in their schools. This kind of information sharing is becoming increasingly important as national attention moves from setting high standards to reaching high standards."

For more information and for a copy of Promising Practices: Progress Toward the Goals 2000 or Minnesota and TIMSS: Exploring High Achievement in Eight Grade Science, visit the National Education Goals Panel at <http://www.negp.gov>.

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