

# 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

### MASSACHUSETTS' TEACHER TESTS: SCORES UP

#### Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development

Three years after Massachusetts teachers faced national ridicule over low scores on a mandatory teacher-licensure exam, test scores have risen significantly, reports EDUCATION WEEK (Blair, 2/28). In 1998, only 41 percent of prospective teachers passed the first administration of the test. This year, 62 percent of first-time test-takers passed all three sections of the exam, notes the paper.

The Massachusetts Department of Education reports that scores increased because teacher candidates improved their performance on the subject-matter exams.

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

### ON-LINE IN SOUTH DAKOTA: STATE ASSESSMENTS Goal Three: Student Achievement

In a "pioneering move," South Dakota may become the first state to offer a series of state tests aligned with state academic standards solely over the Internet (Galley, EDUCATION WEEK, 3/70). Pilot on-line exams have been administered over the past year and these exams would become the prototypes for the state.

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

Between 1991 and 1994, no state (out of 51) significantly reduced the percentage of public secondary school teachers reporting that student disruptions interfere with teaching.

—Promising Practices:

Progress Toward the Goals 2000

<http://www.negp.gov/promprac/promprac00/promprac00.pdf>

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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.

On-line testing could give educators more information about student progress. For example, reports the paper, a student who scores well on a series of questions would automatically be boosted up to a series of more difficult questions. The "logistics of shipping, conducting, and scoring" also are simplified using on-line testing systems.

Virginia and Oregon are considering the use of on-line testing.

For more information, visit the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs at <http://www.state.state.sd.us/deca>.

## COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

### **NYC BLUES: DROP-OUT RATES DON'T DROP Goal Three: Student Achievement**

The high school dropout rate in New York City increased to almost 20 percent for the class of 2000, from 17.5 percent for the class of 1999, reports the NEW YORK TIMES (Hartocollis, 2/28). Schools Chancellor Harold Levy said that the dropout rate would rise further unless the state provided funds targeted to help students meet higher standards.

The review of dropout data was conducted by the city's school board's division of testing. Researchers cautioned that the dropout rate is poised to "skyrocket" since all students are required for the first time to pass the Regents math exam. According to the paper, five Regents subject exams are being phased in as a graduation requirement.

For more information, visit the New York City Board of Education at <http://www.nycenet.educ>.

## The National Education Goals Panel

### GOVERNORS

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Vacant

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Illinois

Representative Douglas R. Jones  
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll  
Missouri

## COCA-COLA: A "CLEAN ZONE" FOR SCHOOLS All Goals

The Coca-Cola Company this week announced a new approach to supporting education, including the creation of an Education Advisory Council. Setting the stage for the development of a new public/private partnership between beverage companies and school districts, the Coca-Cola Company calls for adoption of non-exclusive agreements with schools. The Coca-Cola system will continue to return revenue from beverage sales to support educational programs, without requiring exclusivity.

"The classroom is a clean zone," said Jeffrey Dunn, president of Coca-Cola Americas. "And, we've always been committed to promoting a learning environment that does not become commercialized." He added: "Now we're prepared to take this commitment a step further, reducing our commercial presence in other areas of the school environment as well." For example, one of the elements of Coca-Cola's new approach is to provide students access to a wide array of beverages, including juices, water, sugar-free, caffeine-free and vitamin and calcium-rich products, in school vending machines. Local schools and districts would be able to decide on beverage choices provided on campus.

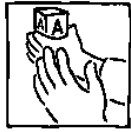
An Education Advisory Council, which will include as a member former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, will help guide the company's new education role. A key component of the Council's work will be to study and promote a series of Best Practices in Public/Private Partnerships that will respond to the needs of educators and students.

For more information, visit Coca-Cola at <http://www.coca-cola.com>.

## PEER PRESSURE: TRYING TO CURTAIL DRUG Goal Seven: Safe Schools

In an attempt to curb drug use through peer pressure, one South Carolina high school is awarding gold stars to student athletes who volunteer to take drug tests (Jonsson, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 3/11).

## 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

Mandatory drug testing controversies have ignited in schools nationwide, but Dutch Fork's call for voluntary testing is an attempt to circumvent privacy issues.

According to the paper, the policy neatly fits into the school district's goal to "put pride over punishment." Julie Underwood, general counsel for the National School Boards Association, summed up the policy: "If you don't participate, no benefits are withheld, but you're ridiculed and pressured - very clever."

For more information, visit the National School Boards Association at <http://www.nsba.org>.

## FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

### HERALDING STANDARDS: THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE All Goals

The business community strongly supports the drive to raise academic standards "because standards in some states are still not rigorous enough," said Edward Rust, chairman of The Business Roundtable Education Task Force, in testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Education Reform.

Rust added that the BRT "strongly support[s] annual state testing in reading and math in grades 3-8 as a way to make sure that children are acquiring the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in the workplace of the future."

EDUCATION WEEK reports on the BRT's "new venture in Washington: the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)." (Sack, 3/7). The business group has organized a lobbying effort dedicated to implementing a broad range of principles to be reflected in the ESEA, including standards and testing.

For more information, visit the Business Roundtable at <http://www.brt.org>.

**HAIL TO MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS: PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS**  
**Goal Five: Math and Science**

President Bush last week announced that 203 educators received the annual Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching for 2000. After an initial selection process at the state or territorial level, a national panel of scientists, mathematicians and educators recommends teachers to receive the Presidential Awards.

Winners receive a \$7,500 educational grant for their schools and a trip to Washington, D.C., to accept a certificate. The Presidential Awards program began in 1983 and the awards are administered by the National Science Foundation.

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

**RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL  
PRACTICES**

**BULLYING: MAJOR PROBLEM FOR MANY STUDENTS**  
**Goal Seven: Safe Schools**

Bullying, teasing and discrimination are major problems for students, according to a survey conducted for the Kaiser Family Foundation, Nickelodeon children's television and Children Now (REUTERS, DETROIT FREE PRESS, 3/9).

Seventy-four percent of children surveyed said teasing and bullying occur at their schools, while 51 percent of children age 8-11 said discrimination is a major problem. Forty-six percent of students surveyed noted threats of violence.

The survey also found that a third to more than half of 8- to 11-year-olds said they do not recall conversations with parents on bullying, teasing or other issues; yet parents surveyed indicated that the topic had been discussed.

For information, visit Children Now at <http://www.childrennow.org>

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## **OBSERVING SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A REPORT FROM PARIS**

### **Goal Seven: Safe Schools**

Students must become “citizens in their schools rather than tourists,” said Jerome Freiberg of the University of Houston, during an international conference on school violence hosted by the European Observatory of School Violence (Ganley, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, 3/7). Experts at the conference said that America’s culture of violence and large schools breeds alienation among young students, notes the paper. Eric Debarbieux, founder of the European Observatory of School Violence, also cited the availability of guns as a problem in America.

Freiberg said schools should create programs that “engage everyone.” Other initiatives to curtail violence include spending two years with the same teachers and time set aside to converse with adults who are role models.

For more information, visit the SALT LAKE TRIBUNE at <http://www.sltrib.com>

## **FEATURE STORY**

### **MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: A BUSINESS REPORT**

#### **Goal Three: Student Achievement**

Tests that are valid, reliable and fair are the best means of charting the country’s progress toward the goal of improved student achievement, according to a new report released by the Committee for Economic Development (CED), a group of business and education leaders. CED applauds the efforts underway in nearly every state to specify academic standards and measure student learning. Yet the report, *Measuring What Matters*, stresses that tests are a means, not an end, to school reform.

“CED Trustees are convinced that we cannot improve what we cannot measure,” explained Ed Rust, chairman and CEO State Farm Insurance Companies and co-chair of CED’s education subcommittee. “Properly designed and aligned tests are vital tools for managing and evaluating efforts to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education that prepares them for college, for the workplace and for lifelong learning to keep up with the rapid pace of change in the 21st century.”

However, the report cautions that assessment and accountability systems capable of driving school improvement are still in their nascent states. More work must be done to ensure that the tests are strong measures of learning, that students are provided with adequate preparation, that teachers are prepared to translate the testing information into improved instruction and that accountability systems accurately reflect how well schools are doing to boost student performance.

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Measuring What Matters recommends that federal and state leaders keep in mind the following as they craft testing and accountability provisions:

- > Tests should be used and improved now, rather than wait for the “perfect” test.
- > Standards should be uniformly rigorous and substantive and assessments should measure the rich array of knowledge and skills embedded in such standards.
- > Policy makers should respect professionally developed testing standards when designing and implementing assessment and accountability systems, including using tests only for purposes for which they have been validated.
- > Tests are most useful when aligned to standards that states and districts have set for what students should know and be able to do.
- > Accountability systems that reward and sanction educators must be designed carefully to get the incentives right.
- > Holding students accountable requires providing them with adequate academic preparation for tests tied to promotion or graduation and with intensive instruction if they initially fail.
- > Standards, assessment and accountability policies should be regularly reviewed using independent evaluators to help identify problems and best practices and to monitor the intended and unintended consequences of policy changes.
- > Investments will be needed for improved tests and test administration, for assistance to students “for whom tests show to be poor performers,” and other items.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit the Committee for Economic Development at <http://www.ced.org>.

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