

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

NINE NEW YORK DISTRICTS: ABYSMAL CONDITIONS BRING LAWSUIT Goal Three: Student Achievement

The New York Civil Liberties Union, bolstered by a recent State Supreme Court decision, filed a lawsuit accusing the state of not meeting its obligation to “improve abysmal conditions in schools in nine districts that it knows are failing.” (Zernike, *NEW YORK TIMES*, 3/29). The lawsuit came on the heels of a court decision that ruled that the formula New York State uses to finance schools denies students in New York City their constitutional right to a “sound, basic education.”

According to the paper, one goal of the new lawsuit is to go beyond the ruling in the New York City case by having the state appoint monitors to work with each of the nine school districts to help improve both student achievement and the physical conditions of each campus.

For more information, visit the New York Civil Liberties Union at www.nyclu.org.

GUBERNATORIAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION: IT'S GROWING All Goals

In many states, governors are taking on more school responsibility and in the process asking for more power to control school decision-making. “It’s kind of

FACT OF THE WEEK

51 states increased the percentage of degrees earned by all students that were awarded in mathematics and science.

—The National Education Goals Report: Building a nation of learners, 1999
<http://www.negp.gov/reports/99rpt.pdf>

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.

easy to see why governors, if they're going to be blamed for schools, want more powers," said Ted Sanders, president of the Education Commission of the States.

EDUCATION WEEK writes that the "trend toward giving governors more power over schools has been unmistakable." (Stricherz, 3/28). According to the paper, in 31 states the governor names all members of the state board. In four other states, the governor appoints some of them.

EDUCATION WEEK explores the change in gubernatorial authority over education in several states, including Florida and California.

For more information, visit EDUCATION WEEK at www.edweek.com. Click on Education Week and go to the 3/28 issue. Or, visit the Education Commission of the States at www.ecs.org. Click on Education Issues, then Governance.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

TEACHERS AND THE INTERNET: A NetDay SURVEY Goal Four: Teacher Education/ Professional Development

A significant majority of teachers surveyed (87 percent) expressed comfort in using the Internet, yet many pointed out that the Internet is not well-integrated into their classrooms because of lack of time, equipment and technical support, according to a survey conducted for NetDay.

Other findings from the survey:

-84 percent of teachers thought the Internet could improve the quality of education.

-77 percent said teachers without Internet access are at a disadvantage.

-60 percent said teachers who have Internet access spend less than 30 minutes a day on the Internet

-When they are online, teachers are doing research or gathering information for lessons (55 percent); communicating with other teachers (42 percent); helping students

The National Education Goals Panel

GOVERNORS

Frank O' Bannon
Indiana, Chair, 2000

Jim Geringer
Wyoming, Chair-elect, 2001

John Engler
Michigan

Jim Hodges
South Carolina

Frank Keating
Oklahoma

Paul E. Patton
Kentucky

Jeanne Shaheen
New Hampshire

Tom Vilsack
Iowa

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Vacant

Vacant

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New Mexico

U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords
Vermont

U.S. Representative George Miller
California

Vacant

STATE LEGISLATORS

Representative G. Spencer Coggs
Wisconsin

Representative Mary Lou Cowlshaw
Illinois

Representative Douglas R. Jones
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll
Missouri

with projects (41 percent); communicating with parents (20 percent); and posting lesson plans (18 percent).

For more information, visit NetDay at www.netday.org.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS: MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTRODUCES NEW SYSTEM **Goal Four: Teacher Education/ Professional Development**

A new teacher evaluation system launched in Montgomery County, Maryland, introduces a "new level of accountability and a mechanism to get rid of teachers who don't measure up," and is reported to be a "radical departure" from the past system that made it all but impossible to get fire incompetent, tenured teachers (Loeb, WASHINGTON POST, 3/29).

The new evaluation distinguishes experienced teachers from veterans. For example, veteran teachers will be required to assemble a three-year professional growth plan. At the end of the three years, an evaluation will take place. New teachers, however, are assigned a "consulting teacher" who regularly evaluates the novice teacher, serves as a mentor and "ultimately makes a recommendation on whether she'll continue to teach."

For more information, visit the Montgomery County Public Schools at www.mcps.k12.md.us.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

EXTRACURRICULAR DRUG TESTING: COURT SAYS NO **Goal Seven: Safe Schools**

A 2-1 ruling by a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit struck down an Oklahoma school district's policy of requiring students participating in extracurricular school activities to take a drug test. The decision distinguished the Oklahoma case from a 1995 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that upheld drug testing of student athletes. "It is difficult to imagine how participants in vocal choir, or the academic team, or even the

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



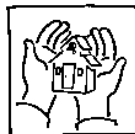
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

[Future Homemakers of America] are in physical danger if they compete in those activities while using drugs, any more than any student is at risk simply from using drugs," wrote the majority in the Oklahoma case.

For more information on Earls v. Board of Education of Tecumseh Public School District at FindLaw.com:

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=10th&navby=case&no=006128>

COPS ON THE ROCKS: BUSH CALLS FOR CUTS, EMPHASIS ON SCHOOL SAFETY Goal Seven: Safe Schools

President Bush plans to "severely scale back" the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and funnel the funds to school security officers, writes the L.A. TIMES (Lichtblau and Brownstein, 3/30). COPS, a popular Clinton anti-crime initiative, provided municipal police departments with more than \$9 billion in federal funds to put about 85,000 new officers on the streets during its six-year existence. In an interview last year, the L.A. TIMES reports that Bush argued that putting more cops on the streets is a local issue.

However, the paper reports that "one part of the program that policymakers have determined is worth salvaging is the hiring of officers to protect schools. The paper notes that the Bush plan will earmark \$180 million for school hires, "roughly equal to the current level of funding."

For more information on COPS, see the June 11, 1999 Federal Register, which can be found on-line at www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/1999-2//061199a.pdf.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

GRACE MEMORIAL: PITTSBURGH'S EXAMPLE OF FAITH-BASED LEADERSHIP **Goal Three: Student Achievement And Goal Seven: Safe Schools**

EDUCATION WEEK profiles the Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as illustrative of Bush's call for faith-based education leadership. Church leaders seven years ago, in an attempt to curtail crime and drug traffic that was seeping into their well-groomed, middle-class black neighborhood, organized its After-School Tutorial and Enrichment Program (A-STEP).

Besides offering academic assistance, praised for reinforcing public school education, the program also includes a spiritual component. For 15-minutes every Monday and Wednesday afternoon, Reverend Johnnie Monroe meets with students in the sanctuary for a voluntary "pastor chat." Monroe: "One reason I pushed the program here is that I saw so many children who needed what the church could offer in terms of morals and values. We also saw a need to assist the school system. We see ourselves as a school after school."

EDUCATION WEEK observes that the Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church program has "many of the ingredients that are at the center of a federal effort to tap into the faith-based community."

For more information, visit EDUCATION WEEK at www.edweek.com. Click on Education Week's 3/28 issue.

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND IMPROVED TEST SCORES: A CONNECTION? **Goal Three: Student Achievement And Goal Five: Math And Science**

Arizona students attending charter schools for two or three consecutive years improved their reading test scores more than their counterparts in traditional public schools, according to a report released by the Goldwater Institute. The report, "Does Charter School Attendance Improve Test Scores? The Arizona Results," also found that charter school students enrolled in charters for two years were slightly better off in math compared to similar students in traditional public schools. Students in charter school for three years, however, posted slightly lower gains in math than their regular public school counterparts.

Arizona has more charter schools than any other state. More than 400 charter schools are operating in the state.

For more information, visit the Goldwater Institute at www.goldwaterinstitute.org.

FEATURE STORY

JUST WAITING TO BE ASKED?” PUBLIC AGENDA ON HOW MUCH EDUCATORS WANT TO BE INVOLVED All Goals

Public Agenda’s latest report, *Just Waiting to be Asked? A Fresh Look at Attitudes on Public Engagement*, is an attempt to study the relationship between public schools and the public. According to Public Agenda, advocates of public engagement models argue that the relationship between public schools and the public is tearing apart. Reforms, they hold, will be more likely to succeed if the public’s concerns are more clearly heard. The report tries to answer the questions: How much input do educators really want? How much does the public really want to give?

The report found, for example that 70 percent of teachers feel left out of the education decision-making process. A mere 23 percent of the 404 teachers surveyed said that district leaders talk with them to understand their views. On the other hand, 70 percent of teachers said school officials talk with them only to gain their support for “what the district leadership wants to accomplish.”

Deborah Wadsworth, president of Public Agenda, pointed out that if teachers are the main conduits of information to parents and teachers feel left out of the loop, a “lost opportunity” is created. Bob Chase, president of the National Education Association, noted that teachers often cite their inability to have an impact on school policy as a main reason for leaving the profession.

Researchers also interviewed school superintendents, school board members, parents and the general public. Other findings from the report are:

- Only 4 percent of superintendents view communication with the community as their most pressing concern.
- 78 percent of superintendents said public-engagement efforts were underway in their districts.
- 41 percent of superintendents said they set policies with other school leaders first then seek community support, rather than garner public opinion before making policy decisions.
- While parents and the public would like to see more community involvement, two-thirds say they are comfortable leaving decisions to the professionals.
- Parents and the public who rate their schools poorly are more likely to want to get directly involved in decision making.

The report is divided into six chapters. The first describes the “Lay of the Land.” Contrary to conventional wisdom about frayed relations between school districts and their communities, few school board members and superintendents complain that their districts must deal

with antagonistic organizations representing business, senior citizens or other groups.

Chapters two through five present issues and findings about the general public, teachers, superintendents and school board members, respectively. The final chapter discusses “So What Does This Mean for My District?”

Overall, Public Agenda found widespread support for public schools, with the public generally comfortable with leaving school policies for educators to decide.

The report is based on a mail survey of 686 public school superintendents and 475 school board members. Also interviewed by mail were 404 public school teachers and 809 members of the general public. The general public category included 205 parents of K-12 public school students.

For more information, visit Public Agenda at www.publicagenda.org.

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