

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

In half the states (18 out of 36), the performance of students in the bottom quartile in 4th grade reading declined, and performance improved in only 3 states. In contrast, the performance of students in the top quartile improved in 12 states and declined in none.

— Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps (A report to the NEGP, released April 9, 2001) www.negp.gov

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STATE POLICY NEWS

SOCIAL PROMOTION: LOSING GROUND IN GEORGIA AND TEXAS

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Ending social promotion gained steam in Georgia last month when state lawmakers passed a bill that required students in grades 3, 5 and 8 to pass state tests in order to be promoted to the next grade (Keller, EDUCATION WEEK, 3/28). Students who failed the test on their first try would qualify for extra help and take the tests again. However, if they failed on their second attempt, they would be held back unless a three-member committee (parent, teacher, principal) agreed that the child should be promoted.

In Texas, a 1999 state law that ends social promotion, while initially challenged by the Commissioner of Education Jim Nelson and Governor Rick Perry, eventually received their full support.

For more information, visit the Georgia Department of Education at <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us> or the Texas Education Agency at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>.

PRINCIPAL SHORTAGE: MARYLAND OFFERS ENTICEMENTS

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Maryland's shortage of principals is "more acute" than its teacher shortage, commented State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick. The State Board of Education came

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.

up with 24 recommendations to help the state's school districts address the principal shortage, writes the WASHINGTON POST (Johnson, 3/29).

Plans include better compensating principals by increasing their retirement income; provide three- to five-year contracts to those who take charge of troubled schools; and create a salary scale that ensures they will earn more than teachers. The Board also called for streamlining special education paperwork and hiring one assistant principal for every 350 students.

For more information, visit the Maryland Department of Education at <http://www.msde.state.md.us> and click on State Board.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

SCHOOL TIPS: INDIANAPOLIS' HOTLINE (Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson and the city's police department are publicizing the Crime Stoppers of Central Indiana hotline, in the wake of the recent school shootings in California (Spalding, Indianapolis STAR, 3/23). They are targeting primarily middle and high school students.

Students who suspect that guns or drugs have been brought into school or have heard violent threats can anonymously warn adults by calling the hotline (317-262-TIPS or 800-92-ALERT). Crime Stoppers and the Indianapolis Police Department will provide schools that participate in the hotline with a video explaining the program and posters and flyers to post on campus. Any tip that leads to an arrest could result in a \$50 reward.

For more information on the Crime Stoppers of Central Indiana visit <http://www.crimetips.org>.

The National Education Goals Panel

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Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll
Missouri

CHESTER-UPLAND: A THREE'S-COMPANY TOWN (All Goals)

The state board of control, in charge of Chester-Upland, Pennsylvania, schools for the past year, hired three different private companies to run the district's schools. Competition is the reason for picking more than one company, reports EDUCATION WEEK (Walsh, 4/4). Edison Schools Inc. will manage four elementary and two middle schools. LearnNow will run the district's only high school and three other schools. Mosaica Education Inc. will take over one elementary school.

The companies will be required to cooperate in certain areas: joint teacher contracts and the transfer of student records. Otherwise they will compete with each other over persuading parents to send their children to their elementary and middle schools.

For more information on each of the companies, visit: Edison Schools Inc. at <http://www.edisonschools.com>; Mosaica Education at <http://www.mosaicaeducation.com/Chesterupland/html>; and LearnNow at <http://www.inschools.com>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

YOUTH OF PROMISE: PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK GIRLS

(Goal Two: School Completion, Goal Three: Student Achievement and Goal Six: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning)

Tapping federal funds, Richmond, California, has created a project designed to help at-risk girls achieve in school and gain employment (Learner, EDUCATION DAILY, 3/28). The Youth of Promise project is a two-year after-school program that provides girls ages 14 to 17 with tutoring and homework assistance, personal development courses and employment training.

The girls meet every other week during the school year and participate in a summer jobs program. Each girl also enrolls in a service learning program, such as volunteering in a hospital or tutoring elementary school children. Students who stay in the program receive a \$25 weekly

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



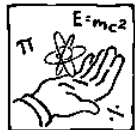
Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



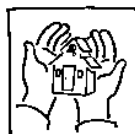
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

stipend and a \$600 annual bonus for completing the three program components.

Youth of Promise began last year and enrolls 50 teenage girls. It is funded from the federal Workforce Investment Act.

For more information on Youth of Promise, call Richmond Youth-WORKS at (510)235-5497.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A NEW LEADER

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

President George W. Bush selected Carol D'Amico to serve as assistant secretary for vocational and adult education at the Education Department. D'Amico is the co-author of Workforce 2020, a book that details "21st-century trends in education and the workforce," notes EDUCATION DAILY (Learner, 3/30).

D'Amico is known for supporting policies that de-emphasize the teaching of specific vocational skills; instead, she stresses the need for a "strong academic component" to vocational education.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education at www.ed.gov.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

SAVING OUR SCHOOLS: CRISIS PREVENTION VIDEOS

(Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

Saving Our Schools from Hate and Violence is a two-part "early warning" video series that provides educators with a tool for preventing school crises by building lines of communication among students, teachers, counselors and parents. The video series explores ways young people can ease the social isolation some students experience by creating a caring and inclusive school culture.

Saving Our Schools has won several awards, including the Parents' Choice Silver Award.

For more information about Saving Our Schools, visit the Bureau for At-Risk Youth at <http://www.at-risk.com>.

PREDICTING TEACHER QUALITY: A LOOK AT TEACHER TESTS

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

A new report from the National Research Council examines what makes a quality teacher. According to the report, *Testing Teacher Candidates: The Role of Licensure Tests in Improving Teacher Quality*, scores on licensure tests are not an “adequate gauge” of teacher quality (Gladfelter, ED DAILY, 3/29). “When screening teacher candidates, greater attention should be paid to factors that more directly related to student learning,” said David Robinson, chairman of the NRC committee that conducted the study and vice president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Besides test scores, the report indicates that policymakers could look at these indicators to determine if an education school is of high quality: student assessment data; employer evaluations; state and district evaluations of novice teachers; and information on course requirements and quality.

The report, *Testing Teacher Candidates: The Role of Licensure Tests in Improving Teacher Quality* is available for \$50 from the National Academy Press (800)624-6242. Visit the National Academy Press at <http://www.national-academies.org>.

FEATURE STORY

NAEP AND NEGP: REPORTS ON READING, MATH

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

In reading, the nation’s best students are getting better, while struggling readers are getting worse, concludes two reports. The Nation’s Report Card: 4th-Grade Reading 2000, a report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and *Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps: Reporting Progress Toward Goals for Achievement*, a state-by-state analysis of NAEP data by the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) show a clear achievement gap in our nation’s schools.

While the reading performance of the nation’s fourth-grade students has remained relatively stable (the national average scale score of 217 in 2000 is similar to the 1992 score), “significant changes” are detected at the upper and lower ends of the performance distribution, according to NAEP. Higher performing students have made progress: scores at the 75th and 90th percentiles in 2000 were significantly higher than 1992. Yet, the score at the 10th percentile in 2000 was significantly lower than in 1992.

“The good news [in the NEGP report] is that the states are making real progress in mathematics,” said Governor Frank O’Bannon, NEGP chairman. “But, the findings of this report really underscore the need for most states to look again at their efforts to improve reading.”

The NEGP report supports the NAEP findings. Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps found that while states are making more progress in math than in reading, only a few have reduced the achievement gap between students who score at the top quartiles with those at the bottom. The NEGP report also points out that few states have begun to close the gap between white students and their black and Hispanic peers.

Other findings from the reports include:

Reading 2000 (NAEP)

- > In 2000, female fourth-grade students had a higher average score than their male peers. The scale-score gap between males and females widened since 1998.
- > The 2000 results by region show fourth-grade students in the Northeast and Central regions outperform their counterparts in the Southeast and the West.
- > Comparisons of achievement level results between locations show a lower percentage of central city students at or above the Proficient level than their peers in other types of locations.
- > Fourth-grade students who reported spending a moderate amount of time on homework - one-half hour or one hour daily - had higher average scores than students who reported that they spent more than an hour or that they either did not have or did not do homework.
- > Students who reported watching three or fewer hours of television each day outperformed students who reported watching more television.

Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps (NEGP)

- > States are making more progress in mathematics achievement than in reading. Between 1990 and 1996, the average student achievement score improved in 28 out of 32 states in eighth-grade mathematics, and none declined. In fourth-grade reading from 1992 to 1998, only seven out of 32 states improved their scores and four states actually declined.
- > Good readers are getting better at the same time weak readers are losing ground. In half the states (18 out of 36) the performance of students in the bottom quartile in fourth-grade reading declined and performance improved in only three states. In contrast, the performance of students in the top quartile improved in 12 states and declined in none.
- > States have not reduced the achievement gap between top and bottom quartiles or between white and minority students. In reading only one state reduced the achievement gap between the top and bottom quartiles. And only one state reduced the performance gap between white and minority students. In math, eight states reduced the gap between the top and bottom quartile at fourth grade and five did so at eighth grade. Also in math, only two states reduced the gap between white and minority students at fourth grade and one did so at eighth grade.

The NEGP report also provides new information about individual state performance. Based on the new analysis of NAEP data, four states showing improvement in the most indicators in math and reading performance and some evidence of reducing the gap between the best and the worst performers and/or narrowing the performance gap between whites and minorities. Those states are Connecticut, Kentucky, Mississippi (no data avail-

able for eighth-grade math), and North Carolina.

For more information on The Nation's Report Card: Fourth-Grade Reading 2000, visit NAEP at www.nces.ed.gov. For more information on Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps: Reporting Progress Toward Goals for Achievement, visit NEGP at <http://www.negp.gov>.

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