

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD: NEW JERSEY'S STANDARDS (Goal One: Ready To Learn)

Last year, the New Jersey Commissioner of Education David Hespe appointed a task force of superintendents, principals, teachers, Head Start directors as well as parents, business and community leaders to develop standards for early childhood education programs. The National Association of State Boards of Education's (NASBE) State Improvement Initiatives newsletter describes New Jersey's standards development and implementation process (vol.6, no. 3, April 2001).

The newsletter notes that the state is making a "significant effort" to expand the availability of preschool programs for disadvantaged families. State officials also are in the midst of creating an early childhood education curriculum framework.

The full text of Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality is available at the New Jersey Department of Education's website at www.state.nj.us/njded/ece/expectations/index.html. Or visit the National Association of State Boards of Education at www.nasbe.org.

FACT OF THE WEEK

Between 1991 and 2000, the U.S. and 51 states (out of 51) significantly increased the numbers of Advanced Placement examinations receiving a grade of 3 or higher (per 1,000 11th and 12th graders.)

—Promising Practices: Progress Toward the Goals, 2000

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

The NEGP WEEKLY is a publication of:
The National Education Goals Panel
1255 22nd Street NW, Suite 502
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202-724-0015

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.

MATH SCORES AND TEACHER TESTING: JUDGE RULES IN MASSACHUSETTS

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development and Goal Five: Math And Science)

Suffolk County Judge Patrick King recently rejected the cases of two teacher unions that the state Board of Education's math teacher testing plan "overstepped its authority and violated the constitutional rights of the state's 120,000 teachers," reports the Boston HERALD (Hayward, 5/8). The plan would require giving competency tests to veteran teachers in districts where student math scores are low.

According to the paper, math instruction was declared to be in crisis after the 1999 statewide math test scores became public. On the 2000 MCAS, 45 percent of 10th-grade students failed the math exam, "a startling number" since high-schoolers will need to pass both the math and English portions of the exam in order to graduate beginning in 2003."

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

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING: KEY TO SUCCESS

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Already distinguished twice as a Blue Ribbon School, Upper St. Clair High School education leaders decided against complacency by developing several new schoolwide reforms with the goal of further improving student achievement (EDUCATION DAILY, 4/26). "When you have 97 percent of your students going on to college, the bar is always being raised," said Terrence Kushner, Upper St. Clair principal.

The school's decision to allow every student in grades 9-12 unscheduled time within the school to pursue individual academic or career interests led to a third Blue Ribbon Award, as well as recognition as one of the U.S. Department of Education's New American High Schools.

Rather than be assigned to the typical study hall, students

The National Education Goals Panel

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may select from a wide array of options that include "attending the centralized academic resource center, interning at a local business, or pursuing a host of volunteer opportunities on or off campus," reports EDUCATION DAILY. The resource center meets students' individualized needs through customizing instruction provided by teachers of social studies, math, science, foreign language and English. It also offers online tutoring from community members.

For more information, visit Upper St. Clair High School, located in a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at www.uscsd.k12.pa.us.

SCHOOLS REACH FOR THE TOP (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

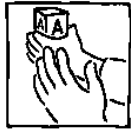
Two Miami, Florida, school principals attribute their schools' previous low ranking on the state's high-stakes school report card to each schools' current success (Stepp and Yanez, the MIAMI HERALD, 5/10). "Failing meant that we finally got the resources we needed all along to help our kids improve," explained Brenda Dawson, principal of Shadowlawn Elementary School.

Additional resources granted the schools after they earned failing grades on the state report card include more teachers, education specialists, tutoring and mentoring programs and new textbooks. Both schools "posted some of the district's biggest gains" on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. For example, average math scores from the schools' fifth-graders increased by more than 30 points.

Little River Elementary and Shadowlawn are nearly 100 percent minority and about the same percentage of students are from disadvantaged homes.

For more information, visit the Florida Department of Education at www.firn.edu/doe.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



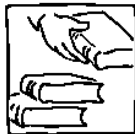
Goal 1: Ready to Learn



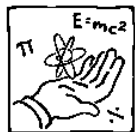
Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



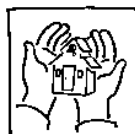
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BILL: THE "GO GIRL" ACT (Goal Three: Student Achievement And Goal Six: Adult Literacy And Lifelong Learning)

Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-California) introduced a bill this month that would provide \$50 million in local grants during fiscal 2002 for elementary and secondary education programs that help girls succeed in courses that lead to nontraditional jobs for females.

Dubbed the "Getting Our Girls Ready for the 21st Century Act, or "Go Girl!", the bill would fund programs that encourage girls to pursue courses in math, science, engineering and technology. It also would introduce girls to these careers and educate parents about the obstacles girls may face in pursuing these nontraditional careers.

For more information and a copy of the text of HR 1536, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov> and type in the bill number HR 1536.

TECHNOLOGY: HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige this week hosted a Satellite Town Meeting that focused on ways to close the achievement gap through technology. The town meeting explored questions such as:

- > How can today's education technologies help all students, including low-income students, meet high academic standards?
- > How can teachers be well prepared to learn and use new education technologies?
- > How can schools and communities create comprehensive technology plans to improve student achievement?
- > What resources are available to schools and communities to support their education technology needs?

To view live or archived webcasts of Satellite Town Meetings please visit Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at www.ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv/. For more information on Satellite Town Meetings, visit the Department of Education at www.ed.gov.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

TEACHER PREPARATION: IMPACT ON READING INSTRUCTION

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

Beginning teachers whose teacher-preparation courses featured quality reading instruction typically provide their students with a “richer literacy experience” than teachers who attended an institution that did not stress reading, according to a new study issued by the International Reading Association (IRA).

The IRA’s National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction identified the following universities as excellent: Florida International University in Miami; Hunter College, New York City; Indiana University Bloomington; Norfolk State University, Virginia; the University of Nevada-Reno; the University of Texas at Austin; the University of Texas at San Antonio; and the University of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. According to EDUCATION WEEK, the IRA’s study may stir up criticism due to the study’s lack of emphasis on pedagogy (Manzo, 5/9).

For more information on the IRA’s Commission, visit the IRA at www.reading.org. The Commission can be found at www.reading.org/advocacy/commission.html.

CHEATING: TEACHERS LOOK THE OTHER WAY?

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

A survey of 4,500 high school students nationwide found that nearly half believe their teachers sometimes choose to ignore students who are cheating in class. The survey, conducted by Donald McCabe, professor of management at Rutgers University, also found that more than half of the students surveyed said they had used the Internet to commit plagiarism.

McCabe has been researching college cheating for decades and now has turned his sights to high school students. As to why teachers may be looking the other way, McCabe says teachers are “afraid of retaliation by the parents.”

Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Josephson Institute of Ethics, told EDUCATION WEEK that he concurred with McCabe. “[Teachers] are afraid they’ll be sued by parents, and that schools don’t have the resources to back them up [in court,] said Josephson (Stricherz, 5/9).

For more information, visit the Josephson Institute of Ethics at www.josephsoninstitute.org.

FEATURE STORY

TECHNOLOGY COUNTS 2001: ED WEEK'S LATEST
(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Disparities in not only access to educational technology but also the way computers are used to educate children continue to divide advantaged and disadvantaged schools, despite the "rapid infusion of computers in American schools," reports EDUCATION WEEK in its fourth edition of the paper's Technology Counts series. Technology Counts 2001: The New Divides notes that the nation's digital divide no longer can be described as "one, single, gaping divide" - those who have and those who do not have computers and computer access. Rather, today's divide flows "in different directions:" a series of divides.

"Everybody is still struggling" with the complexity of the issue," said Christopher Dede, co-director of the Technology in Education Program at Harvard University. "You're not going to find any district that says, we've solved this."

The good news is that the student-to-computer ratio in the nation's poorest communities is not far from the national average. Digital-divide services, organizations that provide special computer training for school-age children to low-interest loans to help disadvantaged families purchase home computers for their children, has burgeoned to more than 20,000 such services.

Some policymakers look at the good news and question whether there still is a digital divide. EDUCATION WEEK reports that Michael Powell, the new chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, suggested that the digital divide is more of a "Mercedes divide," meaning that "everyone would like to have one, but you can still get to where you need to go with a less expensive machine."

However, technology advocates argue that "the problems of the digital divide are far from solved," writes EDUCATION WEEK. For example: "How often are students using the Internet and other computer resources to learn, and for what purposes? Are youngsters using school computers that can handle large amounts of data and employ sophisticated communication tools? Or are they working with obsolete machines that belong in a junkyard rather than a 21st-century classroom? Do some schools have the technical support necessary to keep machines running while others do not?"

Other questions posed by EDUCATION WEEK are: Are teachers in one district getting better training to understand how to use technology to enhance learning, while teachers in another district are left to themselves to figure it out? Do all students - low achievers and high achievers, minority and non-minority children, girls and boys, rich and poor benefit equally from the technology available in schools?

Technology Counts 2001 helps readers understand the new divides and establish programs to close the gaps that do exist in its first section titled "Dividing Lines." This chapter identifies the types of students who are not fully benefiting from the available technology.

A second chapter, "Beyond Machines," presents the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, public schools' understanding that the "human factor," as much as the hardware and software improvements, will close divides and help all children learn via technology.

Technology Counts 2001 also provides the results of a survey of 500 middle and high school students. The results suggest that "schools may not be harnessing the powers of technology as effectively as they could," writes ED WEEK. For example, 92 percent of the students surveyed said they believed that having good computer skills improves the quality of a person's life "a great deal" or "somewhat," but only 40 percent said they believed that knowing about computers is "extremely" or "very" important to how well they perform in school.

Other chapters focus on statistics that paint a picture of school-based computer use nationwide and a state-by-state look at what each state has done, or has not done, to close the digital divide.

For more information on Technology Counts 2001: The New Divides, visit EDUCATION WEEK at www.edweek.org.

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NEGP Acting Executive Director: John Barth
Publisher: John Barth
Editor: Barbara A. Pape
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