

# 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

### PRIVATE-TUTORING GRANTS: ON THE BOOKS IN PENNSYLVANIA

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

As part of a deal to increase teacher pensions, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge was able to get both House and Senate approval of his plan to give grants to parents for after-school private tutoring (Keller, EDUCATION WEEK, 5/16). Under the plan, parents who meet certain income guidelines could receive up to \$500 per child each year to pay for tutoring, if the child is in grades 3-6 and is failing standardized tests.

According to ED WEEK, voters in Arizona passed a similar proposal last fall as part of a sales-tax increase targeted for education.

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education to read highlights of House Bill 996 at <http://www.pde.psu.edu>. Click on "Newsroom" and search for HB 996.

### PERFORMANCE PAY: IOWA LAWMAKERS SAY YES

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Joining a small group of districts and schools, Iowa lawmakers earlier this month voted to replace their traditional teacher-compensation system with a performance-based one (Blair, EDUCATION WEEK, 5/16). The new system would become effective in 2003.

Under the plan, teachers would have a four-step career path, with the minimum pay for beginning teachers increas-

### \*\*\*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

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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](http://www.negp.gov). Publications requests can be made by mail, fax, e-mail, or on-line.

ing from \$23,000 to \$28,000. Teachers would undergo comprehensive reviews conducted by district administrators. In the final step, a regional team from outside the school district would evaluate teachers. Eight standards would be used in the evaluations.

The state, as part of a pilot program, is testing in six schools part of the compensation plan that gives cash bonuses to teachers whose students show improvement.

To read a critique of the plan by the Iowa State Education Association, visit the teacher union at <http://www.isea.org>. Look at the "What's New" section and click on Hollow Victory in Teacher Pay Plan.

## COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

### **SCHOOL SAFETY: A LOCAL DIALOGUE** (Goal Seven: School Safety)

Four local education funds of the Public Education Network (PEN) conducted community "conversations" to help improve school safety in their community schools. PEN published the outcome of these local dialogues in its publication "Lessons from the Field." (April 2001)

At the close of the year 2000, 250 participants in the following communities engaged in discussion on school safety issues: Buffalo, New York; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; McKeesport, Pennsylvania and Paterson, New Jersey. They based their conversations around The 1999 Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, *Violence in America's Public Schools: Five Years Later* in order to "ground their local experiences in a national context."

"Lessons in the Field" summarizes the local funds' experiences and cites several examples of local school-safety programs that work. It also provides a brief list of resources for school safety.

For more information, visit PEN at <http://www.PublicEducation.org>.

## The National Education Goals Panel

### GOVERNORS

Frank O' Bannon  
Indiana, Chair, 2000

Jim Geringer  
Wyoming, Chair-elect, 2001

John Engler  
Michigan

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South Carolina

Frank Keating  
Oklahoma

Paul E. Patton  
Kentucky

Jeanne Shaheen  
New Hampshire

Tom Vilsack  
Iowa

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Vacant

Vacant

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS  
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New Mexico

U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords  
Vermont

U.S. Representative George Miller  
California

Vacant

STATE LEGISLATORS  
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Wisconsin

Representative Mary Lou Cowlshaw  
Illinois

Representative Douglas R. Jones  
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll  
Missouri

## BALTIMORE'S TURN AROUND: TEST SCORES RISE

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

In what is being dubbed as a turnaround of a troubled school system, Baltimore's first- through fifth-grade students have made significant gains on national reading and math tests for the third year in a row (Bowie and Niedowski, Baltimore SUN, 5/18).

In 1998, 29 percent of the city's first-grade students read at or above the national average for their grade. This year, 56 percent of the students did so, reports the paper. In math, the scores have risen from 30 percent in 1998 to 52 percent this spring. First graders improved the most, and many educators attributed their high performance to a "new emphasis on programs for four- and five-year-olds," writes the paper.

According to the paper, the test score increases occurred four years after the state and city forged a partnership, "marked by tens of millions of dollars in new state funding" to reform a troubled school system. School board members targeted most of the money to elementary schools to reduce class size, buy new textbooks, adopt a citywide curriculum and retrain teachers in reading and math.

For more information, visit the Baltimore schools at <http://www.bcps.k12.md.us>.

## FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

### SCHOOL SUCCESS: NCES INDICATORS OF QUALITY

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

Earlier this year the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released a report that examines why some schools may be more successful than others at helping students learn. *Monitoring School Quality: An Indicators Report* reviews 13 characteristics of schools, classrooms and teachers that are most likely related to school quality and improved student learning.

The report also identifies, for each indicator, where national data are currently available and reliable.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit NCES at <http://www.nces.ed.gov>. Search for the report by title. The publication number is NCES 20001-030.

## THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



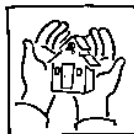
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

### ZERO-DOWN-PAYMENT MORTGAGES: A TEACHER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

A creative attempt to recruit and retain teachers is offered by Freddie Mac, the congressionally chartered corporation that packages mortgages and sells them to investors (Blair, EDUCATION WEEK, 5/16). Freddie Mac wants to expand its California program where, in partnership with the teacher-retirement system, the housing-finance company provides teachers and other school employees with zero-down-payment mortgages.

The CalSTRS Home Loan Program was launched last spring and is the first in the nation to involve public pension funds. California school employees who participate in the CalSTRS program are required to take out two loans. The first covers 95 percent of the cost of the home and must come from a credit union or commercial lender to be paid back in monthly mortgage installments. Freddie Mac purchases those bank loans.

The second loan is paid for by the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) and is applied to the down payment. This loan does not have to be paid back until the house is sold.

For more information, visit Freddie Mac at <http://www.freddiemac.com> and click on "News."

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

### TEACHER SALARIES: NOT KEEPING PACE WITH INFLATION

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

The average teacher salary increase in the 1999-2000 school year is among the smallest in 40 years and failed to keep pace with inflation, according to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) annual teacher salary survey. The average national teacher salary for 1999-2000 was \$41,820. This salary was up 3.2 percent from the previous year, which is slightly less than the year's inflation rate of 3.4 percent.

The average beginning teacher salary for 1999-2000 was \$27,989, up from 4.2 percent from the previous year, a slight decrease from the 4.4 percent salary hike in 1998-1999.

For more information, visit the American Federation of Teachers at <http://www.aft.org>.

## **SENIOR SLUMP: AND, WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT**

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

Better coordination between the K-12 school system and colleges and university is key to preventing a high school student's senior year from becoming meaningless, according to Michael Kirst, an education professor at Stanford University. In his report, *Overcoming the Senior Slump: New Education Policies*, Kirst argues that senior slump is a "rational response of high school seniors to an education system in which no one claims the content of the senior year as a basis for further education."

One solution is for states to appoint one organization to be responsible for education from kindergarten through college. According to Kirst, Georgia is a model for this approach. A state and regional "P-16" council establishes education policy for grades pre-school through college (grade 16).

The report also offers recommendations for how high schools can address the "senior slump." For example, they can redesign courses taken in the senior year to better connect with first-year college courses.

A copy of the report, published by the Institute for Educational Leadership and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, can be ordered from IEL via e-mail: [iel@iel.org](mailto:iel@iel.org).

## **FEATURE STORY**

### **BRAIN RESEARCH: CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS**

(All Goals)

Brain research and its potential for the classroom are the topics discussed in the Council for Basic Education's (CBE) monthly policy brief (April 2001). The essays presented in the policy brief tackle specific issues surrounding the application of research into practice and even question whether "the findings of contemporary neuroscience" should be applied in today's classrooms.

Keith Verner, head of the division of developmental pediatrics and learning at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, opens the issue by providing a brief overview of how the brain processes information. He defines "the way we perceive, attend to, process and memorize information" as the link between science and education.

In the second article, Kathleen Madigan, executive director of the National Council for Teacher Quality, chastises educators who she describes as taking a "leap of faith" when they attempt to create curriculums or develop learning kits or workshops based on brain research. Madigan quotes Kurt Fischer, director of the Mind, Brain and Education Program at Harvard University: "You can't go from neuroscience to the classroom because we don't know enough about neuroscience."

William Brock, president of Bridges Learning Systems, Inc and former U.S. Senator, writes of the need to "transform education" based on unfolding developments in brain research. He challenges educators, policymakers and scientists to "employ the incredible findings of those engaged in brain research, first to understand the strengths, limitations and needs of the individual child." Children struggling to learn are Brock's primary focus.

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, a doctoral student at Harvard's Mind, Brain and Education program,

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describes the remarkable progress being made to understand how the brain works, with potential implications for understanding the learning process. She presents the case of Nico, a “smart, successful, middle school students,” who is living with only half his brain. He had surgery to remove his entire right hemisphere at age three as a “last-ditch effort to control his severe epilepsy.”

In another case study, Immordino-Yang discusses “Judy’s” math disability. But, according to the author, “in thinking about Judy not as having a disability limited to math, but as possessing a core set of neuropsychological strengths and weaknesses, we will be better able to understand and predict her performance across domains, as well as design a curriculum that more closely accommodates her needs as a learner.”

For more information, visit the Council for Basic Education at [www.c-b-e.org](http://www.c-b-e.org).

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