

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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The NEGP Weekly is taking a summer recess next week, but we will be back the week of July 12 with more exciting news stories about education improvement efforts across America.
Happy Fourth of July!

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STATE POLICY NEWS

VIRGINIA GUIDELINES: HELPING CURRICULA MATCH STANDARDS

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Virginia teachers will be able to refer to new state-released guidelines that show them how and in what order to teach English, math and science so that curricula matches the state's Standards of Learning (SOL). (Wermers, Richmond TIMES-DISPATCH, 6/22).

A press release issued by the state's Department of Education said that the "Scope and Sequence Guides" demonstrate how concepts called for in the SOLs can be taught sequentially and meaningfully. Critics complain, however, that the guidelines are too restrictive and basically amount to a curriculum for the schools.

For more information, visit the Virginia Department of Education at <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/solscope/> for copies of the sample guides.

ALGEBRA: SOUTHERN STATES UNITE TO CREATE EXAM

(Goal Five: Math And Science)

Organized by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), a group of 12 Southern states has joined forces to improve algebra instruction and testing in school (Hoff, EDUCATION WEEK, 6/20.) The group is seeking proposals from companies and non-profit groups "to create a series of products that will give the states common test items for their exams and profes-

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.

sional development opportunities for math teachers and the administrators who supervise them," writes the paper.

For more information on SREB, visit <http://www.sreb.org>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

TEACHER HIRING: ON THE FAST TRACK IN BUFFALO

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Lawmakers in Albany, New York, put hiring new teachers in the Buffalo school district on the fast track by eliminating a rigorous testing process (Precious, 6/22). The legislation, which gained final approval last week, was "hailed by Buffalo school officials as a way to streamline hiring to be competitive with suburban school districts," writes the paper. Since 1968, new teachers faced extra testing when seeking a job in Buffalo.

Buffalo teachers union officials criticized the change, claiming it will lower the quality of teachers coming into the district and make it easier for school officials to hire friends and relatives. School officials argued that the separate test "restrained us from going out for recruitment," said Buffalo School superintendent Marion Canedo. Canedo added: "We could never say to the candidate: 'Wow, you have great credentials. We can hire you.'"

For more information on the Buffalo schools, visit the city of Buffalo at <http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/city/index/html>. Click on city government and find Buffalo schools.

ROMER AND L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOLS (All Goals)

Roy Romer, former governor of Colorado and superintendent of schools in Los Angeles, is receiving good marks after his first year running the city's school system (West, BALTIMORE SUN, 6/24). According to the paper, "his early critics are revising their opinions upward."

While student achievement test scores are due out this

The National Education Goals Panel

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Illinois

Representative Douglas R. Jones
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll
Missouri

summer, Romer has "already declar[ed] victory," notes the SUN. Romer acknowledges that change does not come in one year. "You want this place to change faster, but you need to be honest about how much you can do within a certain period of time." Romer added that being a school chief is "much tougher than being governor."

Romer's primary goal is improving classroom instruction, especially reading. He also intends to build 85 schools, although the paper writes "there is no end in sight to classroom overcrowding."

For more information on the Los Angeles Unified School District, visit <http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

MATH AND READING: A FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

(Goal Three: Student Achievement, Goal Five: Math and Science and Goal Six: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning)

The U.S. Departments of Education and Labor recently announced a joint effort to improve adult and young adult education opportunities. The partnership calls on the two departments to;

- > Assess the reading and math needs of local labor markets and of local labor pools as well as available adult education resources in order to establish a referral program for workers in need of reading and math skills training;
- > Give at-risk youth access to a high school diploma through partnerships between the Labor Department's Job Corps centers and public schools, distance learning programs and online course providers; and
- > Provide technical assistance to state and local education agencies and other groups to assist them in providing and expanding improved adult education opportunities.

For more information, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov>.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



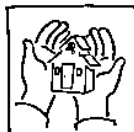
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

AFTER-SCHOOL FUNDS: DoED ISSUES AWARDS (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige earlier this month announced the award of nearly \$206 million in new grants to 308 school districts to create high-quality learning opportunities after school and during the summer.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program helps schools stay open longer to provide youth tutoring and homework help, academic enrichment, college prep activities, enrichment through the arts, technology education, drug and violence prevention counseling, supervised recreational opportunities and services for youth with disabilities.

For more information and a list of grantees, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/06-2001/06152001.html>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

AMERICAN STUDENTS ON ASIA: ILL-INFORMED (Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

American students demonstrate a lack of understanding of Asia, America's "most important" trading partner, according to a report issued by the New York City-based Asia Society. Namji Kim Steinemann, vice president of education programs at the Asia Society, said the report's major finding - that American schools engage in "educational isolationism" - confirms the group's view accepted by many educators nationwide.

The report notes that high school social studies and history teachers tend to pay little attention to Asia because they do not have the training. They also do not have the books and materials to use in classroom instruction.

The Asia Society's National Commission on Asia in the Schools is seeking the aid of U.S. governors to lead school curriculum changes that stress international education and Asia-related classes. Governors from Alabama, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Washington already have agreed to work with the Commission (Mangaliman, SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS, 6/25).

For more information, visit the Asia Society at <http://www.asiasociety.org>.

GRADE SCHOOL DROPOUTS: NO HELP IN SIGHT (Goal Two: School Completion)

Most programs to curtail the school dropout problem target high school students. Yet, nearly 2,000 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students in Chicago dropped out of school last year, according to a report issued by the Consortium on Chicago School Research and reported in the June 2001 issue of *Catalyst*, a Chicago-based school-reform magazine.

“They’ve been the silent dropouts that no one really talks about,” said Patricia Preston, director for alternative education at City Colleges of Chicago. Preston has been lobbying the state legislature to fund programs for younger students who drop out or are at risk of dropping out of school.

According to *Catalyst*, sixteen-year-olds who leave school have “productive alternatives to high school,” including full-time employment, job-training programs and GED. However, there is no “structured program” for younger students who leave school, said Preston.

For more information on grade school dropouts in Chicago, visit *Catalyst* online at <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org>. Click on the June 2001 issue.

FEATURE STORY

“BEATING THE ODDS:” INNER-CITY SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC GOALS (All Goals)

Inner-city schools have made meaningful improvements in math scores on state assessments and some gains in reading, according to a new report issued by the Council of the Great City Schools. Urban schools may have finally “established a beachhead on the rocky shoals of reform,” writes the report.

In *Beating the Odds*, achievement data are presented district-by-district on 55 city school systems in reading and math, by year, by grade and by race/ethnicity. These systems are located in 35 states. Other information provided in the report includes: important demographic and financial data, enrollment by race/ethnicity, poverty rates, percentages of English language learners and average per-pupil expenditures. Data is presented for each city and state.

The Council analyzed state assessment data from several perspectives. Researchers examined test data at the district level; then they analyzed aggregate data across grade levels and, finally, the Council examined racial/ethnic gaps in student scores on state assessments.

Following are the six major findings report in *Beating the Odds*:

- > Math achievement has improved in urban schools. About 92 percent of the Great City school districts increased their scores in more than half the grades tested on their state assessments. Nearly half of Great City School districts increased their math scores in more than half the grades tested at a faster rate than the statewide average. About 86 percent of all grades tested in the Great City Schools on state assessments showed gains in math scores.
- > Gaps in math achievement in urban schools may be narrowing. In math, 55 percent of the 4th grades in the Great City schools narrowed the achievement gap between white and African American students. Nearly half of 8th and 10th grades reduced the white-black gap. Fifty-nine percent of the 4th grades narrowed the achievement gap between white and Hispanic students. Nearly half of 8th grades reduced the gap; and 76 percent of 10th grades narrowed the white-Hispanic gap.
- > Reading achievement in urban schools has improved on state tests. About 80 percent of Great City School districts increased their reading scores in more than half the grades tested on their state assessment. About 34 percent of the districts increased their reading scores at a faster rate than the statewide averages for more than half the grades tested on their state assessment. Approximately 74 percent of all grades tested showed increased reading scores. However, the report notes that these gains in reading are not as strongly corroborated by other studies as the gains in math.
- > Gaps in reading achievement in urban schools may be narrowing. About 68 percent of 4th grades narrowed the achievement gap in reading between white and African American students. About 67 percent of 8th grades narrowed the gap, while 76 percent of 10th grades did so.
- > Nearly 60 percent of 4th grades narrowed the gap in reading between white and Hispanic students; about 71 percent of 8th and 10th grades did so.
- > Urban school achievement in reading remains below the national average. Only five major cities have average reading scores in at least half of the grades tested that are the same as or higher than their respective state average in 2000. They are: Albuquerque, Hillsborough County (Tampa); Portland, Oregon; San Diego; San Francisco.

Beating the Odds features several cities that are making across-the-board gains and provides descriptions of what they are doing. These cities include Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Houston and Sacramento.

The report concludes with future actions the Council of the Great City Schools, federal, state and local government and schools can do to encourage education improvements in urban schools and a closing of the achievement gap between white and minority students.

For more information, visit the Council of the Great City Schools at <http://www.cgcs.org>. Copies of the report are available for \$20 plus \$5 shipping and handling.

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