

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

CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL EXAM: A "NOTEWORTHY" POLICY (Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

An independent evaluation of the California High School Exit Exam has found that "noteworthy" and "good" progress has been made in the development of the test overall and in the state's efforts to provide students with the opportunity to learn the material on the exam.

The Human Resources Research Organization, an Alexandria, Virginia-based group, said that school staffs were well prepared to conduct the test and generally provided "good test conditions." The evaluation also found that the process used to establish minimum-passing scores was well designed and executed.

California law stipulates that beginning with the class of 2004, students must pass the exit exam to earn a high school diploma. The evaluation recommended that although it is "too soon to tell whether there will be significant problems" getting members of the class of 2004 ready to pass the exam, the Legislature should keep the current testing timeline for now.

For more information, call the California State Board of Education at (916)653-7016.

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 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.

MASSACHUSETTS' VOC ED STUDENTS: SHOULD THEY TAKE EXIT EXAM

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

A decision on whether Massachusetts' vocational education students should be required to take a state test tied to graduation is pending as state lawmakers review several bills that call for changing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) requirements.

Plans to modify the MCAS call for vocational education students to pass alternative tests linked to the state's new certificate of occupational proficiency, which vocational education students may now take to demonstrate mastery of core skills in various fields (Learner, EDUCATION DAILY, 7/9).

The decision to exclude vocational education students from the MCAS is controversial, with a decision expected to be made by the end of the summer.

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

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW YORK CITY'S SUMMER SCHOOL: MORE STUDENTS ENROLLED

(Goal Two: School Completion and Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

New York City's summer school enrollment has burgeoned this year, in large part due to this being the first summer high school students are required to attend (Rubin, EDUCATION DAILY, 7/9). Nearly 330,000 students are taking summer classes, with about 190,000 required to attend summer school.

According to the newsletter, "the intensified summer school policy, now in its third year, reflects the city board of education's effort to curb grade promotion." Students at risk of being held back are notified in February that they may be required to attend summer school.

For more information, visit the New York City Board of Education at <http://www.nycenet.edu>.

The National Education Goals Panel

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CITY SCHOOLS AND MATH AND SCIENCE: MAKING GAINS WITH HELP FROM NSF

(Goal Five: Math And Science)

National Science Foundation (NSF) grants to city school systems are helping to improve math and science education, according to a study conducted by Systemic Research Inc. The study's preliminary results found that students in most districts receiving Urban Systemic Initiatives grants improved achievement in math and science.

Many districts also were able to reduce the gap in test scores between white students and black and Hispanic students. More students also were taking high-level courses, including algebra, geometry, biology and physics.

The program began in 1993, with 22 school districts receiving grants for large-scale math and science reform. Between 1993 and 1999, eight of the 22 school districts increased their graduation requirements in math and seven increased science requirements. Twelve districts exceeded their state graduation requirements in math, and eight in science.

For more information on the study, Academic Excellence for All Urban Students: Their Accomplishment in Science and Mathematics, visit Systemic Research Inc. at <http://www.systemic.com>. For more information on the Urban Systemic Initiatives program, visit the National Science Foundation at <http://www.her.nsf.gov/esr/programs/usp>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A NATIONWIDE SURVEY

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

Last month, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released a report that examines national data on occupational program offerings, the use of skill competencies and other occupational program characteristics in public secondary schools and less-than-four-year post-secondary institutions.

Several of the survey findings are:

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



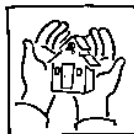
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

- > a majority of schools offer at least one program in two broad occupational program areas: business and marketing (85 percent) and technical occupations (60 percent)
- > 79 percent of schools that offer occupational programs had developed or adopted "skill competencies" for all of their programs;
- > in developing or adopting these skill competencies, 54 percent of schools reported "minor" industry input, while 35 percent said that industry was "equally involved" and 6 percent said the skill development involved "primary or exclusive industry input."

For more information, visit NCES at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001018>.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: DoEd PROVIDES GRANTS (All Goals)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige last week announced that \$6.3 billion in formula grants have been awarded to states for numerous education programs covering pre-K through adult education, including teacher training and programs to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers.

Among the \$6.3 billion in grants are:

- > Title 1 grants to help disadvantaged children
- > Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
- > Early childhood programs
- > Adult education - state grant program
- > Teacher preparation

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov>. Or, for details on the individual programs that received grants, visit the Department of Education's Guide to Education Programs at <http://web99.ed.gov/GTEP/Program2.nsf>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION: A SUCCESS STORY? (All Goals)

The National Association of Partners in Education recently released a survey, Partners 2000: A Decade of Growth

and Change that found that school partnerships support the nation's education goals and have grown beyond parent groups. The report also found that 82 percent of urban school districts engage in partnership activities, many partnerships are helping schools overcome the "digital divide" and that rural communities face tough challenges to forming partnerships.

Chris Cross, president of the Council for Basic Education, commented on the report: "Well-planned and implemented partnership programs are especially lacking in high-poverty schools." However, he added, "partnerships must stay focused on what matters most, student achievement." Cross: "And with the number of school partnerships on the rise, it is essential that these programs are informed with the most up-to-date research on how children learn."

For more information, visit the National Association of Partners in Education at <http://www.partnersineducation.org>. Or visit the Council for Basic Education at <http://www.c-b-e.org>.

TECHNOLOGY COOPERATIVE: A SREB PROJECT

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

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has developed a cooperative where "every education and higher education agency in the SREB states is multiplying benefits and dividing costs" as a member of the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative.

SREB's cooperative helped make possible several interstate agreements that promote student achievement through the use of technology, including the American Telecommunications Alliance.

The SREB Educational Technology Cooperative also includes:

- > a comprehensive, online course in algebra for teachers of middle and high school math — SREB states have free access to this course, which is funded by the AT&T Foundation and SREB.
- > EvalUTech provides schools, teachers, parents and student with free online evaluations of software and other educational materials through an arrangement with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

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

FEATURE STORY

REDUCE YOUR LOSS: SREB'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HELPING NEW TEACHERS

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

One way to address the challenge of nationwide teacher shortages is to help new teachers become veteran teachers, states the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in its latest report *Reduce Your Losses: Help New Teachers Become Veteran Teachers*. While teacher recruitment efforts are important, the ability to retain beginning teachers is “critical to maintaining an adequate supply of teachers,” writes SREB.

The report describes key reasons why teachers leave the profession. They are: inadequate preparation, workplace conditions and salaries and benefits. According to the report, national studies find that about 46 percent of newly hired teachers in public schools are first-time teachers. Many of these teachers recently graduated from colleges of education where “they did not receive adequate preparation in areas such as classroom management or student discipline.”

New teachers then find that the responsibilities of classroom teaching are “overwhelming.” SREB notes that two important factors that influence whether new teachers will remain in teaching are the amount of support and guidance they receive and the assignments they are given. Often, new teachers are given the most difficult students or subjects to teach. Frustrating assignments are a main reason why beginning teachers leave the profession after only a few years, notes the report.

Salary is not at the top of the list of why new teachers leave the profession. SREB cites several studies that found only 10 percent of teachers who left teaching after five years cited dissatisfaction with salary and benefits as the primary reason.

Reduce Your Losses also features efforts underway in SREB states to help keep new teachers in the classroom. Quality mentoring or induction programs are “the greatest tools that states can give new teachers,” writes the report. Mentor teachers are assigned to beginning teachers in 10 SREB states, while some states have established formal training for those who will serve as mentor teachers.

Other SREB states have developed programs designed to support teachers in their first few years. For example, Arkansas’ Beginning Teacher Support Program provides all new teachers with mentors and other assistance. Florida’s mentor Teacher Pilot Program trains mentor teachers to assist inexperienced teachers. Oklahoma’s Residency Program offers each new teacher a three-member team comprised of a representative from a college or university, a school administrator and a mentor teacher. The team observes the beginning teacher three times a year and provides him or her with guidance and support during the first year and, if needed, during the second year of teaching.

Reduce Your Losses also describes programs designed to create financial incentives to recruit and retain new teachers. In Maryland, for example, teacher education graduates who are in the top 10 percent of their classes can receive \$1,000 signing bonuses in ex-

change for three-year commitments to teach in Maryland schools. And, most SREB states provide scholarship and forgivable loans to attract and retain teachers.

Besides a list of references, the SREB report offers tips for “ways for states to keep beginning teachers in the classrooms,” which include “provide prospective teachers with quality teaching for content and classroom-management experiences in teacher preparation programs; and “collect information on the effectiveness of approaches and programs that support beginning teachers.”

For more information, visit the Southern Regional Education Board at <http://www.sreb.org>.

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