

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

MASSACHUSETTS' HISTORY EXAM: FROM THE WORLD TO AMERICA

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The Massachusetts State Board Of Education is poised to vote to switch the world history portion of the 10th-grade Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to focus, instead, on American history. High school students would have to pass American, rather than world, history to earn a high school diploma (Greenberger, BOSTON GLOBE, 7/24). According to the paper, the exam probably will focus on the period from the Revolution through Reconstruction.

Current policy holds that beginning with the class of 2003, students will have to pass the English and math portions of the MCAS to graduate from high school. State officials have postponed including history and science as part of the MCAS, although the two subjects may be included for the class of 2008, reports the paper.

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

CLOSING THE GAP: IT'S POSSIBLE SAYS EDUCATION TRUST

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

A new analysis by The Education Trust shows that achievement gaps present in many states would shrink dramatically, if poor and minority students in those states reached the same levels of academic achievement as do their counterparts in top-performing "frontier states."

For example, explains Education Trust:

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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.

> The white-African American gap in 8th-grade writing would disappear entirely in seven states (Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Utah, West Virginia, Arkansas and Hawaii) if black students in those states wrote as well as African American 8th-grade students in Texas.

> The white-Latino gap in 8th-grade math in California would shrink by two-thirds if California's Latino 8th graders performed as well as Latinos in Iowa.

Education Trust's analysis is part of the group's new on-line Education Watch report and interactive Web site. The on-line materials compare each state's scores on the National Assessment of Educational progress (NAEP) with achievement in top-scoring states, called "frontier states," for poor and minority.

For more information, visit The Education Trust at <http://www.edtrust.org>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

TURNAROUND DISTRICT: UNION CITY (All Goals)

School officials in Union City, New Jersey, averted a state takeover by relying on a "mix of proven strategies," that included comprehensive curriculum reform, cooperative learning and educational technology (Learner, EDUCATION DAILY, 7/20).

Test scores demonstrate the school district's success:

- > from 1989 to 1997, first graders increased their California Achievement Test scores by 45 percentage points in reading, 34 in writing and 18 in math;
- > from 1991 to 1997, fourth graders increased their California Achievement Test scores by 25 points in reading, 14 points in writing and 15 points in math.

"We developed our own curriculum based on state standards, using whatever materials helped us meet a given standards," explained Fred Carrigg, executive director of Union City's academic program.

For more information, visit Union City public schools at <http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us>.

The National Education Goals Panel

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URBAN DIVERSITY INITIATIVES: AN INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION PROGRAM

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

The International Reading Association's (IRA) Urban Diversity Initiatives Commission is planning a series of leadership academies to share information about what is an exemplary schoolwide reading program and how to design one. At a workshop held in Los Angeles last March, various speakers discussed not only what makes a good reading program, but what support is needed from the school and district level.

The Commission also is planning to provide a greater understanding of the needs of urban children and how to help them become more effective learners.

For more information, visit the IRA at <http://www.reading.org>. Or, e-mail irawash@reading.org.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

EDUCATION AND HHS: JOIN FORCES TO IMPROVE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

(Goal One: Ready To Learn)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson launched a task force to translate research on learning readiness into action through Head Start and other preschool programs. The task force will identify ways that federally funded preschool programs can be aligned with research on the development of early reading and math skills among preschool-age children.

The task force will review and make recommendations regarding research-based strategies that could be used in Head Start and other programs to better prepare children for academic success. It also will seek ways for Head Start centers to better prepare students for public school and how those schools can make that transition effective.

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

THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION: NCES REPORTS (All Goals)

The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) annual report, The Condition of Education, provides indicators of important developments and trends in American education.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



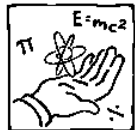
Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



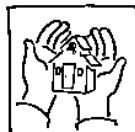
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

Recurrent themes highlighted by the indicators, which serve as categories for presenting the data, are participation and persistence in education, student performance and other outcomes, the environment for learning and society's support for education.

The report concludes that trends in the condition of American education show "some encouraging signs." These include: higher rates of educational participation in the overall population, increases in the math performance of students, some increases in science performance in the 1980s (but with no further advances in the 1990s), and increased advanced course-taking of high school students in four major academic subject areas (math, science, English and foreign languages).

However, international comparisons of student performance and instructional quality continue to raise concerns about how well the American educational system compares with the systems of other economically developed countries, particularly at the middle and high school level. The data also show "disturbing" gaps in academic performance and educational participation among different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

This year, the report features data on first-generation students (students whose parent did not attend college) and how academic preparation can increase the likelihood of these students' access to and persistence in post-secondary education.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit the National Center for Education Statistics at <http://www.nces.gov/programs/coe>

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY: WHERE ARE THE GIRLS?

(Goal Five: Math and Science)

In a recent study, the New York City-based National Council for Research on Women found that while women make up 45 percent of the American workforce, they hold just 12 percent of science and engineering jobs in business and industry.

"Women's gains have been stalled, and in some cases eroded, in engineering, physics and computer science," said Linda Basch, executive director of the Council. "The pipeline for women is particularly leaky. Women drop out of the sciences at almost every critical point."

For more information, contact the National Council for Research on Women at (212)785-7350. Copies of the report, *Balancing*

the Equation: Where Are Women and Girls in Science, Engineering and Technology is \$22, plus \$4.50 for shipping.

MAPMAN: SCHOLASTIC'S NEW GEOGRAPHY PROGRAM

(Goal Three: Student Achievement, Goal Four: Teacher Education And Professional Development, And Goal Eight: Parent Involvement)

Scholastic Inc. recently announced that its classroom magazines will launch a comprehensive age-appropriate and fun geography education program beginning in August for grades 4 through 6. The curriculum-based material will include a geography feature in each issue of Scholastic News for fourth graders and the publication of a special map skills book, MAPMAN's Map Skills, for grades 4-6.

An online companion to Scholastic News and another Scholastic Inc., magazine, Junior Scholastic, is a free resource for teachers, parents and children that can be used in the classroom or at home to discuss current events and to develop students' understanding of how national and international news affects their lives.

For more information, visit Scholastic at <http://www.scholastic.com/newszone>.

(Goal Three: Student Achievement, Goal Four: Teacher Education And Professional Development, And Goal Eight: Parent Involvement)

FEATURE STORY

**READY TO READ, READY TO LEARN:
WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING
(GOAL ONE: READY TO LEARN)**

More than 400 government, education, community and philanthropic leaders from across the country attended the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development. Called Ready to Read, Ready to Learn, the Summit was co-hosted by First Lady Laura Bush, Mrs. Lynne Cheney, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Service Tommy Thompson.

Mrs. Bush, a former teacher and school librarian, created the summit to highlight the early learning activities that parents and educators can use to prepare young children for school. "We all have a duty to call attention to the science and seriousness of early childhood cognitive development," said Mrs. Bush. "The years from crib to the classroom represent a period of intense language and cognitive growth. Armed with the right information, we can make sure every child learns to read and reads to learn."

Secretary Paige called the summit the first step in a long range and widespread effort to raise public awareness of the science of and need for early childhood cognitive development. He described a new task force of senior education and health and human services department officials as a vehicle for putting research and recommendations presented during the course of the summit into practice in government programs for young children (see Federal Policy, #5).

Paige: "Together, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services will ensure that the Head Start and preschool programs we support are doing the right things and getting results. We also will work to make sure every adult who cares for a child understand the

methods we have learned at this summit and will use them at home. In other words, we will get the government's house in order, and spread the word to all the other houses, too.”

A group of national experts in early childhood education addressed the group, which met at Georgetown University, including: Reid Lyon, chief, Child Development and Behavior Branch, National Institutes of Health; Dorothy Strickland, professor of reading, Rutgers University; Kathy Thornburg, president, National Association for the Education of Young Children; and Susan Neuman, assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education.

Patricia Kuhl, co-director of the Center for Mind, Brain, and Learning at the University of Washington, explained to the audience how babies begin to learn speech sounds in the first year of life. “The studies show that by one year of age infants all over the world are sorting out which sounds their language uses, what sounds can be combined in their language, and the patterns of words used in that language.”

Another speaker, Susan Landry, professor of pediatrics at the University of Texas, Houston Health Science Center, described how parents and Head Start teachers can be taught intervention skills to help the young children in their care.

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

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