

# 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

### **Grants For Private Tutoring: A Massachusetts Response To Low Test Scores** (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Acting Governor of Massachusetts Jane Swift proposed awarding grants of up to \$1,000 to the families of students who repeatedly fail the state exam (Greenberger, BOSTON GLOBE, 8/30). The funds could be used for private tutoring.

Swift's plan, unveiled during her State of the State address, would begin in the fall of 2002 and initially would be limited to the class of 2003. This group of students is the first who must pass the English and math portions of the state test to graduate from high school. The governor's "Extra Help Guarantee" would cost \$5.2 million.

For more information, visit the Massachusetts Governor's Office at <http://www.state.ma.us/gov/>.

### **Teacher Retention: New Jersey Must Do More** (Goal Four: Teacher Education & Professional Development)

A new Harvard Graduate School of Education study finds that more than 4 in 10 teachers new to the teaching profession last year in New Jersey do not plan to remain classroom teachers for the rest of their careers (Newman, NEW YORK TIMES, 8/28). The study also found that nearly half of all teachers new to teaching in the state were mid-career professionals coming from other fields.

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

The Harvard researchers recommend that school districts try harder to keep high-quality teachers in the classroom and that recruiting new teachers from beyond college campuses is working.

Harvard plans to conduct teacher surveys in four other states: California, Massachusetts, Michigan and Texas.

For more information, visit the Harvard Graduate School of Education at [http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/nj\\_survey\\_study/html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/nj_survey_study/html).

## COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

### **Civility Guides: How-To Lessons For Parents** (Goal Eight: Parent Involvement)

Two school districts in Washington state, Mercer Island and Issaquah, have issued new civility guidelines, "which spell out what is and is not appropriate communication between parents, staff and students (Pohlig, SEATTLE TIMES, 8/31). Mercer's "Let's Talk" guidelines and Issaquah's "civility policy" include items such as: being respectful, positive and flexible; not using vulgar language; scheduling appointments to talk to teachers instead of dropping in; and offering solutions, not blame.

Educators in the districts stress that while most parents are respectful, the few who are not are highly threatening and abrasive.

"I think increasingly there are models of uncivil discourse in our society - on T.V., on talk radio - and we are trying to show what civil interaction should look like and remind people what is not appropriate, such as cornering each other in the grocery store," explained Mercer Island Superintendent Bill Keim.

For more information, visit Mercer Island School District at <http://www.misd.wednet.edu>.

### **Divide And Conquer: Chicago Splits Up Larger Schools**

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and Schools chief Arne

## The National Education Goals Panel

### GOVERNORS

Frank O' Bannon  
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Vacant

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Cowlshaw  
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Representative Douglas R. Jones  
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll  
Missouri

Duncan last month announced an \$18.2 million initiative to break up the city's lowest performing schools into smaller, independent institutions (Quintanilla, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 8/31). A study of the school system's smaller schools found that students who attend these schools are more likely to achieve higher and less likely to get into trouble than their counterparts in larger schools.

"We want to take the success we have had with small schools and duplicate that success across the system," said Duncan.

Under the plan, four to six large high schools will close and each would reopen as two or more "small schools" inside the same buildings, reports the paper. Students attending these smaller schools would be in smaller classes, with greater attention from teachers and a safer academic environment.

For more information, visit the Chicago public schools at [www.cps.k12.il.us](http://www.cps.k12.il.us).

## FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

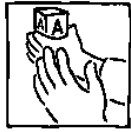
### **Learning Disabilities: A Summit** (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

For the first time, the Department of Education hosted a Learning Disabilities Summit. The Summit, held in Washington, D.C., late August, is part of a national initiative sponsored by the office of special education.

In his remarks, Secretary of Education Rod Paige said, "... learning disabilities are a real and debilitating handicap that place children at considerable risk for academic failure and other problems. Because of this it is essential that we develop a genuine science of learning disabilities." He asked the gathering for their "suggestions for more and better scientifically sound research to help us identify and address learning disabilities as early as possible."

A series of papers were made available that covered several areas: early childhood identification, alternative responses to intervention, processing deficit models and clinical judgment. All nine papers will be available on the

## THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



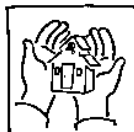
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

Department of Education's web site later this year.

For more information, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/08-2001/010827.html>.

### Back-To-School Address: Secretary Paige Speaks To Nation (All Goals)

At the National Press Club earlier this week, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige delivered his Back-to-School address. His remarks featured President Bush's Leave No Child Behind education plan and the bipartisan reception it has received in Congress.

"While there are excellent schools across America, our system is failing too many children," said Paige. He pointed to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as opportunities to improve education for all children.

He continued: "I have seen a spirit of change in many of the schools I have visited to mark the new school year. But I know we need to see more of it and at more schools. If we press on and finish a good bill, districts and teachers and the Department of Education will have time to begin putting the reforms into practice for next year."

For a copy of Secretary Paige's remarks, visit the Department of Education at [www.ed.gov/Speeches/09-2001/010904.html](http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/09-2001/010904.html).

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

### In Need Of Sleep: Teens, Sleep And School (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

A study of thousands of Minneapolis high school students found that the more sleep students get the better their grades and the less they experienced depression. The study was conducted as the district shifted from a start-up

time at 7:15 am to 8:40 am. (Kaufman, WASHINGTON POST, 8/29). The improvement in grades was slight, not significant, reports the paper.

Kyla Wahlstrom, a researcher at the University of Minnesota who conducted the study for the Minneapolis school district, said that “attendance and continuous enrollment have improved significantly in Minneapolis schools since the start times were changed.” She added: “It certainly makes sense that less sleepy students are more likely to stay in school and will be more ready to learn.”

For more information, visit the WASHINGTON POST at <http://www.washingtonpost.com>. The article is in the 8/29 issue.

### **High Stress: Driving Principals Out Of Business** (Goal Four: Teacher Education & Professional Development)

Milli Pierce, director of the Principals’ Center at Harvard University, sums up the state of America’s principals: “We will lose half of our school leaders in the next four years. How’s that for a crisis?” According to the HOUSTON CHRONICLE, principals “are quitting a profession that demands so much, yet provides so little in return.”

The paper also reports that twenty years ago, 20 or 30 applicants would apply for a principal’s job, with only 10 candidates applying today.

“The expectation for principals is higher than ever before,” said Valerie Forti, executive director of the Business Education Roundtable. “We have given them the responsibility to make schools perform but not the authority to make that happen.”

For more information, visit the National Association of Elementary School Principals at <http://www.naesp.org>, or the National Association of Secondary School Principals at <http://www.nassp.org>.

## FEATURE STORY

### **Sat Scores: Slightly Up, With More Students Taking The Test** (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The College Board recently released its annual SAT report. While the average scores of math and verbal combined were 1020, representing a slight increase from 25 years ago, the data also revealed some good and bad news.

The number of students taking the test has burgeoned over the years. This year, nearly 60 percent of all 18-year-olds took the SAT or the ACT, another college testing service, an increase from 40 percent in 1976. Such an increase in the number of test takers should, in fact, push scores down, reports the NEW YORK TIMES (Rothstein, 8/29). Yet, the

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overall results have remained stable, which suggests “real gains,” notes the paper.

Scores of both minority and white students increased during this time period. “But because the number of minority students as a share of all test-takers has grown, and because their scores have continued to be lower than those of whites, the overall average has not risen as much as the separate minority and white averages,” writes the TIMES. The paper concludes: “The growth in the number of lower-scoring (but improving) minority students taking the tests is a good sign, even if it stunts the overall average.”

Among the highest achievers, scores also have increased. This year about four of every 1,000 18-year-olds achieved a combined score of over 1500, while only one of every 1,000 students scored that high in 1976. In 2001, about 51 of every 1,000 18-year-olds scored over 1300 on the SAT, nearly double the number who scored that high in 1976.

However, the College Board also reported that a minority gap continues to exist. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige commented on the data: “Today’s report by the College Board provides more evidence that our educational system is leaving too many children behind, especially poor and minority students - and that we have a long way to go to close the achievement gap among our students.” While Paige said he was “heartened to see that more minority students are taking the SAT and setting their sights on college, . . . the achievement gap between white and minority students who took the SAT is both large and persistent. That kind of data cannot and must not be ignored.”

The College Board report also revealed the presence of grade inflation. For example, a student who scores 650 on the math section of the SAT today is more likely to get an A than a student with the same score in the past. Over the past 10 years, the percentage of high school seniors with A averages increased 46 percent and high school grade-point-averages also have increased steadily. “Conversely, during the same period, SAT scores and 12th-grade performance on the National Assessment of Educational progress barely budged,” noted Paige. He added: “If we want to prepare our young people to be active citizens, we must set high standards for them and measure their performance toward those standards - not just move them along.”

For more information, visit the College Board at <http://www.collegeboard.org/press/html/index.html>.

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