

The NEGP WEEKLY

October 5, 2001

Volume 2 — No. 120



A Weekly News Update on America's Education Goals and school improvement efforts across America from the National Education Goals Panel

CONTENTS:

STATE POLICY NEWS.....Page 1

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS.....Page 2

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS.....Page 3

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PRACTICE...Page 4

FEATURE STORY.....Page 5

STATE POLICY NEWS

“Crackerjack” Teachers: Illinois Plans to Get them for Neediest Children

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Goal 4: Teacher Education & Professional Development)

The Illinois Senate Education Committee is planning a series of hearings to spotlight the “glaring problem” that finds thousands of teachers statewide struggling to pass certification tests, with many of those who failed to pass the test still teaching, explained state Senator Daniel Cronin, chair of the education committee (Rossi, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, 9/28).

According to the paper, the hearings were “spawned” by the paper’s “Failing Teachers” series.

A central focus of the hearings will be to decide how to get “crackerjack’ teachers in front of the state’s neediest children,” according to Cronin, writes the paper.

For more information, visit the Illinois General Assembly at <http://www.legis.state.il.us>.

More Math: Oklahoma’s Plan

(Goal Four: Professional Development & Goal Five: Math & Science)

Oklahoma schools Superintendent Sandy Garrett proposed to the state board of education that students be required to take four years of math in high school (Galley, EDUCATION WEEK, 9/26). Cur-

The NEGP WEEKLY is a publication of:
The National Education Goals Panel
1255 22nd Street NW,
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037;
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 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.

rently, Oklahoma students are required to study math for three years in high school and English is the only course required each year to graduate.

Garrett also proposed that the state offer a \$2,000 stipend to teachers of other subjects to return to school and become certified to teach math. According to Garrett, this plan should "address the demand for math teachers."

The math plan needs to "go through a year of public hearings" before it can become state policy, notes Garrett.

For more information on Oklahoma education, visit the Oklahoma Department of Education at <http://www.sde.state.ok.us>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

Afterschool Ambassadors: A Grassroots Campaign (All Goals)

The Afterschool Alliance announced the selection of 25 local leaders from around the nation as Afterschool Ambassadors for the 2001-2002 school year. All of the Ambassadors lead local afterschool programs and each will serve a one-year term working to build grassroots support for afterschool programs.

Ambassadors were selected from 20 states and the District of Columbia. They run programs ranging in size from several hundred to more than 10,000 students. The Ambassadors serve one-year terms organizing public events, communicating with policy makers and building community support for afterschool. Each will plan a major event for Lights on Afterschool!, the Afterschool Alliance's October 11 celebration when programs across the country turn their lights on and rally neighborhood support for afterschool.

For more information, visit the Afterschool Alliance at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>.

The National Education Goals Panel

CHAIR 2001

Governor Frank O' Bannon of Indiana

CHAIR-ELECT 2002

Governor Jim Geringer of Wyoming

MEMBERS

Governor John Engler of Michigan

Governor Jim Hodges of South Carolina

Governor Frank Keating of Oklahoma

Governor Paul E. Patton of Kentucky

Governor Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire

Governor Tom Vilsack of Iowa

U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico

U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont

U.S. Representative George Miller of California

State Representative G. Spencer Coggs of Wisconsin

State Representative Mary Lou Cowlshaw of Illinois

State Representative Douglas R. Jones of Idaho

State Senator Stephen Stoll of Missouri

Cops 'N Kids: A Reading Center (Goal Three: Student Achievement & Citizenship)

Racine, Wisconsin, boasts a unique program that began with local police officers giving books to children "when they made traffic stops or visited homes," reports READING TODAY (August/September 2001). The program, spearheaded by retired police officer Julia Burney, now operates out of a reading center.

The Cops 'N Kids program has received major media attention, from the Today Show to Oprah, which helped Burney gain the support and resources of her community and businesses. Burney's success also has spurred other reading programs, including Project BOOKS, headed by Ann Smith, a teacher at Clayton Middle School/High School in southern New Jersey. Other programs are operating in Florida, Minnesota, New Jersey and Texas.

For more information, visit <http://www.cops-n-kids.org>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

Parent Education: DoED Funds Centers (Goal Eight: Parent Involvement)

Nonprofit organizations working with school districts in 19 states will receive a total of \$11.7 million to set up local parent information and resource centers in communities across the nation. Each center will have a unique focus, but all will share a common objective: to provide and expand opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning while reflecting the priorities and conditions of local communities.

The grants will offer sundry services to help parents help their children learn, including: parent-to-parent training activities; hotlines that offer telephone assistance in response to parents' concerns about child

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



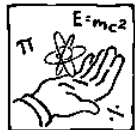
Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



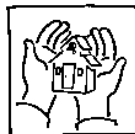
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

development and behavior; and workshops to help parents enhance their parenting skills, foster their child's readiness skills, understand their child's academic development and use resources to improve their child's learning.

For more information, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/09-2001/09282001a.html>.

Adult Literacy: A Look At America (Goal Six: Adult Literacy & Lifelong Learning)

A report issued by the National Center for Education Statistics provides an in-depth look at adult residents of the United States who were either born in other countries or were born in the United States but spoke a language other than English as young children.

The report, English Literacy and Language Minorities in the United States, reports that immigrants who arrive in the country when they were teens and who did not receive a formal education in their home countries struggle the most to achieve literacy. It also found that those who learned English as young children, whether born here or abroad, are better off than those who learned the language when they were 12 or older.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit NCES at <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>. The NCES number for the report is 2001464.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Reading Research Grants: Applications Accepted (Goal Four: Teacher Education & Professional Development)

The International Reading Association (IRA) awards a variety of research grants and awards each year to "encourage, support and honor individuals in the field of reading research," according to the IRA.

Reading educators, researchers, graduate students and others involved in reading research are invited to apply for grants and awards, including:

- * The Elva Knight Research Grant provides up to \$10,000 for research in reading and literacy;
- * The Helen M. Robinson Grant is a \$1,000 annual award to support International Reading Association members who are doctoral students at the early stages of their dissertation research in the area of reading and literacy;
- * The Jeanne S. Chall Research Fellowship is a \$6,000 grant established to encourage and support reading research by promising scholars;
- * The Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award is \$1,000 award;
- * The Reading/Literacy Research Fellowship is an award of \$1,000 to a researcher outside the U.S. or Canada;
- * The Teacher as Researcher Grant program is intended to support teachers in their inquiries about literacy and instruction. Grants will be awarded up to \$5,000.

For more information, including guidelines and applications visit the IRA at <http://www.reading.org>.

Pathways To Learning: Helping To Improve Children's Health (Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

The Bureau For At-Risk Youth announces its new Pathways to Learning activity book series, now available to educators and other professionals working with school and community organizations. The series is designed to help children deal with important issues concerning their health and well being.

The books designed for children in grades K-3, deal with issues such as bullying, stranger safety, drug prevention and self-esteem.

For more information, visit the Bureau For At-Risk youth at <http://www.at-risk.com>.

FEATURE STORY

Young Children: Need More Math (Goal One: Ready To Learn & Goal Five: Math & Science)

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics joined forces with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to produce a joint position statement regarding appropriate math instruction for 3- to 6-year-old children. EDUCATION WEEK notes that the statement is in response to a growing concern among educators that early-childhood education's "heavy focus [on reading] could be overshadowing the development of skills" in math.

“This originated from concerns that we needed to send a message to the field about the importance of high-quality mathematical experiences,” said Marilou Hyson, associate executive director for professional development at NAEYC.

In a January 2001 issue of the *Teaching Children Mathematics* journal, published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Doug Clements, a professor of early-childhood math at the State University of New York at Buffalo, discusses why math skills are important to introduce during the early-childhood years, how to teach math, the teachers’ role and other factors that are needed to create high-quality early-childhood math programs.

“High-quality teaching in mathematics is about challenge and joy, not imposition and pressure. Good early childhood mathematics is broader and deeper than mere practice in counting and adding. It includes debating which child is bigger and drawing maps to the “treasure” buried outside. Quality mathematics instruction includes providing loads of unit blocks, along with loads of time to use them; asking children to get just enough pencils for everyone in the group; and challenging children to estimate and check how many steps are required to walk to the playground,” writes Clements.

Preschool math is needed for four reasons, according to Clements. “First, preschoolers already experience curricula that include only a small amount of mathematics, and usually that content is anemic. We should improve this situation.

“Second, many of these children, especially those from minority and low-income groups, later experience considerable difficulty in school mathematics. Recent curriculum development projects have shown that the gap between these and other children can be narrowed. We should address these equity issues.

“Third, preschoolers possess informal mathematical abilities and enjoy using them. Before they enter school, many children develop number and geometry abilities that range from counting objects accurately, to finding one’s way through the environment, to making shapes. Children use mathematical ideas in everyday life and develop informal mathematical knowledge that is surprisingly complex and sophisticated. Neglecting to nurture such interests would be an educational shame. . . .

“Finally, although recent research on the brain has less to tell us about education than some suppose, it offers three general messages: (1) Preschoolers’ brains undergo significant development, (2) preschoolers’ experience and learning affect the structure and organization of their brains, and (3) preschoolers’ brains grow most as the result of complex activities, not from simple skill learning.”

EDUCATION WEEK reports that Clements plans to compile the discussions and recommendations from a recent conference on this issue into a report titled *Engaging Young Children in Mathematics*, which is expected to be released next year. This new report is expected to be organized into two sets of recommendations: descriptions of high-quality math experiences for young children and the types of materials and activities teachers can use to develop in children an awareness of such concepts as numbers and geometric

shapes; an explanation of what it takes to prepare early-childhood teachers with the knowledge and skills to better teach math to young children.

For more information, visit the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics at <http://www.nctm.org>. The article by Clements, "Mathematics in the Preschool" from the journal Teaching Children Mathematics, can be found at <http://www.nctm.org/tcm/2001/01/>

The NEGP WEEKLY is a publication of:
The National Education Goals Panel
1255 22nd Street NW, Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037;
202-724-0015

NEGP Acting Executive Director: John Barth
Publisher: John Barth
Editor: Barbara A. Pape
www.negp.gov

The NEGP/ Daily Report Card (DRC)
hereby authorizes further reproduction and
distribution with proper acknowledgment.
