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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

Back To School: California Teachers Study Reading and Math

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

California Governor Gray Davis recently signed into law a bill that allows nearly 200,000 teachers and over 20,000 classroom aides to attend the University of California for training in reading and math instruction (Martin, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 10/13). The Mathematics and Reading Professional Development Program will cost \$80 million next year and \$580 million total during the next four years.

"We know that teaching is the most important element in a student's success," said Kerry Mazzoni, Davis' education secretary, on the impetus for the bill. For more information, visit Governor Gray Davis' web site at <http://www.governor.ca.gov> or <http://www.governor.ca.gov/state/govsite/>

http://www.governor.ca.gov/state/govsite/press_release/2001_10/

Southern Teachers: Leave Teaching Due To Lack Of Respect

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Nearly half of teachers in 16 Southern states leave teaching in the state where they started, or quit teaching entirely within five years, according to a new

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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.

report issued by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

These teachers leave the profession due to a lack of support or respect from their administrators. The report also notes that beginning teachers often are handed the most challenging students. From the report: "Many new teachers feel they are left to 'sink or swim' early in their careers," writes the report.

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

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

New Haven's Accountability Plan: It Does Take A Village

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship and Goal Eight: Parent Involvement)

Placing the education of children on the shoulders of the entire community is the foundation of New Haven, Connecticut's, accountability plan (Reid, EDUCATION WEEK, 10/17). "The whole community should be rallying around developing young people academically and socially," said Superintendent Reginald Mayo. "Therefore, other people should be held accountable: parents, business, higher education institutions and the faith community."

For example, parents who make sure their children complete homework and attend school will be recognized on a "parent honor roll" and given discounts at local businesses. However, parents who fail to live up to expectations could be referred to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, charged with neglect, notes the paper.

For more information on New Haven schools visit <http://www.nhps.net/main>.

Or visit National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education at <http://www.ncpie.org>.

The National Education Goals Panel

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Colleges Of Education: Illinois Ranks Schools (Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

Controversy swirls around Illinois' ranking of state-wide colleges of education, reports the CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (Grossman, 10/12). Most of the state's colleges of education received an "A" on the new state board of education rankings, "but experts say the rankings are almost meaningless because they are rigged in favor of the schools."

Colleges are ranked based on student performance on state competency exams. The paper explains that the colleges, under direction from the federal government, count a student's best score on state competence tests over five years, "even if that student failed multiple times before passing."

Some educators point to the American Bar Association (ABA) as a model. The ABA publishes pass rates on first-time attempts at the bar exam. "There is no reason why we shouldn't do that for schools of education," said Arthur Wise, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

For more information on colleges of education, visit the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education at <http://www.ncate.org>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

University Of Texas: Grants For Early Childhood and Reading Programs

(Goal One: Ready To Learn and Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

Last week, U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige announced the award of two grants totaling more than \$1.7 million to two University of Texas projects for pre-kindergarten teacher training materials and professional development in early childhood reading instruction.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



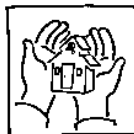
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

The Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning & Education at the University of Texas-Houston received \$1.2 million over two years to launch professional development programs in early childhood language acquisition at Head Start centers.

The Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts at the University of Texas-Austin received \$500,000 to develop a national training model for kindergarten through second-grade teachers in effective early reading instruction.

For more information, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/10-2001/10092001b.html>.

America's Fund For Afghan Children: Children Helping Children

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

In an address to the nation on the Afghan war, President Bush called on America's children to send \$1 to help Afghan children struggling to cope with the devastation of war. Bush asked children to send dollars to the White House addressed to "America's Fund for Afghan Children."

"This is an opportunity to help others while teaching our own children a valuable lesson about service and character," said Bush. "I hope school classes or Boy and Girl Scout troops, other youth organizations will participate in any way to raise the money to send to the children." This week, Bush announced that over 90,000 American children already have responded to his call.

For more information, visit the White House at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/connection/20011012.html>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

An Education Summit: Use Testing To Diagnose (Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

Governors, education and business leaders ended an Education Summit in Palisades, New York, last week with

a call to use standardized testing results not simply to rank students or “embarrass” under-achieving schools, “but to diagnose problems in order to allocate resources to improve achievement,” reports the WASHINGTON POST (Fletcher, 10/11).

According to the paper, Summit participants credit their past work with “helping to create a national consensus around education reform through setting high standards and testing.” Participants now want to “take the next step” by focusing on ways to raise achievement in schools that continue to perform poorly.

However, the paper also reports that teachers may be losing confidence in standards-based reform. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has found that teacher support for standards-based reform dropped from 73 percent in 1999 to 55 percent this year. “If teachers become disillusioned, we’ll never be able to carry out this agenda,” said Sandra Feldman, president of the AFT.

For more information, visit Achieve, Inc. at www.achieve.org.
Or for information on the AFT, visit <http://www.aft.org>.

K12 Inc.: Bill Bennet’s Education Company (All Goals)

Former Education Secretary William Bennett created K12 INC., an on-line education program. The group provides curriculum and instructional tools for adults working with children in grades K through 2. Six core subjects are available: language arts/phonics, math, history, science, art and music.

The company delivers all lessons, progress and planning tools, assessments and a variety of other learning aids over the Internet. Books, workbooks, CDs and videos complement the on-line service.

According to the web site, children can work at their own pace and the program is designed to “exceed international, national, and state standards.” From the web site: “Our goal is to provide an education that will be comparable or superior to the nation’s best public and private schools.”

For more information, visit K12 at <http://www.k12.com>.

FEATURE STORY

March Toward Excellence: Department Of Defense Schools Rule (All Goals)

Student performance in Department of Defense (DOD) schools ranks among the best in the nation, according to a new report issued by the National Education Goals Panel. The report, March Toward Excellence, was produced by researchers from the Peabody Center

for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University and was based on visits to 15 middle schools worldwide operated by the Department of Defense.

According to the report, if it were a state, the DOD schools would rank first or second nationally on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For example, only one state, Connecticut, outranked the DOD schools.

Yet DOD schools encounter similar challenges faced by schools nationwide, according to the report: high rates of poverty, parents with no more than a high school education and frequent family re-location that means students move from school to school.

“The DOD formula may be one of the best kept secrets in American education, until now,” said Indiana Governor Frank O’Bannon, chairman of the Goals Panel. “We recognize that the DOD school system is unique in some ways, but there are important lessons for all schools,” he added. “Educators across the nation should take a close look at these recommendations for improving the academic achievement of all students and closing the achievement gap.”

Researchers pointed to a confluence of factors that they claim contributes to the high success of DOD schools. The DOD model includes the following factors that can benefit other schools:

- * centralized direction balanced with local decision making;
- * policy coherence, structural alignment and efficient flow of data;
- * sufficient financial resources;
- * staff development;
- * small schools;
- * academic focus and high expectations for all;
- * continuity of care for children; and
- * “corporate commitment” to public education.

“Compared to the common experience for minority students in this country,” said Claire Smrekar, lead researcher, “these schools are just vastly different and vastly better.”

For more information, visit the National Education Goals Panel at www.negp.gov or <http://www.negp.gov/issues/publication/othpress/rel100101.pdf>, to view a press release or <http://www.negp.gov/reports/DoDFinal921.pdf> to view the report.

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