

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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FACT OF THE WEEK

Between 1990 and 1997, the U.S. and 37 states (out of 49) significantly reduced the percentages of infants born with one or more of four health risks.

—The National Education Goals Report: Building a nation of learners, 1999

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STATE POLICY NEWS

ED FLEX: PENNSYLVANIA IS FIRST STATE

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Pennsylvania is the first state allowed to waive certain federal rules and regulations, after guaranteeing to improve student achievement. States can seek exemption from federal rules under the Education Flexibility Partnership Act, otherwise known as Ed Flex.

EDUCATION DAILY reports that to qualify for the program, Pennsylvania had to develop state content standards, put in place Title 1 performance standards and aligned assessments, and demonstrate the inclusion of all students on statewide tests (Cardman, 10/17). The state also was required to "implement its own waiver authority to free districts from state regulations," writes the newsletter.

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

MATH: ALIGNING STATE ASSESSMENTS AND STANDARDS

(Goal Five: Math and Science)

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) recently awarded a \$976,000, 14-month contract to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) for the purpose of aligning national math assessments with state standards. The goal is to reach a national consensus on a framework for the 2004 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math exam.

According to NAGB, the updated framework will be designed to maintain the most recent math trend on the

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 Goals 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.

NAEP, while adding some new elements to reflect changes in math education, particularly in state standards and tests. The current NAEP math framework was developed in 1988.

"The consensus process will be open to all points of view about mathematics instruction and assessment," said Mark Musick, chairman of the independent, bipartisan NAGB. "We are trying to reach a balanced approach to mathematics assessment that will provide the most useful information on what students know and can do in mathematics and on trends in student achievement."

For more information, visit the National Assessment Governing Board at <http://www.nagb.org>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

EXEMPLARY READING PROGRAMS: AN IRA AWARD (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

To help promote success stories for reading instruction, the International Reading Association (IRA) annually presents its Exemplary Reading Program Awards to schools throughout the U.S. and Canada that have a proven language arts program. Although the schools range from large to small, rural to urban, common threads weave through all the winning programs, including:

- > a balanced approach to reading instruction
- > strong community involvement
- > an emphasis on reading and writing across the curriculum
- > encouragement for students to read for enjoyment

One winning school, Stockdale Elementary in Bakersfield, California, actively promotes its "Stockdale Star Readers" program. Throughout the school, reading is emphasized as an important and fun activity. The library is a special place at Stockdale Elementary, with a full-time librarian and well-stocked shelves. Corners in the library are transformed into a magic kingdom castle, tree house, and comfortable beanbag chairs are scattered throughout to make reading fun and relaxing for students.

Other winners hail from Chicago, Illinois; Indianapolis, Indiana; Havelock, North Carolina; Portland, Oregon; and Greenville, South Carolina.

For more information, visit the International Reading Association at <http://www.ira.org>. Refer to their newspaper, *READING TODAY* (October/November 2000).

The National Education Goals Panel

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Wisconsin, Chair, 1999

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North Carolina

Frank Keating
Oklahoma

Frank O'Bannon
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Representative Douglas R. Jones
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Missouri

BIG CITY SCHOOLS: WHAT WORKS

(All Goals)

School reforms underway in big city school districts are taking hold, according to a new report issued by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Doing What Works: Improving Big City School Districts profiles big city school districts and has found "substantial progress in raising student achievement."

"While no one would claim that urban school districts have yet achieved universal excellence, no one can deny the progress evident in their accomplishments over the past few years," said Sandra Feldman, AFT president.

While almost all urban school districts can claim a school or two that has against all odds risen to the top in student achievement, this report notes that entire school districts are showing steady improvement. Some of the factors considered critical for getting a school system to "work" are: high standards, implementation of research-based academic programs, strong professional development, smaller class size, extra help for struggling students, safe schools and broadbased involvement of school officials, staff, unions, families and community organizations.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit the AFT at <http://www.aft.org>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

SCHOOL CRIME DECLINES: REPORT ON SCHOOL SAFETY

(Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

Overall school crime continues to drop, consistent with a declining rate of crime against students outside of schools, notes the third Annual Report on School Safety. The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice jointly released the report last week.

The report also found a steady and significant decline in the percentage of high school students who reported they carried a weapon to school - seven percent in 1999, down from 12 percent in 1993. The report includes sections on the nature and scope of school violence, information on school discipline policies and resources on school safety and crime.

For more information on the report Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2000, visit the Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov>.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



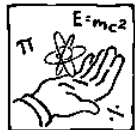
Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



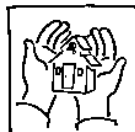
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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 PRE-SCHOOL CHALLENGE: CREATING GOOD ONES

(Goal One: Ready To Learn)

The U.S. Department of Education Satellite Town Meeting scheduled for November 15, 2000 will focus on preschool education. Called Creating High-Quality Preschool: New Ideas for Supporting Early Learning Programs, meeting participants will suggest ways that schools and districts can use existing federal funds and form partnerships to support pre-school programs. Representatives from the Department of Education will take questions during the program.

For more information and to register visit <http://registerevent.ed.gov>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

HIGH SCHOOL MATH: NEEDED FOR JOBS OF TOMORROW

(Goal Five: Math and Science and Goal Six: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning)

Secondary schools should improve math education so high school graduates are better prepared to take jobs in information technology, according to a draft summary of a National Research Council report on preparing high-tech workers (Learner, EDUCATION DAILY, 10/26). The report argues that it is "critical" that the U.S. better educate and train its own high-tech workforce rather than rely on highly skilled foreign workers to fill our nation's high-tech labor crunch, notes the paper.

The report calls for several changes in U.S. policy toward foreigners who work under an H-1B visa program. However, it also "urges employers to increase their support for training current workers."

For more information on the report, Building a Workforce for the Information Economy, which will be released early next year, call (800) 624-6242.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: NEW NSBA REPORT CITES MIXED RESULTS

(All Goals)

Although charter school parent and student satisfaction is high, the charter school movement has not lived up to the claims of its early proponents, according to a new report issued by the National School Boards Association. Charting a New Course: Fact and Fiction about Charter Schools examines historical and

contemporary forces that have shaped the charter school movement, describes charter schools as they exist today, evaluates their performance in raising student achievement and assesses their influence on traditional public schools.

The report points to several areas in which the charter school movement has not lived up to early expectations, including: student achievement, innovation and special education. The authors caution that without corrective legislative action, the charter school movement may begin to lose support.

For more information, visit the National School Boards Association at <http://www.nsba.org>.

FEATURE STORY

IN THE CLASSROOM: TEACHER PRACTICES MATTER MOST FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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

What teachers do in the classroom contributes more to student learning than does professional development or non-classroom aspects such as teacher education levels, according to a new study issued by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and supported by the Milken Family Foundation. "This study shows not only that teachers matter most," said research Harold Wenglinsky of ETS's Policy Information Center, "but how they most matter."

How Teaching Matters is the first study to use national data to link a comprehensive set of classroom practices to student academic performance. It does this by analyzing data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Wenglinsky examined data from two national samples of students: 7,146 eighth graders who took the NAEP math assessment in 1996 and 7,776 eighth graders who took the 1996 NAEP science assessment.

Three types of teacher quality were measured in the study:

- > classroom practices such as the use of small groups and hands-on learning
- > professional development to support particular classroom practices
- > teacher inputs, such as teacher education levels and years of experience

Wenglinsky then linked these classroom practices, professional development and teacher inputs to student academic performance taking into account other possible influences, such as student background and average class size.

The largest effects on student achievement derived from classroom practices. Students in this study whose teachers conduct hands-on learning activities outperform their peers by about 70 percent of a grade level in math and 40 percent of a grade level in science. Students whose teachers emphasize higher-order thinking skills outperform their peers by about 40 percent of a grade level in math.

Professional development follows as the next largest effect on student learning. In science, students whose teachers received professional development in hands-on learning or lab experiments did better than their peers by about 40 percent of a grade level. In math, students whose teachers received professional development in higher-order thinking skills also did better by about 40 percent of a grade level.

Of the teacher inputs, only majoring or minoring in the relevant subject is associated with improved

student academic performance.

“Overall, these findings suggest that policymakers are correct in emphasizing the importance of teaching for helping students meet high academic standards,” said Wenglinsky. “However, these findings indicate that less attention needs to be paid to attracting certain kinds of people into teaching, and more attention needs to be paid toward improving what our current crop of teachers does in the classroom.”

Wenglinsky recommends that teachers be provided with more opportunities to receive professional development and that the training occur over an extended period of time. Topics should be closely tied to effective classroom practices. He also urges that teachers be rewarded for putting into practice a curriculum oriented toward effective classroom practices, perhaps through offering advanced certification, such as that offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

For more information and a copy of *How Teaching Matters: Bringing the Classroom Back into Discussions of Teacher Quality* visit the Education Testing Service at <http://www.ets.org>.

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