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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

Teacher Testing: Illinois Reforms Exam *(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)*

Illinois State School Superintendent Glenn McGee claims that the state's new test for would-be teachers is "far-harder" to pass than the old one (Rossi, Chicago SUN TIMES, 11/6).

The old test was written at about an eighth-grade level and had a first-time pass rate of more than 90 percent. The new test is a more rigorous college-level Basic Skills test. However, teacher-candidates could get nearly two-thirds of the math questions wrong and still pass the exam under scoring procedures being debated this month by State Board of Education members, writes the paper.

For more information, visit the Illinois State Board of Education at <http://www.isbe.state.il.us>.

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Foreign Language Programs: Massachusetts' Teachers Say Si

(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)

Foreign language teachers throughout Massachusetts are trying to save foreign language programs from losing ground as schools face pressure to help students perform better on the statewide exam (Coleman, Boston GLOBE, 11/14). These teachers claim that the Massachusetts Comprehensive As-

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.

assessment System (MCAS) is causing schools to make "tough choices, resulting in foreign languages becoming the "forgotten framework," writes the paper.

State Education Commissioner David Driscoll, while sympathetic, does not think foreign language study will become a high priority for schools. "I think everybody understands that we are light years away from having the kind of universality of foreign language as these other areas," he said.

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

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

Fundraising In St. Louis: Wealthy Districts' Efforts Are Questioned *(All Goals)*

"Fundraising has gone way beyond the bake sale," said Howie Schaeffer, spokesman for the Public Education Network (PEN), of the efforts of public school education funds nationwide. The St. Louis POST-DISPATCH reports on St. Louis' parent associations' successful efforts to raise funds to pay for better buildings and special programs ((Bower, 11/5).

One of the city's oldest public school foundations is the Parsons Blewett Memorial Fund, established by a former superintendent in 1916 to "provide teachers in St. Louis city schools with scholarships for continued education as well as financial assistance after retirement." Last year, the fund spent a little more than a million dollars. The money was spent on teacher and principal training, recruiting teachers from South Africa and helping teachers get special certifications.

The article details fundraising operations at other local schools nationwide. It also details opposition to public school fundraising, citing equity issues as the main reason some oppose the foundations.

For more information, visit the Public Education Network

The National Education Goals Panel

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at <http://www.publiceducation.org>.

Gone With The Wind: Grades In Niagara Falls *(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship)*

Niagara Falls elementary and middle school students no longer will receive report cards with grades. Instead, parents will be sent report cards with a list of skills for each subject area and "indications of whether their child mastered the skills," reports THE BUFFALO NEWS (McNeil, 11/5).

The new evaluation process was initiated seven years ago by a group of district educators. According to the paper, the goal is to increase student achievement by "taking the focus off grades and offering each student an individualized learning plan."

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

E-Learning Projects: An Apec Initiative *(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship and Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)*

The Departments of State and Education are supporting an APEC e-learning initiative that will use the Internet to share best practices in education and to promote international collaboration on Internet-based learning among the economies that form APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation).

Projects include:

* The APEC Cyber Education Cooperation, a consortium of the U.S. Department of Education and similar organizations from Korea, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore, that will develop an on-line knowledge bank for educators

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



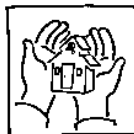
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

of best practices in education.

* The Asia-Pacific e-Learning Alliance, a private sector effort involving 10 major computer companies working with APEC economies to identify ways to improve education and boost productivity through greater use of web-based learning opportunities.

* The e-Language Learning Project, a proposal to help students and educators in the APEC region use the Internet to learn a second language, with an initial focus on English, Chinese and Spanish language skills. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov>.

Blue Ribbon Schools: Honoring The Best

(Goal Two: School Completion, Goal Three: Student Achievement And Citizenship, Goal Four: Teacher Education And Professional Development and Goal Eight: Parent Involvement)

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige recently announced the winners of the Blue Ribbon Schools initiative. This year, 223 public schools and 41 private schools in 38 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as a Department of Defense school, will be recognized. The schools were nominated by state education agencies, the Department of Defense and the Council for American Private Education.

The 18-year-old Blue Ribbon Schools program spotlights some of the nation's most successful schools by honoring excellence in leadership, teaching, curriculum, student achievement and parental involvement. Specifically schools this year were evaluated on several characteristics, including:

- * high student retention and graduation rates;
- * challenging standards and curriculum;
- * excellent teaching and an environment that strengthens teachers skills and improvement;
- * school, family and community partnerships; and
- * student performance on measures of achievement.

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

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Improving Science Education: NSF Launches \$100 Million Campaign *(Goal Five: Math and Science)*

The National Science Foundation (NSF) in an effort to improve science instruction announced a \$100 million initiative. NSF's plan is to establish Centers for Learning and Teaching throughout the country. The centers will encourage the development of new faculty and new materials to boost learning in kindergarten through 12th grade. It also will focus on better preparing graduate students in areas of critical national need.

For more information and a list of the Centers, visit the NSF at <http://www.nsf.gov>.

Choosing Content: A Tough Decision *(Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship and Goal Five: Math and Science)*

In an article for EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, George Nelson, director of Project 2061, discusses why choosing what should be taught in any academic area is a challenge for educators. Math, science and technology provide a framework for his article, but the questions and challenges can be applied to any subject area.

Nelson calls on educators to first think about the "why" when selecting content. "Stating exactly what the curriculum is supposed to achieve is essential to defining who should learn what," he writes. He goes on to raise tough questions, including is the goal coverage of a subject or actual learning? If learning is the goal, he writes, "and even the brightest students take more time to learn than is commonly thought, then the curriculum must be pared down to give students time to focus on a coherent set of the most important ideas and skills."

For a copy of his article, visit <http://www.ascd.org>.

FEATURE STORY

Friendship Through Education: It's A Small World Program

President Bush recently announced the formation of Friendship Through Education, a consortium of groups facilitating expanded links between U.S. students and students in countries with Muslim populations. As a first step, three schools in U.S. communities most directly affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks will be linked for student and teacher

interchanges with schools in Islamic nations.

The program is a consortium of non-governmental organizations and private groups “committed to connecting children from different nations in an effort to bridge cultures and broaden understanding,” writes the Department of Education. Several of the organizations involved in Friendship Through Education are: iEARN-USA, People to People International, The UN’s Cyberschoolbus, ePals Classroom Exchange, Global SchoolNet Foundation, Schools Online, Sister Cities International, US Fund for UNICEF and Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools Program of the Peace Corps.

Friendship Through Education is modeled after several successful programs including the President’s People to People program, launched on September 11, 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. “After touring the liberated death camps after World War II, Eisenhower was sure that, if people could have face-to-face contact, future atrocities could be avoided through better understanding,” writes the Department of Education. The People to People International group is now a member of Friendship Through Education.

Friendship Through Education will begin with expanded student and teacher exchanges among countries throughout the globe. Initial efforts will focus on countries with Islamic populations, including Egypt, Indonesia, Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Bahrain and Afghan refugee camps. The Friendship Through Education program will identify appropriate friendship schools in Islamic nations, help provide safe and secure Internet-based communications among students, assist with translations and facilitate classroom projects.

Two projects featured in the initial work of Friendship Through Education:

* E-Mail PenPals: gives students a chance to exchange e-mails with students from one of the identified countries in an attempt to better understand each other’s countries and cultures.

* Laws of Life Project: invites students to submit essays describing the rules, ideals and principles by which they live and explain the sources of their laws of life (literature, life experience, religion, culture, role models).

For more information, visit <http://www.FriendshipThroughEducation.org>.

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