

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

STATE AID: DEPENDS ON ATTENDANCE RATES (Goal Two: School Completion)

Student attendance rates in many states, including Illinois and Missouri, affects "a lot more than [a child's] knowledge of geography or algebra," reports the St. Louis POST-DISPATCH (Hacker and Sultan, 11/12). It also determines the amount of state aid school districts receive. Ironically, the districts penalized the most for low-attendance rates are those that serve the highest proportion of disadvantaged students.

In East St. Louis, Illinois, for example, the district would add more than \$3 million to its school coffers if it raised its attendance rate to the state average of 93.9 percent. Currently the rate stands at 87.6 percent.

Critics of the current system argue that schools should not be penalized financially for low attendance rates because they cannot control all the factors that keep students from coming to school, reports the paper.

Some schools go to great lengths to keep students coming. Last year in the Cahokia School district, a freshman won a new Chevrolet Cavalier in a raffle for students with perfect attendance.

For more information, visit the St. Louis POST-DISPATCH at <http://www.postnet.com>.

December 6, 2000

**Goals Panel National
Teleconference on Rising to the
Test: Meeting the Challenges of
Standards, Assessment and Ac-
countability in Education Today.**

Visit the NEGP's web site at
www.negp.gov or call the Goals Panel at
(202)724-0078 to find out how you can get
involved!

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 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.

STATE BALLOTS: RESULTS IN EDUCATION WEEK (All Goals)

The November 8th issue of EDUCATION WEEK includes a list of measures related to K-12 education that appeared on state ballots and the results of the election. The list includes Arizona's Proposition 203, which would end bilingual education for students not fluent in English and require the students to be placed in intensive yearlong immersion programs that stress English-language instruction and other academic subjects.

It also includes Initiative 728 from the state of Washington, which would direct a portion of annual surpluses from state property taxes to schools on a per-pupil basis, and devote unobligated state lottery funds to school programs and construction.

For a copy of the results of these and other ballot measures, visit EDUCATION WEEK at <http://www.edweek.com>.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

CHOICE: PRIVATE MANAGEMENT OF LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS (GOAL THREE: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT)

Education leaders in Philadelphia are debating different ways to improve the city's low-performing schools, including turning them over to private companies (Snyder, Philadelphia INQUIRER, 11/11). Other options include converting them into independently run charter schools and breaking up the staffs of schools that fail.

Last spring, the state passed the Education Empowerment Act that requires school systems to improve student test scores or face a state takeover. Philadelphia and 10 other Pennsylvania districts were identified to be in need of an overhaul because more than half of their students scored in the bottom 25 percent on the state's standardized tests in 1998 and 1999, reports the paper.

For more information and a copy of the Philadelphia plan visit <http://www.philsch.k12.pa.us>

The National Education Goals Panel

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Illinois

Representative Douglas R. Jones
Idaho

Senator Stephen Stoll
Missouri

PHILADELPHIA'S LAW AND SCIENCE: FIRM HELPS STAFF LAB (Goal Five: Math and Science)

McCandlish Kaine, a Richmond, Virginia, law firm, is helping staff Linwood Holton Elementary School's science lab (Wermers, Richmond TIMES-DISPATCH, 11/13). The firm is asking area universities and corporations to donate trained scientists to serve in the school's lab. Only three of the district's elementary schools have a science lab, but none of them has a dedicated science teacher due to lack of funds.

The firm also awarded the school \$5,000 that is targeted to purchasing "decodable books," designed to improve reading skills of young students. The school and PTA plan to pitch in some of their own money to expand the reading program.

For more information, visit the Richmond TIMES-DISPATCH at <http://info.timesdispatch.com>.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

DROPOUT RATES: NEW FIGURES FROM NCES (GOAL TWO: SCHOOL COMPLETION)

A new report issued by NCES provides national data on high school dropout rates and high school completion rates from 1972 to 1999. Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999, also includes state level information for the 1990s.

Besides showing basic rates, the report examines the relationship between various individual and family characteristics compared to high school dropout on the one hand, and completion propensity on the other.

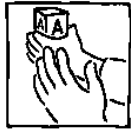
For more information and a copy of the report, visit <http://nces.ed.gov>.

GUNS IN SCHOOL: ON THE DECLINE (GOAL 7: SAFE SCHOOLS)

Fewer students are being expelled for bringing firearms to school during the 1998-1999 school year (3,523), compared to the year before (3,658), according to a U.S. Department of Education report. Three years ago, 5,724 students were expelled.

The findings are published in the Report of State Implementa-

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

tion of the Gun-Free Schools Act - School Year 1998-1999: Final Report 2000. The Guns-Free Schools Act of 1994 requires states to pass laws mandating school districts to expel any student who brings a firearm to school.

For more information and a copy of the report, visit <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/news.html>.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

“FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION”: A STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION REPORT (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Failure is Not an Option is a report issued by the National State Boards of Education (NSBE) that focuses on the “false choice” schools face between social promotion and retention. The NSBE formed a study group on Alternatives to Retention and Social Promotion to examine the issue.

Recommendations presented in the report include:

- > Stay the course on systemic standards-driven reform that includes implementing credible assessment systems and effective, non-punitive accountability measures;
- > Establish universally available opportunities for quality pre-school education;
- > Allow local districts and schools flexibility to structure curriculum, instructional practices and classroom time so that every student is continually engaged in learning and receives helping interventions as needed to achieve academic standards;
- > Ensure that all teachers are well prepared and supported; and
- > Never give up on students, no matter where they are in their education.

The NSBE urges state and local boards of education to demonstrate leadership by assembling coalitions to provide “sustained, goal-oriented direction” and ensure policy alignment.

For more information visit the National Association of State Boards of Education at <http://www.nasbe.org>.

EQUITY AND EDUCATION: A NEW LOOK (All Goals)

In the book *A Nation at Risk: Preserving Public Education as an Engine for Social Mobility*, editor Richard Kahlenberg argues that since the report *A Nation at Risk* was issued in 1983, the nation has focused on raising levels of student achievement. At the

same time, equity issues fell by the wayside.

The purpose of the book is not only to resurrect the notion of equity in education but also to put forth possible solutions. Proposals offered by some authors are: summer school, federal aid to education, standards, teacher enhancement, charter schools and zero-tolerance policies. Authors range from Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute and Professors Linda Darling Hammond and Amy Stuart Wells.

Kahlenberg offers two approaches to tackling the challenge of equity in education. "In the short term," he writes, "a number of the important initiatives outlined in this volume can begin to chip away at inequality . . ." Or, he adds, "Should we harness the trend toward public school choice to reduce the number of high-poverty schools altogether, striking at the root of unequal curricula and expectations, unequal peer influences and parental support, unequal teacher and principal quality, unequal learning environments and unequal financial resources, in one fell swoop?"

For more information and to order a copy of the book call The Century Foundation Press at (800)552-5450.

FEATURE STORY

THE FOURTH "R": ART

The "Internet revolution in education" has boosted art to the head of the class, according to Jason Ohler, director of the education technology program at the University of Alaska Southeast. In an article for EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, Ohler writes, "the multimedia environment of the Web, as well as much of what we experience through our computers, requires students to think and communicate as designers and artists." (EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, October 2000) Art, thus, is fast becoming the "next literacy."

Ohler cites anecdotal evidence to support his premise. Over the past few years, Ohler has observed high school students struggling to assemble multimedia presentations for language-arts classes. The students are challenged not by the technology, but by their inability to "create art." These students fumble with the media, "clumsily cramming together scads of video clips, graphics, sounds, buttons, and a few words." According to Ohler, these students eventually lose sight of what they were trying to communicate.

Ohler points to two developments that have converged, causing art to earn a "permanent place in the common experience of life for us all." First, multimedia has become relatively inexpensive, allowing even the "artistically challenged" to easily move into an art world. Second, the Web through its ubiquitous multimedia presentations has spread art globally. "For that reason," Ohler argues, "art should be included in the common experience of school for all students, not just those who plan to major in art and design."

Over the years, numerous groups of people have advocated for more and better art education programs in the schools. According to Ohler, their reasons fall primarily into three categories: art improves a child's ability to express herself or himself; art improves both a child's cognitive ability and attitude toward school; and art brings multicultural awareness and personal growth to the forefront. Yet, these reasons have not been successful to put more money into art programs, admits Ohler.

Ohler argues that the burgeoning world of multimedia and the Internet gives an added rationale to those seeking broad-based support for the arts. He offers several recommendations for “facilitat[ing] the coming age of art in our schools.” First, he calls for renaming art since it comes “with too much baggage.” Ohler would call art programs “business communication.” He urges school officials to “roll it into the literacy portion of the school’s curriculum, and then let it evolve.”

Ohler also calls for hiring more art teachers, whom he says are called for in order to “anticipate that the shift from text-only to multimedia environments will cause a combination of excitement and anxiety in our schools in the short term.”

Next he recommends increasing art requirements in teacher education programs and calling for an “Art, the fourth R” day - a day in the school year when art is integrated throughout content areas.

For Ohler, art literacy translates into real-world jobs, particularly given the new marketplace found on the Web, cable TV, and other related industries. “The Internet turns out to be not just a revolution in media and methods, but in literacy as well,” he concludes.

For more information, e-mail Jason Ohler at jason.ohler@uas.alaska.edu.

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