

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

CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM: MADE EASIER

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Facing possible legal challenges, California Governor Gray Davis won the approval of the State Board of Education to shorten and make easier the state's new high school exit exam (Groves, L.A. TIMES, 12/8). The state's main concern is that high numbers of students would fail the exam, a probability reported by several researchers who have examined the issue. According to the paper, legal challenges in Florida and Texas revolved around whether students have been adequately taught the material covered on the states' graduation tests. John Mockler, Davis' interim education secretary, said California was "learning from other state's troubles," writes the paper.

Changes in California's exam include elimination of many high-level algebra questions, a delay in when the test will begin to count and when the passing mark will be established. The paper notes that several states, including Wisconsin, Maryland and Arizona, have postponed exit exams or have created easier tests "rather than face high failure rates."

For more information, visit the California Board of Education at www.cde.ca.gov/board/ or the L.A. TIMES at www.latimes.com.

FACT OF THE WEEK

Between 1991 and 1996, the U.S. and 38 states (out of 53) significantly increased the percentage of degrees earned by minority students that were awarded in mathematics or science.

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

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.

ALGEBRA: TOUGH TEST IN TEXAS

(Goal Five: Math and Science)

Local school officials in Texas are concerned about the majority of students who fail the state's algebra test (Markley, HOUSTON CHRONICLE, 12/4). State officials are informing local school leaders that a student's end-of-course algebra test score is a strong indicator of how well students will do on the revised state test, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

The paper reports on efforts underway in several school districts to improve student performance on the algebra test. For example, Fort Bend school officials will offer a tuition-free summer school program for ninth-grade students who failed algebra. Another district, plagued by high teacher turnover rates, is beginning to pay bonuses to encourage math teachers to stay. In Houston, training is being provided not only to algebra teachers, but also to math teachers in lower grades.

Susan Hull, of University of Texas' Charles A. Dana Center, which trains teachers to improve their math instruction, pointed to a critical problem statewide. "There is a disconnect between what is going on in the classroom and what the kids are being required on the test to master," she said.

For more information, visit the University of Texas' Charles A. Dana Center at www.utdanacenter.org.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL NEWS

PHILADELPHIA STORY: VIOLENCE CONTINUES TO REIGN IN SCHOOLS

(Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

A Pennsylvania Legislature subcommittee reports that the Philadelphia school district is culpable of under-reporting or denying school violence, leaving the schools "rife with violence," writes the DAILY NEWS (Dean, 12/4). An 11-month investigation carried on by members of the Urban Affairs Committee's First Class Cities Subcommittee found that despite spending \$22 million on security this academic year, the school district continues to lose the battle against crime on campus.

Committee members intend to continue to explore the "impact of laws that exempt violent special education students from punishment." They also plan to compare Philadelphia's story to other school districts in the state and the nation. Teacher union leader Ted Kirsch said the report "essentially hits the

The National Education Goals Panel

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target.” Kirsch: “Everybody agrees that there is a problem, let’s solve the problem. . . We can’t stop random acts of violence. But we can control a school. We can’t let kids run schools.”

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania General Assembly at www.legis.state.pa.us, or the Philadelphia DAILY NEWS at www.philly.com.

TESTING CITIES: IN NEED OF STUDY

(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The Council of the Great City Schools, an organization representing nearly 60 of the nation’s large urban school districts, wants to use the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to compare results from city to city on a trial basis. “The council and its members are fully committed to the standards movement,” said Michael Casserly, the Council’s executive director. “Yet, we have little way to measure our progress. We can’t tell from all the overlapping and conflicting assessments whether or not we’re making any headway.”

Under Casserly’s proposal, which he presented last month at a meeting of the National Assessment Governing Board, the group that sets NAEP policy, urban districts would volunteer to participate.

For more information, visit the Council of the Great City Schools at www.cgcs.org.

FEDERAL POLICY NEWS

TEACHER PREPARATION AWARDS: OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS

(Goal Four: Teacher Education and Professional Development)

U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley last week announced the first winners of the National Awards Program for Effective Teacher Preparation. The award recipients are: Elementary Education Program at Alverno College (Milwaukee); Middle School Mathematics Teacher Preparation Program at East Carolina University (Greenville); Elementary Education Program at the Fordham University Graduate School of Education (New York); and Elementary Education Program at Samford University (Birmingham).

Applicants were asked to demonstrate the link between their

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



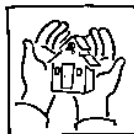
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



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

teacher preparation programs and their graduates' ability to improve student learning in reading and mathematics.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education at www.ed.gov.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF A GOOD IDEA: FEDERAL PROGRAM PRAISED (Goal Three: Student Achievement)

The U.S. Department of Education celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by releasing a new report on special education. The report's findings include:

- > A record 55.4 percent of students with disabilities graduated from high school in 1997-1998, up from 53.5 percent in 1996-1997 and continuing a four-year rise.
- > Dropout rates fell to 31 percent in 1997-1998, declining from 32.7 percent the previous school year and 34.7 percent in 1993-1994.
- > A record 46.4 percent of disabled students ages 6-21 were served in the regular classroom at least 80 percent of the school day in 1997-1998, up from 45.7 percent in 1996-1997.

For more information on the report or on IDEA, visit the Department of Education at www.ed.gov.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

RISKY BUSINESS: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND AT-RISK BEHAVIOR

(Goal Seven: Safe Schools)

A teenager's school performance and friends have more influence than their race or family-income level on whether they will drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes or carry weapons, according to a report issued by the University of Minnesota. EDUCATION WEEK writes that the results from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health "contradict the widely held view that race and income are the predominant influences on a young person's likelihood of engaging in risky or self-destructive behaviors." (Portner, 12/6).

Among the findings of the report, researchers concluded that students who spend a lot of time after school with their friends were more likely to drink, smoke, have sex and carry weapons than their peers who spent after-school hours in supervised settings.

For more information on the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Protecting Teens: Beyond Race, Income and Family Structure visit the University of Minnesota's Department of Pediatrics at www.peds.umn.edu

QUALITY NOW: A REPORT ON RACIAL DISPARITIES
(Goal Three: Student Achievement)

Quality Now! Results of National Conversations on Education and Race, a report issued by Public Education Network, found that even in school systems that are committed to addressing the resource and achievement gaps that separate minority and white students, they still fail to hold all students to the same high standards and expectations. Researchers found that minority parents who participated in a series of more than 60 forums nationwide are increasingly concerned that schools are holding their children to lower standards than white students.

The report urges school districts to collect and monitor more data on student achievement, including test scores, examples of student work and statistics on how resources are allocated. It also provides a "tool kit" designed to help community leaders plan, set goals and convene education-and-race forums in their community.

For more information, visit the Public Education Network at www.PublicEducation.org.

FEATURE STORY

JUMPSTART: COLLEGE KIDS TEAM UP WITH THE PRESCHOOL SET
(Goal One: Ready To Learn)

Jumpstart is a Boston-based program that pairs college students with preschool children, giving the youngest students unprecedented one-on-one time while in preschool. It was founded by Aaron Lieberman in 1993 when he was a student at Yale University. EDUCATION WEEK reports that Jumpstart, which operates with public and private funding, has an annual budget of \$7 million.

According to EDUCATION WEEK, Jumpstart is in the midst of a new growth plan. Lieberman is forming partnerships with more than 50 colleges and universities over the next five years, with the intention of serving more young children. Currently seven universities are involved in Jumpstart, with the University of California, Los Angeles and San Francisco State University the first campuses to enter the program under the "new approach," writes ED WEEK. College officials view Jumpstart as a way of helping their students get real-world classroom experience. "The impact on our students is exciting," said Richard Corrigan, president of San Francisco State. ED WEEK notes that Corrigan became aware of Jumpstart through his participation in President Clinton's America Reads Challenge where AmeriCorps members tutor students in reading.

Jumpstart reduced the number of years their teachers must serve - from two to one, making it easier for college students to participate. Jumpstart also is planning to run a pilot program in which students are paired with two preschoolers instead of one. The two preschool children would still receive individual attention, but for a shorter period. This would allow more children to be reached.

In recent years, Jumpstart adopted the High/Scope model, "a well-respected early-childhood-education curriculum," writes ED WEEK. A new framework was developed, School Success

Outcomes, that includes such skills as “recognizes and produces rhymes,” “knows about books and how books work,” and “plans and carries out complex activities.”

ED WEEK describes a Jumpstart program underway at Linda Vista preschool and kindergarten in Ontario, California. Each local school can decide how best to use the Jumpstart teachers. At Linda Vista, a decision was made not to give the Jumpstart teachers children with special needs because a fully trained teacher would better serve those children. Jumpstart teachers at Linda Vista received 30 hours of advance training and ongoing professional development, but they are not trained in special education, explained Jessamyn Luiz, Jumpstart’s director of affiliate operations.

According to ED WEEK, Jumpstart has begun a longitudinal study of children from two sites - New York City and Boston - to examine the long-term impact of children who participate in the program. An evaluation of 200 children conducted during the 1998-1999 school year found that children who participated in Jumpstart made greater gains by the end of the year in a number of skill areas than their peers who did not participate in Jumpstart.

For more information, visit Jumpstart’s for-profit, Internet-based service that offers early childhood educational products for parents and teachers at www.Schoolsuccess.net. Click on “about us” and then “education partners” to learn more about Jumpstart.

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