

# *The Education Report*

*A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from*

*Washington Partners, LLC*

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**June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

## **Department of Education Issues Guidance for Improving Teacher Quality**

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige issued guidance on Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act. The guidance specifically relates to improving teacher quality. The guidance concerns requiring all teachers in “core academic areas” to become “highly qualified” by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The goal of the guidance is to use “practices grounded in scientifically based research to prepare, train and recruit high-quality teachers.”

The program funds states and localities to train teachers to become “highly qualified.” Funding will be made available to state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs) and state agencies for higher education (SAHEs). In exchange for funding, states are required to demonstrate annual progress towards having teachers become highly qualified.

Being “Highly Qualified” entails:

- Being certified by the state
- Having a bachelor’s degree
- Demonstrating competence (as defined by the state) in a subject area

\$2.85 billion dollars has been made available for accomplishing this goal. The funds can be spent on:

- Recruitment, preparation and licensure of teachers
- Teacher support
- Teacher retention
- Professional development
- Increases in bonuses and merit pay to teachers if increased compensation is linked to increases in student achievement.

In an address at the Education Department’s Teach Quality Evaluation Conference, Secretary of Education Rod Paige echoed the findings of the report. Secretary Paige defended policies in the No Child Left Behind Act, especially the extensive student testing requirements. Secretary Paige also spoke about President Bush’s 2003 budget priorities, which include increasing funds for teacher development, increasing funds for

recruitment of math and science teachers, providing tax breaks to teachers and expanding loan forgiveness programs to teachers in high need schools.

The guidance document can be viewed at:

[www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SIP/Title11guidance2002.doc](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SIP/Title11guidance2002.doc)

### **Chairman Boehner Comments on Teacher Quality Guidance**

On Tuesday, House Education and the workforce Committee Chairman John Boehner (R-OH) issued a statement praising the Department of Education's "Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge" report. He stated, "Our nation needs more great school teachers. Too many barriers exist today that drive excellent teachers out of the teaching profession, or discourage highly qualified Americans from pursuing teaching careers."

Chairman Boehner endorsed the President's budgeting priorities and other policies in the No Child Left Behind Act that forbid federal teacher certification and federal teaching exams in favor of having states control the teacher certification process. Chairman Boehner went on to mention other ways in which the Republican Party has attempted to improve teacher quality including Representative Lindsey Graham's (R-SC) Canceling Loans to Allow School Systems to Attract Classroom Teachers (CLASS ACT) legislation that grants a maximum of \$17,500 of loan forgiveness to math, science and special education teachers and the "Crayola Credit" that was signed into law earlier this year that gives teachers who pay for classroom supplies with their own money a \$250 per year tax credit.

### **ETS Commissions Study of American Attitudes Teachers**

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) commissioned the bipartisan polling team of Peter Hart (D) and Robert Teeter (R) to conduct a study on American attitudes on education reform and the quality of the nation's teaching force. The study, entitled, "A National Priority: Americans Speak on Teacher Quality," which was conducted in May 2002, surveyed adults in general, parents of school-age children, educators and education policy makers.

The study concluded that a vast majority of Americans support hiring more teachers and providing them with better salaries, working conditions and training, even if it means higher taxes. However, the American public is not willing to accept lower standards in order to get more teachers into the classrooms.

Additional findings include: improving education remains high on the national agenda; few Americans, including educators, are aware of national education reform efforts; the public is strongly supportive of standards and accountability; Americans recognize the need for greater parental involvement and discipline; all groups surveyed recognized that the quality of teaching determines the quality of education; and Americans continue to

have a more positive impression of the school in their neighborhood than they do of schools in other neighborhoods across the country.

For more information, visit: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)

### **Secretary Paige Announces Grants for Charter School Financing**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige announced the awarding of \$25 million to five grant recipients for the Charter Schools Facilities Financing Demonstration Program. Secretary Paige noted, “one of the biggest challenges for charter schools is finding and affording quality facilities.” The program allows institutions to aid charter schools in leveraging private and other nonfederal financing for the construction of their facilities.

The grants themselves will aid institutions in developing credit enhancement strategies that are aimed at aiding charter schools in gaining access to nonfederal financing. For fiscal year 2003 (FY 03), the Bush administration has budgeted an increase in the grants to \$100 million (under the Credit Enhancement for Charter Schools Program).

The five award recipients are:

- America’s Charter School Corporation, Braintree, Massachusetts
- Charter Schools Development Corporation, Washington, DC
- Low Income Housing Fund, Oakland, California
- NCB Development Corporation, Washington, DC
- Raza Development Fund, INC., Phoenix, Arizona

For more information, see the full press release at: <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/06-2002/06072002.html>

### **Twelve States to Apply for State-Flex Program**

Twelve states (Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas) have applied for the State Flexibility Authority Program (State-Flex). Only seven states will be able to enter the program. The first of two competitions for the awards will occur this summer. In states that are selected, between four and ten school districts, half of which must be considered “high-poverty” schools, will enter into performance agreements with the state.

The program allows states to use federal funding for projects that are state-level priorities. In exchange for this increased flexibility, states must be more accountable for student performance (achievement gaps, etc.).

For more information, visit: [www.ed.gov/flexibility/](http://www.ed.gov/flexibility/)

## **Arts Education Partnership Announces New On-Line Publication**

The Arts Education Partnership, in conjunction with several other arts related groups, announced the publishing of a new on-line publication entitled “No Subject Left Behind.” The new publication will allow arts organizations to learn about current legislation and ways in which to partner with schools in order to receive federal funding for art education projects. The decision to publish “No Subject Left Behind” came from the current administration’s support of keeping art education a part of the “core curriculum.”

The publication can be viewed at: <http://www.aep-arts.org/What%27sNew.html>

## **Citizens Service Act Passed by Committee**

On June 12, 2002 the full Education and the Workforce Committee held a markup of H.R. 4853, the “Citizen Service Act of 2002”. The bill was reported favorably as amended with only two dissenting votes. The Committee is hopeful that the bill will pass the House before the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess.

Rep. Tom Osborne (R-NE) introduced an amendment that would provide language to give training and technical assistance to underserved rural and urban areas. He stressed that the language will give these areas the resources they need without making them a priority of the bill. This amendment passed unanimously in the Committee.

Rep. Tim Roemer (D-IN) withdrew from consideration an amendment that would have increased the funding authorization for this bill by 40 percent. Although initially ready to introduce the amendment, the Congressman opted instead to work closely with Chairman Boehner (R-OH), and others, to reach an acceptable total. This issue was the subject of debate within the Committee, with concern that such an increase would hurt the bill’s chances for approval on the floor and in the Senate.

## **AYPF Hosts Forum to Discuss School Reform**

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, the American Youth Policy Forum held a lunchtime session to discuss a study conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) and the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS). The study explored student achievement and achievement gaps in large urban school districts by focusing on four large urban school districts: Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC, Sacramento City, CA, Houston, TX, and part of District 85, NYC. These districts were selected because they had demonstrated progress in improving student achievement for all groups of students, not just for certain subgroups. Although this report will not be officially released until July 2002, representatives from MDRC and CGCS shared some of the findings as well as some potential hypotheses as to what policies lead to successful school reform.

The researchers found that while average achievement increases were not that impressive, gaps in pass rates between races were closing and stronger levels of achievement were being noted among disadvantaged students. Several elements seemed consistent between the four school districts that relate to achieving these results: providing accountability and efficient administrative infrastructure; the use of data to guide instruction and resources; implementing a unified curriculum; and a continuing focus on low performing schools.

### **NCTE Announces Workshop**

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) will hold a workshop entitled “The Reading Writing Connection: Teaching in Urban Schools” on July 25<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup> in Bethesda, Maryland. The workshop is designed educate secondary teachers in urban schools in successful strategies for teaching English as well as to act as a networking event.

For more information, visit: <http://www.ncte.org/convention/urban/index.shtml>

### **Funding Alert**

#### **General Mills Foundation**

*Institution:* The General Mills Foundation

*Goal:* To support education, arts, culture, family life and nutrition oriented non-profit organizations

*Eligibility:* Areas in which General Mills is an employer

*Funds:* In 2001, the foundation gave \$15 million, 29% of which went to education related non-profits.

*Deadline:* Ongoing

For more information, visit:

<http://www.generalmills.com/corporate/about/community/listing.asp>

**107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION**

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

<b>July 1 – 5</b>	<b>Senate not in session</b>
<b>July 4</b>	<i>Independence Day</i>
<b>July 8 (Mon.)</b>	<b>Senate reconvenes</b>
<b>August 5 - September 2</b>	<b>Senate not in session (August Recess)</b>
<b>September 2</b>	<i>Labor Day</i>
<b>September 3 (Tues.)</b>	<b>Senate reconvenes</b>
<b>September 16 (Mon.)</b>	<b>Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)</b>
<b>October 4</b>	<b>Target adjournment</b>