

# *The Education Report*

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

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**June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002**

## **Department of Education Releases Preliminary Guidance on Public School Choice, Supplemental Education Services and Collective Bargaining**

The Department of Education has released preliminary guidance via a “Dear Colleague” letter on implementing public school choice, supplemental education services and collective bargaining programs in the No Child Left Behind Act. The goal of the Dear Colleague letter is to give school officials “initial direction” in implementing these programs for the 2002-2003 school year. Formal guidance will be released in the next few months followed by a period for public comments.

The guidance indicates that any Title I elementary or secondary school that has been identified for improvement is required to provide all enrolled students with the option to transfer to another public school in the district. The public school choice requirement must be implemented by the fall of the 2002-2003 school year. The lowest-achieving, lowest income students will receive priority consideration for the program. State laws can specifically prohibit this practice.

With regard to supplemental education services, the school district is required to arrange for supplemental education services for students enrolled in a school that is in its second year of improvement (i.e. a school has been failing to make adequate progress for three consecutive years). Parents of these children must be provided with a list of service providers who have a “demonstrated record of effectiveness” they must also be “of high quality, research based and specifically designed to increase student academic achievement” by the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year. Providers will not be automatically disqualified from the program if their curriculum is not grounded in “scientifically based research” as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act. The services may include tutoring, remediation and academic intervention. Services must occur outside of regular school hours. In the case of limited funds, the lowest-income and lowest achieving students will take priority.

The Dear Colleague letter also seeks to clarify issues concerning collective bargaining agreements in Section 1116 of the No Child Left Behind Act.

A copy of the “Dear Colleague” letter can be viewed at:  
<http://www.ed.gov/News/Letters/020614.html>

## **Department of Education Unveils New Website on Supplemental Services**

The Department of Education has created a new webpage aimed at educating parents on supplemental services in the No Child Left Behind Act. The page defines “supplemental services” and other terms. It posts information on eligibility and how to find out if a school is “in need of improvement” and answers several other frequently asked questions.

The webpage can be viewed at:

<http://www.nclb.gov/parents/supplementalservices/index.html>

## **Department of Education Holds Conference on Charter Schools**

On June 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> the Department of Education held a conference entitled “Gaining Momentum for Choice: Celebrating the Next Decade of Charter Schools in America.” Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige said “In the decade since charter schools started, they have emerged as an important entrée on the menu of educational opportunity for parents throughout the country.” The conference sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the future of charter schools?
- What does the research reveal about the impact of charter schools on student achievement and other surrounding public schools?
- How do charter schools get started and where can you get help in creating one in your school district?

A conference agenda can be viewed at:

<http://www.conferencepros.com/conferences/charter/charter02/agenda2.PDF>

## **Public Agenda Releases Report on Special Education**

Public Agenda released a new report entitled “When It’s Your Own Child: A Report on Special Education from the Families Who Use It.” The report looks at special education from the parents’ perspective, finding that the stigma of having a child in special education has decreased. Two-thirds of all parents surveyed give their local special education programs “high” ratings, but give mixed reviews concerning whether children are actually receiving help. The report also notes that a significant percentage of parents are not aware of the special educational options available to them.

A summary of the report can be found at:

<http://www.publicagenda.Corg/specials/specialed/specialed.htm>

A complete copy of the report for registered users of Public Agenda can be downloaded at <http://www.publicagenda.org/PDFStore/PDFLogin.cfm> until July 10th. After the 10th, there is a fee attached to viewing the report.

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program receives award for Public Service Excellence**

The Public Employees Roundtable awarded a 2002 Public Service Excellence Award to the Department of Education's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center's (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) partnership with the C.S. Mott Foundation. The two organizations worked together to offer high quality after-school programs to children.

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is a part of the No Child Left Behind Act. It expands academic opportunities in art, music and recreation in high-poverty schools in addition to programs in drug and violence prevention, community service, technology, telecommunications and video production. The program also provides "caring adults and counseling and character education."

The partnership allows the Department of Education to provide funds for afterschool programs while the Mott foundation provides funds for programs that increase technical assistance, training, identification of best practices and evaluation for teachers.

More information on the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/21steclc/>

More information on the Roundtable awards can be found at: <http://www.theroundtable.org>

### **President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education Holds Final Meeting**

On June 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> the Commission on Excellence in Special Education held its final meeting in Washington, DC and voted unanimously to endorse the draft report, as amended. Throughout the two-day meeting, amendments to the draft report, which has not been made available to the public, were debated and either defeated or incorporated. The Commission is expected to submit its final report to the President by July 1, the date the Commission ceases to exist.

The discussion at the final meeting included topics such as accountability, vouchers, least restrictive environment (LRE), research, financing, professional development, assessment, identification and transition.

The report will likely include a recommendation for the use of federal IDEA funds (along with state and local funds) for vouchers. More resources were recommended for professional development for both general and special educators as well as preparing doctorates to hold faculty positions in higher education. A strengthened accountability

system was recommended to ensure that all students in special education are assessed in accordance with the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

The Senate HELP Committee has scheduled a hearing on the Commission report for July 9; the House Committee on Education and the Workforce has scheduled a hearing on the Commission report for July 10.

### **Webcast of “Afterschool & Summer Programs: Helping Kids Get Smart & Stay Safe” Available**

A webcast of the June 18<sup>th</sup> “Afterschool & Summer Programs: Helping Kids Get Smart & Stay Safe” is now available. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and several other officials address issues concerning the results of recent research, what constitutes quality afterschool and summer programs, how to provide supplemental academic services, the effects of afterschool and summer programs on reading skills and general academic achievement and what schools, parents and organizations can do to create and assist afterschool and summer programs.

To view the webcast, visit: <http://www.connectlive.com/events/edtowntownmeetings/>

### **House Committee on Education and the Workforce to Hold Field Hearing in Colorado on IDEA Reform**

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Education Reform will hold a field hearing in Colorado on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The hearing is entitled, “Reform of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is Necessary and Possible.” The hearing will take place at the Koelbel Public Library in Centennial, Colorado.

For more information on the Koelbel Public Library visit:

<http://www.arapahoelibraries.org/AboutUs/LibraryLocations/koelbel.cfm>

For more information on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce visit:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/>

### **Reading First Program May Require More than States Expect**

Many states have begun to construct proposals for grants from the Reading First program under the No Child Left Behind Act. Some states are so confident that their programs fit the Reading First guidelines that they have already begun spending the money. Policy analysts have warned that the Reading First guidelines ask for far more than many states realize. One large stumbling block is that many states’ reading programs are not necessarily based on “scientific” research nor do they collect specific data to analyze program effectiveness. Of the 35 states that have reading initiatives, ten states’ current

curriculums are not supported by “scientifically based research.” Many fear that the new guidelines will force states to change programs that are already working well. With many states facing budget cuts; the Reading First grants may be the only source of reading funding available in states. If the state fails to assemble a program that fits the new guidelines, then the state (and children in the state) could be placed at risk of having no reading program.

### **Education Leaders Speak out on Recruitment, Retention and Professional Preparation for Teachers**

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, the American Youth Policy Forum sponsored a briefing on Capitol Hill featuring Arthur Wise, President of NCATE, David Haselkorn, Dean at Lesley University and Emily Feistritzer, an expert in alternative certification. The speakers agreed that “quick fix” approaches, such as lowering standards, are not effective for addressing the teacher shortage. The speakers challenged the Bush Administration’s position that teacher preparation institutions should reduce the emphasis on the “how to teach” portion of their programs and minimize clinical experiences in lieu of an emphasis on content. Arthur Wise said that the research is clear: students with fully prepared teachers outperform those with unprepared teachers. Wise pleaded for increases in salaries, improved working conditions and higher education P-12 partnerships with professional development schools as means of attaining a high quality teachers.

Emily Feistritzer concluded that after years of experimenting with alternative certification routes, we now know what the characteristics of good ones are. They are remarkably similar to schools of professional development. Good alternative certification programs are characterized by: recruiting those with BAs; rigorous screening; field based programs; simultaneous course work and field experience; mentoring by veteran teachers; high performance standards, moving with a cohort through the program; and collaboration between SEAs, LEAs and IHEs.

### **Senate Committee on Health Education Labor and Pensions Holds Hearing on Summer School**

On June 21, The Senate Committee heard testimony from Sandra Feldman, President of the American Federation of Teachers; Harris Cooper, Professor at University of Missouri and Christina Ramoglou, Director of the Rogres School Community Center in Stamford Connecticut regarding the relationship between summer school and student achievement.

Sen. Dodd (D-CT) chaired the hearing and voiced concern about cutbacks in summer school programs and the negative impact they might have on student achievement. Mrs. Clinton (D-NY) echoed his concerns noting that despite the severe budget problems in New York City, Mayor Bloomberg restored funding for summer school because it is so important.

The panelists agreed that summer school can be a key to closing the achievement gap between low performers and high performers. “There is overwhelming evidence that being out of school has serious consequences in relation to our efforts to close the achievement gap,” Ms. Feldman said. “Summer school is no longer a frill,” she noted.

Dr. Cooper reported on the results of a meta-analysis that he conducted indicating that summer learning loss equals at least one month of instruction and that the average student who goes to summer school jumps over 5% to 10% of peers who do not attend summer school as measured by achievement test scores. Ms. Ramoglou described the program she directs in Connecticut and noted that due to budget deficits 1000 fewer students would attend summer school this summer. Sen. Sessions (R-AL) asked about the characteristics of an effective summer school program. Dr. Cooper noted that they include smaller class size, parent involvement and focused programming.

### **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>