

The Education Report

A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from

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Department of Education Releases Guidance on Unsafe Schools

The Department of Education has released draft guidance on the Unsafe School Choice provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act. Final guidance will be released “in the near future.”

The guidance states that every SEA must develop a policy to identify “persistently dangerous public schools.” Policies must include a definition of what constitutes violent and/or criminal behavior in a school. If a student is in a “dangerous” school or is a victim of violence, then he or she has the right to transfer to a safe/safer public school within the LEA.

States are to certify that they are in compliance with the regulation and submit information on any dangerous schools in their state to the Department of Education. If States are not yet in compliance with the provisions, States are to submit a report to the Department, detailing the steps they plan to take to reach compliance by August 15th. All schools are to be in compliance with the regulation by July 1st, 2003.

To view the guidance, visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/unsafeschoolchoice.doc>

Department of Education Releases Guidelines for Blue Ribbon Schools

At a meeting of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige announced new guidelines and a timetable for determining “No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools.” Secretary Paige hopes that “Blue Ribbon recipients will be national models of excellence that others can learn from.” The Blue Ribbon program will recognize public and private K-12 schools that meet one of the following two qualifications:

- Have 40 percent of enrolled students in a school be from a “disadvantaged background” and demonstrate “dramatic” improvement on state academic assessments.
- As a school, score in the top 10 percent of state academic assessments.

At least 50 percent of the Blue Ribbon Schools from each state must have been chosen on the basis of the first qualification. To select Blue Ribbon Schools, the Department will rely on the advice from the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) and state chief school officers.

The following timeline has been established to select Blue Ribbon Schools:

- November 4th, the Secretary will ask for recommendations from CAPE and state chiefs;
- December 20th, recommendations are due;
- January 17th, 2003, applications are sent to the recommended schools;
- March 7th, 2003, applications are due;
- May 21st, 2003, Blue Ribbon awardees are announced;
- Fall 2003, a ceremony is held in Washington, DC to honor Blue Ribbon recipients;

New HHS Disability Office Announced

On July 31st Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy Thompson announced the creation of a new HHS office on disability. The new office will oversee the coordination, development and implementation of disability programs and initiatives. The office will work with and build upon President Bush's New Freedom Initiative that aims to "tear down barriers facing people with disabilities, which prevent them from fully participating in community life."

Margaret J. Giannini, M.D., F.A.A.P. will be the head of the HHS Office on Disability. Before taking on this task, she was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging at the Administration on Aging. Giannini has also been the assistant chief medical director of Rehabilitation and Prosthetics at the Department of Veterans' Affairs and was a founder and director of the University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities at New York Medical College. The new office will officially open this fall.

President Bush Celebrates 12th Anniversary of ADA

On July 26th, President Bush honored the 12th anniversary of the signing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law by declaring "July 26th, 2002, as a day in celebration" of the Act. In his statement he added, "My administration is committed to removing the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from realizing their full potential and achieving their dreams." The President also emphasized the importance of his "New Freedom Initiative," which improves access to assistive technologies and expands educational options for individuals with disabilities.

In a separate statement, President Bush commented on policies that effect many disabled individuals. The President praised the work done by the Commission on Excellence in Special Education, asked for increased funding for the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) and called on Congress to fully fund his New Freedom Initiative at the \$145 million level. The President also clarified Medicare policy for “homebound” individuals saying, “Today I announce...people who are considered homebound can occasionally take part in their communities, without fear of losing their benefits.”

Secretary of Education Rod Paige also spoke about the ADA, stating, “The Act has played a major role in guaranteeing that housing, transportation, employment, recreation, shopping and voting...are available without discrimination on the basis of disability.”

New Democrat Coalition Calls on Administration and Department of Education to Fully Fund IDEA

The New Democrat Coalition (NDC), a coalition of members of the U.S. House of Representatives, wrote a letter to President Bush and Secretary of Education Rod Paige, calling on the Bush Administration to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The Act requires the federal government to share the costs of educating students with disabilities with state and local educational agencies. The letter requested that the federal government fund IDEA to the point where the federal government pays 40 percent of the per student costs. Currently, the federal government pays 16.5 percent. NDC Co-Chair Rep. Jim Davis (D-FL) said, “Now, as schools struggle with tight budgets and growing enrollment levels, the federal government must contribute its fair share to provide opportunities for these students.”

The letter also questions the administration’s commitment to fully funding IDEA. When No Child Left Behind entered the Congressional Conference Committee, questions regarding fully funding IDEA were put-off until additional reforms could be instituted. A recent report by the Commission on Excellence in Special Education entitled “A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families” questions the need to fully fund IDEA. Rep. Darlene Hooley (D-OR) said, “We teach our children to keep their promises. It’s time we teach through example and keep the promise we made a quarter-century ago to pay our share of the costs of educating children with disabilities.”

Department of Education Announces Grants to Study Preschool Curriculums

The Department of Education has awarded a total of \$12,286,158 in grants over four years to seven higher education institutions to study the efficacy of preschool curriculums. The Department of Education and the Research Triangle Institute in North Carolina will conduct randomized clinical trials of preschool curriculum. The seven institutions will then study the data from the trials. The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement said that the “results should help educators and parents make more informed choices of classroom curricula.” Grants will go to: the University of California, Berkeley; Purdue University; the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston; the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; the University of North Florida; the University of New Hampshire and Vanderbilt University.

Senate Confirms Roy Grizzard and Five Others

On July 26th, the Senate confirmed Roy Grizzard to be the new Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy. Gizzard, who is legally blind, was previously the Commissioner for the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

Also confirmed were five individuals to sit on the National Council on Disability. Lex Frieden will become the chair of the organization.

Report Finds Interest in Bringing Ph.D.s into K-12 Classrooms

A recent National Research Council report calls for a pilot fellowship program to promote Ph.D.s as K-12 teachers. The report estimates that a pilot program for 30 fellows would cost \$2.5 million and a program for 60 would cost \$4.8 million. A fellowship would give participants teaching and classroom management skills to combine with their extensive knowledge of a particular subject.

Over 36 percent of recent Ph.D.s said they would be interested in teaching 7-12th grade or being district specialists or curriculum developers in their respective fields. Despite this level of interest, less than one percent of Ph.D.s actually become K-12 teachers. Many Ph.D.s cite low prestige, poor laboratory facilities and overcrowded/ill-behaved students as reasons why they do not want to become teachers. A prestigious fellowship including a stipend to help Ph.D.s become certified teachers would help convince many to become teachers. A fellowship program would also convince many administrators to hire Ph.D.s as well. Many administrators believe that Ph.D.s do not make good teachers because they fear that they cannot relate their knowledge to children effectively.

For more information on the report, visit: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10433.html>

107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

August 5 - September 2 *Senate not in session (August Recess)*

September 2 *Labor Day*

September 3 (Tues.) *Senate reconvenes*

September 16 (Mon.) *Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)*

October 4 *Target adjournment*