

# *The Education Report*

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

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## **Department of Education Recognizes 172 Blue Ribbon Schools**

The Blue Ribbon school program has been in effect for 19 years, it honors excellence in leadership, teaching, curriculum, student achievement, and parental involvement in schools throughout the country. This year, 145 public schools and 27 private schools in 35 states, and two stateside Department of Defense schools, will be recognized. The schools were nominated by state education agencies, the Department of Defense and the Council for the American Private Education.

The selection of Blue Ribbon Schools are based on an evaluation of written materials from the nominated schools and the reports of experienced principals and administrators who conducted site visits to these schools. This information is then passed on to the Department for a final decision. Comprehensive self - evaluation involving administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community representatives are also a part of the application process.

For more information on this process and for the list of schools that have been chosen, please visit: <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/05-2002/05242002.html>.

## **Department of Education Names John Porter as Director Of Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

The Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Education has the unique job of helping to implement the new *No Child Left Behind Act* by harnessing the abilities of faith-based and community organizations to ensure that every child meets his or her fullest potential.

Porter, an attorney from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has extensive experience with faith-based and community organizations having served on the board of an inner city faith-based school in Pittsburgh. He has spent most of his career and life advocating a quality education for children of all backgrounds. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Porter practiced law in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He earned a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1987 and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1981.

## **Department Wins Dismissal of Title I Negotiated Rulemaking Suit**

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia recently dismissed a suit (*Center for Law and Education v. US Department of Education*) claiming that the Department of Education improperly chose negotiators to participate in negotiated rulemaking regarding the newly reauthorized provisions of Title I. As it did as part of the recent negotiations dealing with higher education issues, the Department chose who would be sitting at the negotiating table representing various constituencies instead of letting the various constituencies choose their own negotiators. The plaintiffs in this case are: the Center for Law and Education, Designs for Change, National Coalition for the Homeless, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, and Rachelle Lindsey.

In part, the court decided to dismiss the suit because it said there has not yet been a final agency action that is subject to judicial review. In addition, the court denied the plaintiffs' request for an injunction, saying "the irreparable harm to plaintiffs is largely speculative, while consideration of the harm to others and the public interest supports denying an injunction at this time." The court noted that the "extent of any adverse effect of any final rule on parents and students (or their representatives) remains at this time wholly speculative." The court also noted that if the Department had to conduct negotiated rulemaking over again it would almost certainly cause the agency to miss the July 8<sup>th</sup> deadline for promulgating final rules.

### **Paige, Hutchison Visit Harlem Young Women's Leadership School**

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) visited the Young Women's Leadership School in Harlem, one of the most prominent single-sex schools in the country. During the visit, Paige noted: "Everyone in the school's first senior class graduated. All except one young woman went to college—and she's now serving her country in the U.S. military. The majority of students are reading above grade level, and their pass rates on local exams are higher than city averages."

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* contains a provision sponsored by Senator Hutchison that authorizes local education agencies to use local innovative education funds provided by the act to establish programs to provide same-gender schools and classrooms. Paige intends to propose similar amendments to the regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to support efforts of school districts to improve education outcomes for children and to provide public school parents with a diverse array of education options. The use of single-sex classes and schools can reflect important and legitimate efforts to improve education outcomes for all students and has been the subject of recent congressional proposals.

Secretary Paige also invited comments regarding both single sex classes and schools. More specifically, the Department said the following:

### **Single-sex classes**

Secretary Paige has invited comments on whether and under what circumstances the use of single-sex classes should be permitted under the Title IX regulations. He specifically asked for advice and recommendations from state and local administrators, parents, teachers, community leaders, paraprofessionals, members of local boards of education, charter school operators and public chartering agencies, civil rights groups and education organizations. He is seeking comments on what justifications would be needed for single-sex classes, what opportunities should be provided for students of the excluded sex to ensure equal opportunity, and whether some classes should not be permitted to be single-sex.

### **Single-sex schools**

Because of the statutory exemption for single-sex admissions policies of nonvocational elementary and secondary schools, which is reflected in the Title IX regulations, a school district does not need to provide the Department with a justification for offering a single-sex school. There is already flexibility in the regulations for allowing school districts to offer single-sex nonvocational schools as long as certain conditions are met. However, the goal of this process is to clarify what opportunities would need to be provided for students of the excluded sex to ensure equal opportunity.

After comments on this notice are reviewed, the secretary will publish a proposed amendment to the Title IX regulations for public comment.

All public comments will be available for inspection and may be reviewed in response to this notice in Room 5036, Mary E. Switzer Building, 330 C Street S.W., Washington, between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., EDT, Monday through Friday of each week except federal holidays. The public comment period closes July 9. For additional information, please visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/t9-noi-ss.html>,

## **Funding Alerts**

### **Parental Information and Resource Centers Program:**

Applications for the Parental Information and Resource Centers Program are available through the Department of Education. The Parental Information and Resource Centers Program aims to develop and strengthen partnerships among parents (including parents of children from birth through age five), teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children to develop and strengthen the relationship between parents and their child's school.

Eligibility: Non-profit organizations, or consortia of non-profit organizations and local educational agencies (LEAs).

Funding: \$20,000,000 for 35 awards. Grants will average \$570,000 for a project length of up to 48 months. Funds after the initial year are contingent upon future Congressional appropriations for the program.

Application deadline: June 27, 2002

For more information visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2002-2/052802e.pdf>

### **Improving Literacy Through School Libraries:**

Applications for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program are available through the Department of Education. The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program aims to improve student literacy skills and academic achievement by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials; a well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media center; and well-trained, professionally certified school library media specialists.

Eligibility: Local educational agencies (LEAs) in which at least 20 percent of the students served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

Funding: \$12,125,000 for 75 awards. Grants will average \$25,000 per school for a period of 12 months.

Application deadline: July 24, 2002

For more information visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2002-2/052902a.pdf>

## **Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program:**

Applications for the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development program are available through the Department of Education. The Early Childhood Educator Professional Development program awards funds to projects that provide high-quality, sustained, and intensive professional development for these early childhood educators in how to provide developmentally appropriate school-readiness services for preschool-age children that are based on the best available research on early childhood pedagogy and on child development and learning.

Eligibility: One or more institutions of higher education, or other public or private entities (including faith-based organizations), that provide professional development for early childhood educators who work with children from low-income families in high-need communities; and One or more public agencies (including local educational agencies, State educational agencies, State human services agencies, and State and local agencies administering programs under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990), Head Start agencies, or private organizations (including faith-based organization); and If feasible, an entity with demonstrated experience in providing training to educators in early childhood education programs concerning identifying and preventing behavior problems or working with children identified as or suspected to be victims of abuse. This entity may be one of the partners described above, if appropriate.

Funding: \$15,000,000 for 10 to 25 awards. Grants will average \$1,000,000 per year (based on 15 awards) for a period of 2 years.

Application Deadline: July 5, 2002

For more information visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2002-2/052902h.pdf>

## **President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education**

The 24-member President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education is holding a series of meetings that will culminate with a report recommending reforms for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The site for the first meeting was Houston, TX. The Commission held a March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in San Diego and a March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting in Los Angeles. The last meeting was held **May 30-31 in Washington, DC.**

**107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION**

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS  
Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

<b>May 27 – 31</b>	<b>Senate not in session</b>
<b>May 27</b>	<i>Memorial Day (observed)</i>
<b>June 3 (Mon.)</b>	<b>Senate reconvenes</b>
<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>