

# *The Education Report*

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

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**April 5th, 2002**

## **President Bush Nominates Gerald Reynolds To Serve as ED Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights**

The President has appointed Gerald Reynolds to be Assistant Secretary of Education for Civil Rights. This nomination was announced on June 25, 2001, and his nomination was transmitted to the Senate September 25, 2001.

Reynolds has served since 1998 as Senior Regulatory Counsel at Kansas City Power and Light. From 1997 to 1998, he was President and Legal Counsel for the Center for New Black Leadership. Reynolds served as a Legal Analyst for the Center for Equal Opportunity from 1995 to 1997. He is a graduate of the City University of New York at York College and received his J. D. from Boston University School of Law.

## **Bush Unveils Early Learning Initiative**

President Bush recently unveiled an early childhood initiative focused on improving early childhood development programs to help prepare young children to enter school and be ready to learn. Unfortunately, not all children are receiving high-quality care. There are many reasons for this gap, including the fact that: 1) many states do not fully align what children are doing before they enter school with what is expected of them once they are in school; 2) early childhood programs are seldom evaluated based on how well they prepare students to succeed in school; and 3) there is not enough information for early childhood teachers, parents, and other child care providers on the activities that prepare children to be successful in school.

Bush's early childhood initiative will help states and local communities overcome these obstacles and strengthen early learning for young children by:

- **Strengthening Head Start:** The president has directed the Department of Health and Human Services to implement a new accountability system to ensure that every Head Start center assesses standards of learning in

- early literacy, language and numeric skills. HHS will implement a national training project with the goal of training all of the nearly 50,000 Head Start teachers this year in the best pre-reading and language teaching techniques for young children.
- **Partnering with States to Improve Early Childhood Education:** To ensure that pre-school activities are aligned with state education goals, the President's plan asks States to develop quality criteria for early childhood education, including optional guidelines on pre-reading and language skills activities for pre-school age children that align with state K-12 standards. To help states meet these criteria, the president's plan gives states more flexibility with their federal childcare funds.
  - **Providing Information to Teachers, Caregivers and Parents:** In order to close the gap between the best research and current practices in early childhood education, the Department of Education will implement a broad public awareness campaign targeted toward parents, early childhood educators, childcare providers, and other interested parties. Additionally, the president announced an unprecedented \$45 million collaborative research initiative between the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Department of Education to identify effective early literacy programs and teaching strategies.

For more information about the President's Initiatives, please visit [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

### **Department of Education Invites Applications For \$900 Million in Reading First Grants**

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige stated that "President Bush has made improving children's reading achievement a centerpiece of his education reform agenda and has tremendous passion for the issue." In addition, the President has designed Reading First as the solution to poor reading achievement among U.S. students by helping states and school districts improve student achievement by implementing early reading instruction based on scientific reading research.

The new \$900 million for Reading First will help schools and school districts improve K-3 reading instruction and children's reading achievement. The program centers on:

- raising the caliber and quality of classroom instruction;
- basing instruction on scientific research proven to work in the teaching of reading;
- providing professional training for educators in reading instruction; and
- supplying substantial resources to support the unprecedented initiative

State applications will be reviewed by several reading experts selected by the Department of Education such as: the National Institute for Literacy, the National

Research Council, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Services. States with approved applications will receive funds under a formula beginning July 1, 2002. Once funded, states will open competitions for subgrants to eligible school districts.

A list of estimated state grants is available at: [www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2002/estimates.html](http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2002/estimates.html).

The application for Reading First state grants will be available online at: [www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/grant.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/grant.html).

### **Research in Education Conference**

The National Education Knowledge Industry Association (NEKIA), in association with the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) and the Education Quality Institute (EQI) held the "Research in Education: On the Cutting Edge of School Improvement" conference on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Several distinguished speakers addressed the many issues the No Child Left Behind legislation presents to policymakers and practitioners.

Under current law, education programs and practices must be rooted in scientifically based research. But how can educators determine what research from what source will be valuable? The panels expressed their opinions that Research and Development offices are a necessary resource to pool valuable information and to provide accessibility for educators. A National Research Agenda was suggested to control for accurate, timely, objective, meaningful and accessible research data. The idea was echoed in stressing the importance of weeding out inaccurate haphazard research that is derived from ineffective methodologies.

The conference was well received, with more attendees present than expected.

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

The 24-member President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education began a series of meetings this week that will culminate with a report recommending reforms for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The site for the first meeting was Houston, TX and it held a March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in San Diego and a March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting in Los Angeles. The schedule for subsequent meetings around the country is as follows:

April 9-10	Miami, FL
April 16	NYC, NY
April 16	Nashville, TN
May 30-31	Washington, DC

**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-ED  
Hearing Schedule on Education**

**Wednesday April 10, 2002**

**10:15am-12:15pm** - Secretary of Education - President's  
FY03 Budget

**Thursday April 18, 2002**

**9:45am-12:00pm** - Members of Congress

**Tuesday April 30, 2002**

**2:00pm-4:00pm** - Public Witnesses

**Thursday May 2, 2002**

**9:45am-12:00pm** - Public Witnesses

**Tuesday May 7, 2002**

**2:00pm-4:00pm** - Public Witnesses

**Thursday May 9, 2002**

**9:45am-12:00pm** - Public Witnesses

**Tuesday May 14, 2002**

**2:00pm-4:00pm** - Public Witnesses

## **107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION**

### TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

<b>March 25 - April 5</b>	<b>Senate not in session</b>
<b>March 29</b>	<i>Good Friday</i>
<b>March 31</b>	<i>Easter</i>
<b>April 8 (Mon.)</b>	<b>Senate reconvenes</b>
<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>