

The Education Report

A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from

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Department Invites Comments on ESEA Consolidated State Applications

The U.S. Department of Education recently asked for comments regarding its proposed requirements for optional State consolidated applications submitted under section 9302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Submitting a consolidated application will allow a State to obtain funds under many Federal programs through a single application, rather than through separate applications for each program. In its March 6th Federal Register notice, the Department said comments are due by April 5, 2002. Please address your comments to Marcia Kingman, using Internet (marcia.kingman@ed.gov), fax machine (202-205-5870) or surface mail (Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E213, Washington DC 20202-6400.)

Senate Budget Chairman Estimates Budget Markup After Easter Recess But Before Summer Recess

Senate Budget Chairman, Kent Conrad (D-ND) recently discussed the timing of the fiscal year 2003 budget debate. Conrad said he is aiming to markup the budget bill before the month-long July recess, but that it likely would not happen until after the two week Easter break. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently came out with its estimates of President Bush's FY03 budget. CBO figures show that if an economic stimulus package is approved, the President's budget would run deficits of \$121 billion in FY03 and \$51 billion in FY04. In contrast, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated that the President's budget would produce an \$80 billion deficit next year and an \$14 billion deficit in FY04.

House Science Subcommittee Members Recognize Importance of K-12 Science and Math Teachers

Yesterday, the House Science Subcommittee on Research held a hearing entitled, "Meeting the Demands of the Knowledge Based Economy: Strengthening Undergraduate Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Education." The hearing was primarily designed to discuss the current state of undergraduate mathematics, science and engineering education, by examining challenges faced by institutions, exploring examples of successful programs and discussing federal programs that could be developed to fill current gaps.

Subcommittee Chairman Nick Smith (R-MI) said that many of the math and science education problems this country faces stem from a K-12 school system that is ineffective at preparing students to pursue math and science majors. Representative Bob Etheridge (D-NC) maintained that the lack of preparation of science and math students in middle and high school plays a major role in how many college students major in science- and math-related programs.

Dr. Carl Weiman, a distinguished professor of physics and Nobel Laureate from the University of Colorado-Boulder said that K-12 math and science teachers need to be better prepared to teach in their fields. Congressman Joe Baca (D-CA) agreed that reform needs to start at the K-12 level and that qualified K-12 math and science teachers were critical for preparing students to attend college. Baca also stressed the necessity of offering more advanced-level courses to high school students.

Other witnesses that testified include: Dr. Steven Lee Johnson, Provost and Chief Operating Officer, Sinclair College; Dr. Daniel Wubah, Professor of Biology, James Madison University; Dr. Narl Davidson, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Interim Dean of Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology; and Dr. Kathleen Howard, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Swarthmore College.

Five Year Strategic Plan for the Department of Education

U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige announced in a department-wide staff meeting his 5 year Strategic Plan for the Department of Education. The intent behind the plan is to show parents and children that the Department is focused on improving the quality of education. This plan unites the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 with the President's Management Agenda. There are 6 goals that are set for the agency:

1. **Create a Culture of Achievement:** Create a culture of achievement throughout the nation's education system by effectively implementing the new law, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and by basing all federal education programs on its principles: accountability, flexibility, expanded parental options and doing what works.
2. **Improve Student Achievement:** Improve student achievement for all groups of students by putting reading first, expanding high-quality mathematics and science teaching, reforming high schools, and boosting teacher and principal quality, thereby closing the achievement gap.
3. **Develop Safe Schools and Strong Character:** Establish disciplined and drug-free education environments that foster the development of good character and citizenship.
4. **Transform Education into an Evidence-based Field:** Strengthen the quality of education research.
5. **Enhance the Quality of and Access to Postsecondary and Adult Education:** Increase opportunities for students and the effectiveness of institutions.
6. **Establish Management Excellence:** Create a culture of accountability throughout the Department of Education.

The Department's Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 is available at :
www.ed.gov/pubs/stratplan2002-07/index.html.

White House Conference on Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers

In connection with the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Initiative, Laura Bush hosted the White House Conference on Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers by gathering university and business leaders, teacher education advocates, teachers' unions, public policy organizations and foundations from across the country to help develop solutions for enhancing teacher quality.

The goal of the conference was to ensure that our nation's children can count on having teachers who not only bring love, compassion and dedication to their profession, but also possess a deep and up-to-date knowledge of the concepts and subjects they are teaching as well as the ability to assess each student's academic strengths and weaknesses and to apply the most effective instructional methods, strategies and materials to meet his or her learning needs.

The conference stressed emphasis on the preparation of teacher candidates in the nation's colleges of education and on professional development for those teachers who have already answered the call to teach. It also highlighted research regarding teacher preparation and student achievement as well as alternative routes to entering the teaching profession.

A survey by the Department of Education found that fewer than 36 percent of current teachers feel "very well prepared" to implement curriculum and performance standards, and less than 20 percent feel prepared to meet the needs of diverse students or those with limited English proficiency. While states and educational organizations have begun to pursue different ways to recruit and train high-quality individuals to become teachers, more help is needed.

Through both the No Child Left Behind Act and President Bush's budget, states and local school districts will have multiple tools to help them meet new teacher-quality requirements in the law. Altogether, programs that are part of the president's commitment to teacher quality will provide states and districts with more than \$4 billion in federal funds in 2002 alone. Key parts of the president's efforts to ensure a quality teacher in every classroom include:

- **Providing State Grants to Recruit and Train Teachers:** A \$2.85 billion flexible grant program, funded in FY2002, will provide states with resources to recruit and train teachers and principals. This represents an increase of 35 percent over FY2001 levels, and the president's FY2003 budget sustains this level of funding.
- **Recruiting High-Quality Individuals to Become Teachers:** President Bush proposes record level support for programs that provide innovative ways to recruit new teachers into the teaching profession, including the

- Troops to Teachers program, Transition to Teaching Program and Teach for America.
- **Expanding Programs to Train Teachers in Specific Subject Areas:** President Bush proposes to strengthen programs to help train teachers in specific areas of need, including early childhood education, reading instruction, bilingual education, special education, math, science, history and technology.
 - **Implementing the Teacher Protection Act:** This new law ensures that teachers, principals and other school professionals can undertake reasonable actions to maintain order and discipline in the classroom without fear of litigation.
 - **Creating a New Teacher Tax Deduction:** The president's FY2003 budget calls for a new teacher tax deduction to help teachers defray out-of-pocket classroom expenses of up to \$400. The cost of this initiative is \$16 million in FY2004 and \$577 million over the first years.
 - **Providing Expanded Student Loan Forgiveness for Teachers:** President Bush's plan will expand student loan forgiveness to up to \$17,500 for math, science and special education teachers who commit to teach in high-need schools for five years. The total cost of this initiative is \$45 million in FY2003 and \$112 million over five years.

For more information about the conference, please visit www.whitehouse.gov or www.ed.gov.

Scientifically Based Research

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, calls for the use of "scientifically based research" as the foundation for many education programs and for classroom instruction.

On February 6, 2002, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Susan Neuman hosted a seminar where leading experts in the fields of education and science discussed the meaning of scientifically based research and its status across various disciplines. In addition, experts in the field discussed the implications of scientifically based research on different areas in the field of elementary and secondary education.

For more detailed information about the seminar, please visit: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/research/index.html>

Public Agenda Study Shows Students and Teachers Don't Oppose Regular Testing

A study recently released by non-profit organization, Public Agenda, revealed that a majority of students and teachers don't mind regular testing. The study also indicated that regular testing doesn't detract from classroom learning. Public Agenda surveyed 600 students nationally and found that:

- Nearly three quarters of the students (73 percent) said they could handle the pressure of taking standardized tests, while another 23 percent don't get nervous at all.
- Virtually all students say they take the tests seriously and more than half (56 percent) say they take them "very seriously."
- Eight in 10 students say their teachers use class time to prepare students for the tests, but nearly the same number (78 percent) say the effort does not come at the expense of other class work.
- Eight in 10 students (82 percent) say academic expectations are about right, and 71 percent say the amount of homework they are assigned, as well as the number of tests they take, are about right.
- Large majorities of teachers (62 percent), employers (79 percent), and professors (78 percent) believe standardized-test scores are an effective tool to identify students in need of tutoring or summer school.
- Most parents and teachers agree that students take the right number of tests, that testing younger students is a good way to target early on those in need of help, and that high school exit exams are a good idea. Only 12 percent of parents and 20 percent of teachers think it's a bad idea to require high school students to take an exit exam in order to receive their diploma.

Museum and Library Services Act Passes Subcommittee

On March 6th, the Museum and Library Services Act (H.R. 3784) met with the approval of the House Select Education Subcommittee. This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Subcommittee Chairman Pete Hoekstra (R-MI) and Tim Roemer (D-IN), would modify the current law to strengthen museum and library services and coordinate these services with activities under the No Child Left Behind Act that was signed into law earlier this year. The bill is now pending in the full committee for House Education and the Workforce.

Under this proposed legislation, Title II, the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), is reauthorized to provide appropriations through FY 2008. By providing a minimum of \$340,000 to each state, LSTA promotes improvement in library services to facilitate access to resources to all people of the United States.

Title III of the legislation recognizes museums as a viable pathway to connect the whole of society to the cultural, artistic, historical, and scientific understandings of our heritage. The Museum and Library Services Act aims to ensure proper funding for museums so that they are able to provide for this valuable service to the public.

“It will fund the one federal agency -- the Institute of Museum and Library Services -- devoted exclusively to museums and libraries, which are natural partners with our nation’s schools, and it will sustain provisions to encourage model cooperation between museums and libraries as no other legislation does,” Hoekstra said.

NCES Releases 2001 Digest on Educational Statistics

The National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) has just released a digest that offers a variety of statistical information covering various fields in education from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. Topics covered in this digest range from the number of K-12 schools, colleges, teachers, enrollments, graduates, educational attainment, and finances to employment, income of graduates, libraries, technology and international comparisons.

To download this digest, go to:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002130>

NCES Releases Report on Children's Early Math and Reading Achievement

The report released by NCES examines the relationship of children's early literacy skills and resources at the start of kindergarten to their reading and mathematics achievement at the end of kindergarten and first grade. The relationship of these skills is illustrated from many perspectives, including race and ethnic backgrounds for boys and girls. To download this report, please visit: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002125>

Presidents Commission on Excellence

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. The schedule for subsequent meetings around the country is as follows:

March 13	Des Moines, IA
March 20	San Diego, CA
March 21	Los Angeles, CA
April 9-10	Miami, FL
April 16	NYC, NY
April 16	Nashville, TN
May 30-31	Washington, DC

Rehabilitation Services Administration Announces Public Forum

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) recently announced that it will hold a public forum regarding the Federal Rehabilitation Act, which authorizes the funding of vocational rehabilitation programs serving people with disabilities, independent living programs, projects with industry, client assistant programs, rehabilitation training programs, protection and advocacy, recreation and other demonstration and research programs. If you are interested in providing public testimony or would like more information, please call: 718-933-5650. For those who cannot attend, it is recommended that you provide a written copy of your testimony for the public record. For more information on the act please visit: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/Policy.

Date:	March 19 th . 2002
Time:	1:00 pm-6:00 pm
Place:	Metropolitan Hotel (Ballroom), Lexington Ave & 51 st Street,
Featured Guest:	Joanne Wilson, Commissioner, RSA

**House Labor-HHS-ED Appropriations Subcommittee 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

March 25 - April 5	Senate not in session
March 29	<i>Good Friday</i>
March 31	<i>Easter</i>
April 8 (Mon.)	Senate reconvenes
May 27 - 31	Senate not in session
May 27	<i>Memorial Day (observed)</i>
June 3 (Mon.)	Senate reconvenes
July 1 - 5	Senate not in session
July 4	<i>Independence Day</i>
July 8 (Mon.)	Senate reconvenes
August 5 - September 2	Senate not in session (August Recess)
September 2	<i>Labor Day</i>
September 3 (Tues.)	Senate reconvenes
September 16 (Mon.)	Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)
October 4	Target adjournment

