

# Archived Information



## ED REVIEW

November 22, 2002

*...a bi-weekly update on U.S. Department of Education activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community and other stakeholders*

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**NCLB UPDATE** (<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/>)

As part of a joint effort with the Department, the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy has issued a report calling for a major, agency-wide effort to fund studies that randomly assign students to treatment and control groups -- to establish "what works" in educating American children. Noting that the U.S. has made little progress in raising student achievement scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) over the past 30 years, the report proposes randomized controlled trials as "the key to reversing decades of stagnation in American elementary and secondary education" and recommends the Department provide strong incentives for the widespread use of those educational practices proven effective in such trials. Randomized controlled trials have already identified sound strategies in early reading instruction and school-based substance abuse prevention (as well as medicine, employment, and welfare policy), but such trials are uncommon in educational research. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.excelgov.org/displayContent.asp?Keyword=prppcEvidence>.

Also, on November 4 and 5, the What Works Clearinghouse's Technical Advisory Group convened for the first time. One of the group's responsibilities is to advise the venture in its development of standards for scientific evidence on educational effectiveness. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO [http://www.w-w-c.org/pr\\_111802.html](http://www.w-w-c.org/pr_111802.html).

Last week, the Department released draft, non-regulatory guidance on Title I, Part A paraprofessionals. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires all paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, to have completed at least two years of postsecondary school, obtained an associate's degree or higher, and demonstrated the knowledge and ability to assist in reading, writing, and math instruction. (Paraprofessionals hired before that date must meet the same requirements by January 8, 2006.) Essentially, the guidance leaves it up to states and local school districts to determine how to define and measure

instructional abilities, although "there must be evidence that the assessment is valid and reliable." In addition, the guidance addresses AmeriCorps workers, volunteers, and early childhood educators and funding issues. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/asst.html>. (The document is available, in PDF and Microsoft Word, under "NCLB Policy Guidance," "Policy Guidance for Programs...")

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## STUDENTS IN SERVICE

In support of the President's call for all Americans to dedicate at least two years of their lives to serve others, the Education Department joined the USA Freedom Corps, Corporation for National and Community Service, Points of Light Foundation, and Volunteer Center National Network to create a new resource: "Students in Service to America: A Guidebook for Engaging America's Students in a Lifelong Habit of Service." Among the guidebook's entries, targeted to teachers and community groups, are sections on developing habits of service, hallmarks of effective service programs, and ten steps for bringing service to your classroom. The guidebook also details tools and resources to assist in designing and implementing service-learning programs. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org/>.

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## SCHOOL CRIME AND SAFETY

The annual "Indicators of School Crime and Safety," released earlier this month, shows that most types of school crime dropped between 1995 and 2001, with the proportion of students saying they were victims of crimes dropping from 10 percent to six percent. Indeed, between 1993 and 2001, the percentage of high school students who reported being in a fight declined from 16 percent to 13 percent and students who reported carrying a weapon during the previous 30 days dropped from 12 percent to six percent. Moreover, students who reported street gangs in their school fell by nearly one-third (from 29 percent in 1995 to 20 percent in 2001) and fewer students said drugs were available on campus (from 32 percent in 1995 to 29 percent in 2001). However, in 2001, eight percent of students reported being bullied at school during the last six months, up from five percent in 1999, and from 1996 to 2000 teachers reported being victims of 1.6 million crimes at school, including 590,000 violent crimes and one million thefts. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/schoolcrime/>.

(This publication is issued jointly by the Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics and the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics.)

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## NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY

President Bush intends to nominate Karen Johnson to be Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs. Johnson currently serves as Vice President of Social Marketing and Public Affairs for Porter Novelli, where she provides strategic communications and public affairs counsel for a variety of clients. Prior to joining Porter Novelli, she was a fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communications. As assistant secretary, she will serve as principal advisor to the Secretary on education and various other legislative matters before the Congress and as the Department's liaison in responding to the needs of Capitol Hill. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/11-2002/11082002.html>.

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## CHALLENGING PRECONCEPTIONS

Survey results from the Minority Student Achievement Network, a 15-member consortium of suburban school districts studying ways to address the achievement gap, reveal little racial difference in students' desire to excel in school. Consider: despite the common belief that African-American and Hispanic students have an "anti-school" orientation, those students were more likely than white or Asian students to report that their friends think it is "very important" to "study hard and get good grades." Likewise, the number of students who reported that "my friends make fun of people who try to do really well in school" was comparatively low across all racial groups. Also:

- Students' answers to what motivated them to "work really hard" differed considerably along racial lines. White students were almost twice as likely to cite "teacher demands" as African-American students (16 percent of African-Americans, 19 percent of Hispanics, 20 percent of Asians, and 29 percent of whites), whereas African-Americans students were the most likely to report that they respond best to "teacher encouragement" (47 percent of African-Americans, 41 percent of

Hispanics, and 32 percent of whites). According to Allan Alson, network founder and superintendent of Evanston Township, Illinois, High School District #202, this means that more professional development is needed to help educators understand how students respond to their teaching strategies and use that knowledge to improve student achievement.

- Parents play a critical role in motivating student achievement. When asked why they "worked hard," 60 percent of each student group reported they do so "to please or impress parents." Over 80 percent of each student group noted that their parents do pay attention to their grades.
- There is no difference in the amount of time African-American, Hispanic, and white students reported spending on their homework. However, 48 percent of African-Americans said they "understand the teacher's lesson about half the time, or less," versus 46 percent of Hispanics, 32 percent of Asians, and just 27 percent of whites.

Future work of the network will involve building teacher, administrator, and parent leadership and promoting early childhood and adult literacy interventions. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.msanetwork.org/research.asp>.

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## LIFE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

To celebrate the West Wing's 100th anniversary, the White House is promoting a web-based exhibit: "Life in the White House" (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/life/>). Anyone with Internet access can take an Oval Office tour with President Bush, meet senior White House officials in their appropriate offices (for example, Chief of Staff Andy Card in the Cabinet Room and Press Secretary Ari Fleischer in the Press Room), and view past and present photos of life in the White House. Children young and old may also enjoy games, quizzes, and coloring books at <http://www.whitehousekids.gov/>.

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## QUOTE TO NOTE

"We are ever mindful of the lessons of September 11th that taught us that all future measures of a rigorous K-12 education must include a solid grounding in other cultures, other languages, and other histories. In other words, we need to put the 'world' back into 'world-class' education. Ours is a world of 24-hour news cycles, global markets,

and high-speed Internet. We need look no further than our morning paper to see that our future, and the future of our children, is inextricably linked to the complex challenges of the global community.... International education shouldn't be an add-on. International content can be integrated into the teaching of many subjects. When children read stories, some should be by and about people in other countries. Students in dual language immersion programs often study some of their math, science, and other lessons in that language."

-- Secretary of Education Rod Paige (11/20/02)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

On December 13, from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. ET, a special Imagine Mars (<http://imaginemars.jpl.nasa.gov/>) webcast is planned, with Bill Nye, the Science Guy, and choreographer Debbie Allen leading an exploration of what "community" might be like on Mars. Teachers and students can prepare for this interactive event by downloading an activity guide and exploring links to materials for advance study. The project is co-sponsored by NASA and the National Endowment for the Arts.

eCYBERMISSION, a unique, web-based math, science, and technology competition sponsored by the U.S. Army, poses multiple, open-ended Mission Challenges in four different areas: arts & entertainment, environment, health and safety, and sports & recreation. Teams of three to four seventh- and eighth-grade students identify and solve a real-life problem -- with prizes for participating and winning. Registration is open until December 16, 2002, with submissions due February 28, 2003. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ecybermission.com/>.

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**Please feel free to contact the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs with any questions:**

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