

# EDUCATION DAILY

The education community's independent daily news service

## Budget 2006

### Conferees looking at deeper education cuts than planned

Conferees negotiating a bill to fund school programs in 2006 are considering a deeper cut in educational funding than originally planned. According to a spokeswoman for **Rep. Steny Hoyer**, D-Md., a **House** conferee, appropriators were considering a plan Tuesday to cut overall funding for education in 2006 by \$59 million, rather than the \$56.7 million called for in earlier legislation.

Meanwhile, Democratic members of the House and **Senate** education committees still plan to seek support for Hispanic education initiatives. **Sen. Jeff Bingaman**, D-N.M., and **Rep. Ruben Hinojosa**, D-Texas, scheduled a conference call for today to explain why **Congress** should support the **Education Department's** programs for dropout prevention, migrant education, Hispanic-serving institutions, and English as a Second Language.

#### Entitlement, taxes on the table

Congress is juggling several budget-related items this week, including bills to cut entitlement spending, reduce taxes and fund federal programs.

While conferees for the education appropriations bill try to reach agreement, House and Senate Republicans are trying to complete two bills needed to comply with the budget resolution. One would cut entitlement programs such as student loan subsidies, but includes an extension of a loan forgiveness program for highly qualified teachers. The other bill would cut taxes by roughly \$60 billion. But it is not clear whether that piece of legislation will include an extension for a tax deduction teachers can use to offset the cost of education materials they buy.

That deduction is scheduled to expire the end of this year.

**Rep. Bill Thomas**, R-Calif., chairman of the House **Ways and Means Committee**, included an extension of the teacher deduction in his bill, H.R. 4297. But before convening a committee meeting Tuesday night, he removed the provision along with a deduction for higher education expenses and a tax exemption for state bonds to fund schools.

—Patti Mohr

## Today's Highlights

Vol. 38, No. 208 • Wednesday, November 16, 2005

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## Experts: More integrated arts instruction is needed

School boards, teachers must play key role in promoting music and art

Instruction in the creative arts shows significant promise with helping increase literacy and close the achievement gap, especially in disadvantaged schools, education experts said Tuesday.

They were unveiling a new study by the **Arts Education Partnership**, which includes the **Education Department** and the **Council of Chief State School Officers**.

But getting more music, art and dance courses into schools will require the commitment of local school boards and teachers, they said, noting that No Child Left Behind's emphasis on testing has forced boards to primarily focus on academics.

An arts curriculum integrated into math, language arts and other academic subjects could help educators span this divide, they suggested.

"There has to be passion, a vision, recognition that [an arts curriculum] is not negotiable. You would never have a school without reading or math," said **Stanton Miller**, superintendent of **Twin Ridges School District** in California.

(See **ARTS** on page 2)

## Spellings kicks off international ed week with space chat

**Education Secretary Margaret Spellings** launched International Education Week with a long-distance call to space from one of the nation's top high schools.

The **Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology** is the nation's top-ranked school for Merit Scholarship semifinalists and first in the world in Advanced Placement achievement.

Spellings went to the Fairfax County, Va., school to participate in a teleconference with U.S. astronaut **William McArthur** and Russian cosmonaut **Valery Tokarev** onboard the International Space Station, 220 miles in space. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration** cosponsored the event.

Spellings noted that in 1970, the U.S. produced more than 50 percent of the world's Ph.D.s. "By 2010, that number will be down to 15 percent," she said.

She called Jefferson, with its strong emphasis on math, technology and foreign languages, "an

incubator of great ideas." She said she hoped such ED-NASA collaboration would be broadened to include more mainstream high schools as a way of introducing students to the opportunities science and math curricula offer.

She called that both "a challenge and a responsibility" because 80 percent of the jobs of the future will require postsecondary education. "Our future depends on a strong background in science and math."

McArthur and Tokarev appeared live on a large TV screen at 9:30 a.m. Students spoke to them in English and Russian, asking about the role of nuclear energy in space, the medical facilities onboard and the status of experiments the astronauts were conducting.

One student asked whether criticism of the high cost of the space program was valid. McArthur replied that the program was producing "cutting-edge research" that could be done only in space.

—**David Hubler**

### ARTS (continued from page 1)

Miller said the arts program at **Grizzly Hill School** in North San Juan, Calif., would slowly have died if the local board hadn't made a three-year commitment to keep it alive after an initial foundation grant ended.

#### 'Third space'

The report examined qualitative case studies of 10 high-poverty schools with significant arts courses. In those schools the arts opened a "third space" — a metaphor panelists said they use to describe the new conditions and possibilities the arts create in schools, the interaction among students, and the increased community and parental involvement in school activities.

"These are more than 'feel good' courses, they're powerful learning experiences," **National Education Association** executive director **John Wilson** said.

He said participation in the arts develops such skills as problem-solving, flexibility, self-direction and collaboration — all of which are attributes employees seek.

The schools the AEP studied have balanced these priorities by integrating arts-centered curricula with academic studies.

Nevertheless, panelists agreed, too many schools focus on the academic subjects tested under the No Child Left Behind Act at the expense of the arts.

"There's a misassumption that success means explicit instruction in academic content," said **Joseph Villani**, deputy executive director of the **National School Boards Association**.

While academic subjects are important, he added, the arts produce a rich curriculum that will prepare students to become successful and contributing members of society. Boards need to make sure priorities aren't determined solely by the need for test scores, he said.

NEA's Wilson concurred, saying grassroots support from teachers is important in introducing and maintaining an arts curriculum.

"You will not have a great public school without the arts," he said.

Third Space: When Learning Matters *can be ordered from the CCSSO Web site at* [www.ccsso.org/publications](http://www.ccsso.org/publications).

—**Stephen Sawchuk**



Published every business day by LRP Publications, Inc. (ISSN: 0013-1261), 360 Hiatt Drive, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418, Editorial: (703) 516-7002, extension 21; Customer Service: (800) 341-7874; New Subscriptions: (800) 341-7874. Publisher: Kenneth F. Kahn, Esq.; V.P., Editorial: Claude J. Werder; Corporate Executive Editor: Candace Golanski Gallo; Executive Editor: Debi Pelletier; Editorial Staff: David Chan, Katie Chase, David Hubler, Patti Mohr, Pamela Moore, Stephen Sawchuk, Sarah Sparks. LRP Washington Bureau Chief: Patrick Harden. Annual subscription rate: \$1,200. Single issues: \$6. Copyright 2005 by LRP Publications, Inc. Federal law restricts reproduction of material in this newsletter without written permission.

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## Entrepreneurs offer ideas, but do they work long term?

The No Child Left Behind Act has tapped new potential for entrepreneurs in education, but experts say innovators may have difficulty taking their ideas beyond a few schools.

Private foundations and companies are more frequently “invited to the table” by schools under pressure to raise poor test scores, according to experts at an entrepreneurship summit Monday sponsored by the **American Enterprise Institute**.

Yet creators of new programs and techniques often look for results too quickly and do not establish the financial and political capital to make their programs successful in the long term, the experts agreed.

“You can turn around a business in a year,” said **Robert Maranto**, an entrepreneurship researcher at **Villanova University**. “To turn around a school, you need to wait for a lot of retirements and hope you get a pipeline in to replace them. If you are talking about education reforms, you need to be talking about decades instead of years.”

Because most grants are geared toward start-up programs, “You actually get less capital as you become successful,” said **Jon Schnur**, cofounder of **New Leaders for New Schools**.

That can lead school districts to shoulder more and more of the financial responsibility to keep programs as they develop.

Over time, districts can end up bounced from one new program or new management system to another, without ever implementing and evaluating a program long enough to determine whether it works.

**Nina Rees**, the **Education Department’s** deputy undersecretary for innovation and improvement, said several changes would improve entrepreneurship in education, including:

- **Entrepreneurs must be more engaged in policy debates** surrounding educational reform. Private groups and foundations often come in only after policies are set, so regulations do not necessarily take them into account.

- **Entrepreneurs and educators need better lines of communication.** “Often on paper the idea looks a little crazy,” Rees noted; discussions with all groups can help flesh out “sane” plans and programs.

For more information, see [www.aei.org/events/eventID.1101,filter.all/event\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/events/eventID.1101,filter.all/event_detail.asp).

—Sarah Sparks

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## CEP: Restructured Michigan schools make great turnaround

A majority of Michigan schools that were subject to restructuring in the 2004-05 school year improved student performance enough to move out of the No Child Left Behind Act’s “in need of improvement” category, according to a new **Center on Education Policy** report.

Restructuring is the final sanction under NCLB for schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for five consecutive years. Because Michigan began calculating AYP based on data collected prior to NCLB’s passage in 2001, its schools are among the first to face the consequence.

Of 133 schools undergoing restructuring in 2004-05, 113 of them, or 85 percent, improved test scores sufficiently to make AYP, according to the report, and 26 schools, or 20 percent, did so for the second consecutive year.

### Employ multiple reforms

No one reform strategy stood out as particularly effective. Rather, schools that employed multiple tactics fared the best, the report concluded.

Districts that implemented four or more reforms over the past two years were “significantly more likely to meet AYP targets in 2004-05 than those implementing fewer reforms,” the report said.

“You can change schools that are low-performing,” said **Jack Jennings**, CEP president and CEO. “But there is no simple solution. Frequently

what helps the most is a combination of things.”

While most of the schools employed several reform strategies, they also chose the least radical of the options offered under NCLB, such as significantly changing school governance or appointing a new principal. Only one school chose to reopen as a charter school, and none turned school operations over to a private management company.

School administrators in Flint credit a state-trained “principal coach,” for the turnaround at **Brownell Elementary School**, which met all AYP targets for the first time in 2004-05.

The critical element, said **Karen Lee**, assistant Title I director in Flint, was hiring a coach with instructional expertise in the content area that caused the failure. The coach is “very focused on what is happening in the classroom,” she said.

Some of the improvement in academic performance, the report cautions, is attributable to changes in the state’s accountability plan as approved by the U.S. **Education Department**. In particular, the state is being permitted to apply an “error band” to student scores and count as proficient any that fall within the band.

Hopes but No Miracle Cures: Michigan’s Early Restructuring Lessons is available at [www.cepdc.org/fededprograms/michiganNov2005/HopebutNoMiracleCure.pdf](http://www.cepdc.org/fededprograms/michiganNov2005/HopebutNoMiracleCure.pdf).

—Jeanne Sweeney

## Daily Briefing

### Capitol Hill Watch

#### Fuel costs stretch school district budgets

Schools districts will have to find ways to cut expenses this year to pay for higher fuel costs, warned **Edgar B Hatrick III, Loudoun County (Va.) Public Schools** superintendent.

Hatrack testified before the **House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee** last week about how public school systems are dealing with higher natural gas prices. He emphasized that schools won't be able to absorb the higher fuel costs, but will have to make up budget shortfalls by taking money from instructional accounts or curtailing educational programs.

Hatrack said Loudoun County will have budget shortfalls of \$400,000 because of higher gasoline prices and \$537,000 because of higher natural gas prices.

"We have experienced a 47 percent cost increase in one fiscal year and a 173 percent increase since [fiscal year] 2000," Hatrick said. "It is my hope that **Congress** will be able to help stabilize fuel and energy costs so that dollars we now burn in heating costs can be assigned to the classrooms, where they belong."

### Education Department

#### U.S. works to recruit more foreign students

India sends more students to study in America than any other country, according to a new study by the **Institute of International Education**. Yet overall, foreign enrollment in U.S. schools is down slightly from last year, and nearly half of all foreign students come from five countries.

The report, *Open Doors 2005*, reveals that 80,466 Indian students studied here in 2004-05, an increase of 1 percent from last year, making that nation the leader for the fourth year in a row. China follows, with 62,523 students; then the Republic of Korea, 53,358; Japan, 42,215; and Canada, 28,140.

While enrollment from the five largest-sending countries increased, overall foreign enrollment fell 1 percent, to 565,039. IIE researchers suggest this may be due, in part, to rising costs of tuition and student visa requirements, as well as strong recruiting campaigns in other countries.

The **U.S. Educational Foundation**, a cooperative initiative of the **Education** and **State** departments, is sponsoring workshops in seven Indian cities this week to encourage students to come to America to study, according to a statement from the **U.S. Embassy** in New Delhi.

*Data from the report are available at [www.opendoors.iienetwork.org](http://www.opendoors.iienetwork.org).*

#### ED helps promote Medicare drug program

**Education Department** officials are expanding their resources to promote **President Bush's** new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan and to encourage

seniors to sign up for the drug plan before the end of the year.

"[ED] will continue to reach out to eligible Americans engaged in adult education by informing them of this new method to gain access to improved health care," **Education Secretary Margaret Spellings** said in a statement Monday. "By stepping up our efforts, we will help seniors and individuals with disabilities achieve a healthier future for themselves and their families."

ED's **Office of Vocational and Adult Education** will use public, electronic and Web-based resources to reach out to seniors participating in education programs who might be eligible for the drug benefit. ED's **Office of Innovation and Improvement, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services** and **National Center on Secondary Education Transition** also are taking part in the outreach effort by urging education grantees to sign up.

### Across the Nation

#### Michigan

#### Complaint that lyrics glorify slavery prompts song's removal from school concert

A concert at a suburban Detroit middle school won't include a song about picking cotton, because a black parent complained that it glorified slavery and said he wouldn't let his child participate.

**Gwen Ahearn**, a spokeswoman for the **Berkley School District**, told the *Detroit News* that **Superintendent Tresa Zumsteg** removed the song, "Pick a Bale of Cotton," from the program. Ahearn said when the song was picked for Wednesday's folk concert at predominantly white **Anderson Middle School**, there was no intent to offend anyone. As it became apparent that it appeared to glorify the institution of slavery, "we pulled the song," she said.

The parent, **Greg Montgomery**, said he complained to school officials, and when he was dissatisfied with their response, he decided to pull his 11-year-old daughter, **China**, from singing.

"It's mind-boggling that people don't understand sensitive issues," he said.

The song's lyrics include, "Jump down, turn around, pick a bale of cotton. Gotta jump down, turn around, Oh, Lordie, pick a bale a day."

#### Texas

#### State to offer variations of its standardized assessments for special ed students

Texas is adding three new variations of its main standardized test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), to its battery of assessments, *The Dallas Morning News* reported. The tests will help the state comply with federal requirements and give its

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500,000 special education students greater access to the general education curriculum.

The TAKS-I (“I” stands for “inclusive”) will correspond with the state’s test for mainstream students. The state’s current special ed assessment, the SDAA II, lacks versions for science and social studies or for 11th-graders, and eventually will be replaced by the TAKS-I in all subjects and grade levels. Special ed students who are on grade level will take the TAKS-I, and they will be required to demonstrate the same level of performance to pass as they would for the regular TAKS.

The TAKS-M (for “modified”) will be given to students who perform below their grade level. The TAKS-Alt (for “alternative”) will be used to evaluate the most severely disabled children, such as those with serious cognitive disabilities, and probably will take the form of an online checklist.

### Around the World

#### Chinese sex culture museum to become country’s first sex education facility

The **Ancient Chinese Sex Culture Museum** in Shanghai announced Monday it would admit minors and begin training teachers as part of a bid to become China’s first sex education facility.

The museum plans to partner with an as-yet-unnamed polytechnic school in the city, the *Shanghai Daily* reported. Children will be shown a 30-minute sex education video before exploring the museum. In January, the museum is expected to publish a series of textbooks that cover topics from marriage to AIDS prevention.

The museum contains more than 4,000 items, some of which date back 5,000 years. Exhibits considered too graphic will be kept in a new adults-only hall.

### Study Hall

#### Great Lakes area graduates report little relevance found in high-stakes tests

While the No Child Left Behind Act focuses on state tests to highlight academic weaknesses in schools, students report the information has done them little good, a new survey suggests.

Three out of five graduates of high schools in Great Lakes states said state tests were never used to help them in school, and more than half reported that the tests were not useful “in any way,” according to a survey by the **Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice**.

Great Lakes researchers surveyed 720 graduates in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. About 56 percent of students reported the tests measured what they learned in school, and about

half reported the tests caused them and their teachers at least some stress.

The survey shows students see little connection between the tests and their own education, according to **Teri Moblo**, Great Lakes center director.

*The survey results can be ordered from EPIC-MRA at (517) 331-3313.*

### Newsmaker

#### NAEP honors state-level test advocates

The **National Assessment Governing Board**, policymakers for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, today honored four senators who were key in creating the state-level version of the prestigious test.

As part of the 15th anniversary of the main state NAEP, known as the “Nation’s Report Card,” NAGB praised **Sens. Lamar Alexander**, R-Tenn., **Hillary Rodham Clinton**, D-N.Y., **Orrin Hatch**, R-Utah, and **Edward Kennedy**, D-Mass.

Alexander, then Tennessee governor, served as chairman of the 1986 commission appointed by **Education Department Secretary William Bennett** to improve student performance. The commission, which also included Clinton, then first lady of Arkansas, approved the test to provide state academic comparisons. Kennedy and Hatch introduced bills authorizing state assessments that were later joined to create the NAEP Improvement Act, building on the national sample test already in place. The first state tests were launched in 1990.

*For more information, see [www.nagb.org](http://www.nagb.org).*

### Funding Notebook

#### ED awards \$15 million to develop edu-games

The **Education Department** awarded a \$15 million grant to **Maryland Public Television** to develop a series of educational video games to improve pre-algebra math skills and math-related reading comprehension.

The award would go toward expanding the group’s Thinkport Web site for elementary and secondary education, which was developed under a previous \$10 million Star Schools grant. The new project, “Learning Games on the Go,” would be developed in partnership with the **Center for Technology in Education** at **Johns Hopkins University** and **Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Education Arcade**. It would include professional development for teachers in how to use games in the classroom.

“We need to find ways to reach kids who are struggling with traditional instructional methods by using the engaging and motivational aspects of digital learning games,” said **Gail Porter Long**, MPT vice president for education, in a statement.

*For more information, see [www.thinkport.org](http://www.thinkport.org).*

## Q&A: Teacher retention

### 'Emergency' teachers bear cost of great expectations

Philadelphia's massive \$9 million teacher-recruiting campaign in 1999 netted **Christina Asquith**, a 25-year-old with a bachelor's degree in political science and a few education courses but no certification or experience in a classroom.

Hired on an "emergency certification," she chose to teach English in one of the least-desirable grades, 6th, in one of the most difficult schools in the city, saying she wanted to make the "difference in a child's life" she saw on the recruiting brochure.

Instead, she became a statistic.

According to the **National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools**, one in five teachers at a high-poverty school has fewer than three years of experience, about double the number in wealthier schools, and two in five have no major or minor in the subject area they teach. Asquith saw those statistics play out firsthand.

Asquith, author of *The Emergency Teacher*, a memoir of her year at **Julia de Burgos Elementary School**, spoke to *Education Daily* on Friday about the lack of training and support, coupled with the overwhelming pressure placed on new teachers to "turn around" failing schools. She said this has laid the foundation for the large number of new teachers that leave within the first five years on the job.

#### **Q: What was your first experience with the school?**

**A:** I had my car stolen [before starting to teach], and it was found in that neighborhood, flipped over, burned and stripped. It was another country, a very threatening environment.

#### **Q: Why did you choose to apply directly to the district rather than going through an alternative certification program like Teach for America?**

**A:** I didn't want to go through an elite program like Teach for America. Most emergency teachers don't; they apply directly to the district. I support alternative certification, because it allows in business leaders, scientists, journalists — it can be a door to bring in wonderful teachers.

#### **Q: Given your experiences, do you think alternative certification programs work?**

**A:** Before they go into the classroom, every teacher should have to do student teaching. Even a six-week course could be enough. If you don't know how to teach, it's eight hours of mental and physical hell.

#### **Q: What should the district have told you going into the job that would have helped?**

**A:** They should have told me, "You can make a difference in a child's life, but it will take years; it's a marathon, not a sprint." They should give you realistic expectations for what you can accomplish in the first year, so you don't feel like a failure at the end of the year.

In the first year, you can expect to cover the material in the textbook, learn classroom management, administrative duties. In a nutshell, you can learn how to seat them. In your second or third year you learn to teach them; it takes years to learn to teach beyond your textbook.

#### **Q: How high was teacher turnover at your school?**

**A:** Ridiculously high. There were nine vacancies in a school with 800 students. That's 270 students; you can't have dozens and dozens of unsupervised students. Usually a substitute teacher took them. Some poor soul ... they would only ever come once; by the end of the day they had this horrified look on their face.

I was the third teacher in three years; our principal was the fourth principal in four years. No one had ordered supplies because no one had prepared the spring before. We were all reinventing the wheel. Not a single teacher I came in with was still there three years later.

It was the same with the students. By 8th grade, half of my class had left the school; 25 percent had dropped out.

#### **Q: What were the main causes of turnover?**

**A:** I think it was pay and poor conditions. I got a \$1,500 signing bonus. I was taking home \$300 a week; I could do better than that at Wal-Mart. The building was a health hazard, no one wanted to teach in it. And there was a teacher shortage in the suburbs, too; you could make 40 percent more in a school 5 miles away.

I would have stayed if I had felt physically safe; if I had felt teaching was a prestigious profession; if I had felt supported by my principal.

#### **Q: What would you suggest to reduce new teacher turnover?**

**A:** They need to come into a situation where they are welcomed and supported, rather than blamed. Every teacher goes into the job wanting to make a difference. If you tell them, "You're doing great; it will get better," it helps. If you tell them, "You have to turn this school around by June or you're a failure," it's no wonder they leave.

*For more information, see*  
[www.theemergencyteacher.com](http://www.theemergencyteacher.com)

—Sarah Sparks