

EDUCATION DAILY

The education community's independent daily news service

Diploma means more for grads today, report says

College readiness up, if measured by courseloads, not GPA or SAT scores

While the national graduation rate has remained flat for the past decade, diplomas may be more meaningful to the students who earn them, a new study says.

A report released Tuesday by the Manhattan Institute, a nonprofit policy research firm, found the graduation rate unchanged from 1991 to 2002, with nearly one student in three leaving high school before receiving a diploma.

Of those who remain, only another third will be prepared to enter a four-year college after graduation — but that's an increase from a decade ago, when only one student in four was academically prepared for college.

"The minimum standards for earning a high school diploma are often lower than those required to enter even a minimally selective four-year college," said Manhattan Institute researchers Jay Greene and Marcus Winters in the report.

College 'ready' but not admissible?

However, the report also showed that the number of students who were academically prepared for college in 2002 — be they white, black or Hispanic — roughly equaled those who actually enrolled in a four-year college.

The report suggested financial aid and affirmative action programs in the past decade might have encouraged enrollment, but concluded "policies that focus on increasing the demand for college among students after they have left the K-12 system ... cannot by themselves increase the number of students who attend college very much."

The official college-readiness survey conducted annually by the National Center for Education Statistics rates students from "marginally or not qualified" to "very highly qualified" based on their grade-point average, class rank, aptitude test score and SAT or ACT score. The ratings are then adjusted based on the rigor of the students' course load.

The Manhattan Institute study, by contrast, rated students based on acceptance criteria at minimally selective four-year public colleges.

(See **GRADUATION** on page 6)

Today's Highlights

Vol. 38, No. 31 • Wednesday, February 16, 2005

TEACHER QUALITY

Education Trust finds disparities in teacher quality within California school districts **Page 2**

LEGAL WATCH

Advocacy group aims to enforce judge's order for billions more in education funding for New York City schools **Page 3**

PERKINS REAUTHORIZATION

Witnesses at hearing object to proposal to limit states' administrative spending **Page 5**

WIA reauthorization

House committee ready to mark up job training bill

Amendments to expand funding, in-school training headed for defeat

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce takes up the Job Training Improvement Act (JTIA) today with approval all but assured.

Nevertheless, both sides of the aisle are girding for a lengthy markup session as Republicans seek to limit debate and Democrats offer amendments they know the Republican majority will reject.

In a statement, panel Chairman John Boehner, R-Ohio, said, "My hope is that our committee will pass this legislation as soon as possible, and that the full House and Senate will work quickly after that to send it to President Bush's desk."

But committee member Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass., called JTIA a bill Republicans "are trying to impose on the House" and said he's thinking of offering several amendments.

The legislation, H.R. 27, would reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (ED, Jan. 31).

More money

Tierney, who introduced several amendments that were voted down during last week's 21st

(See **JTIA** on page 6)

Teacher quality

Ed Trust finds disparities in teacher pay within districts

Districtwide per-pupil spending figures conceal funding gaps between schools

California districts' per-pupil spending statistics mask a hidden salary gap as the most qualified and best-paid teachers take positions in wealthier, mostly white schools, according to an Education Trust-West report released Tuesday.

Citing studies showing that student success often depends on the quality of teachers, the report says districtwide per-pupil spending figures don't show the whole picture. Once the figures are broken down, high-poverty, minority schools within districts have lower-paid teachers.

"We find that the concentration of more experienced and more highly credentialed teachers (along with their corresponding high salaries) in whiter and more affluent schools drives huge funding gaps between schools — even between schools within the very same district," the report said.

The report says the higher-paid teachers naturally migrate to schools with better conditions and fewer challenges, and administrators in the impoverished schools cannot combat the trend because of teacher contracts and single-salary schedules.

Of 50 large school districts surveyed, 40 spent less on teachers in schools serving mostly low-income students than in schools serving the fewest numbers of poor students.

On average, the 40 schools spent an estimated \$2,396 less per teacher.

San Bernadino's high-poverty elementary schools spent \$5,760 less per teacher than the wealthier schools.

Addressing the gap

In virtually every school, administrators are given a teacher allocation — for example, 40 teaching slots, rather than a teacher salary allocation.

The only exception is the Oakland Unified School District, which addresses the gap by giving administrators the flexibility to spend their salary budget on a mix of new or veteran

Recommendations

California's Hidden Teacher Spending Gap *recommended:*

- Lifting the veil of secrecy by making school-level teacher salaries publicly available rather than districtwide averages.
- Providing clear analyses on what is perpetuating the salary gaps, particularly the roles of single-salary schedules and contract provisions.
- Using those analyses to close the gap.

teachers.

Oakland superintendent Randolph Ward said in a press conference that the district has avoided conflict with teachers' unions by offering attractive incentives, such as pay for training, that go beyond the standard salary schedule.

Of each school's budget in Oakland, 85 percent goes toward teacher salaries, Ward added.

Don Iglesias, superintendent of San Jose Unified School District, said there needs to be national leadership to inspire young teachers who believe in solving equity issues, "rather than force marching teachers from the suburbs to the urban centers."

Fiscal crisis to blame?

California's superintendent, Jack O'Connell, commended the report's findings and blamed the shortcomings on California's fiscal crisis.

"This is a problem that needs to be addressed in the best interests of California's students, and one that will require good faith negotiations and compromise between school districts and bargaining units," O'Connell said in a statement.

California's Hidden Teacher Spending Gap *can be found at* www.hiddengap.org.

—Stew Magnuson



Published every business day by LRP Publications, Inc. (ISSN: 0013-1261), 360 Hiatt Drive, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418, Editorial: (703) 516-7002, extension 530; Customer Service: (800) 341-7874; New Subscriptions: (800) 341-7874. Publisher: Kenneth F. Kahn, Esq.; V.P., Editorial: Claude J. Werder; Managing Editor: Michael Cardman; Editorial Staff: Kara Arundel, Steve Brown, Katie Chase, David Hubler, Stew Magnuson, Pamela Moore, Katherine Shek, 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. Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by LRP Publications, for

libraries or other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) for a \$3-per-document fee and a \$1.50-per-page fee to be paid directly to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923. Fee Code: (508) 750-8400/05/\$3 + \$1.50. Requests for permission to reproduce content should be directed to LRP customer service at (800)341-7874, fax (561) 622-2423, e-mail custserve@lrp.com. For editorial suggestions, e-mail pharden@lrp.com. www.educationdaily.net.

Legal watch

Spending advocates vow to make court order a reality

Judge mandates billions more for NYC — but no one wants to be stuck with bill

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) on Tuesday said it will make sure New York state government follows a judge's order to give New York City public schools billions of additional dollars for education each year.

"We take very seriously the judge's statement that he expects compliance by the governor and legislature within 90 days of the signing of the order, and we expect the signing in a few days," said Michael Rebell, CFE's executive director.

New York State Supreme Court Justice Leland DeGrasse issued the order late Monday afternoon mandating that New York City schools receive an additional \$5.6 billion each year in general operating funds, as well as \$9.2 billion for construction and renovation.

The order makes official funding levels a DeGrasse-appointed panel called for in 2003, after the legislature missed another deadline to give New York City schools more money (ED, Aug. 5, 2004).

Who pays?

The operating money is to be phased in over the next four years. However, the judge did not stipulate who should pay it — leaving that thorny issue up to city, state and CFE officials.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the city cannot afford to shoulder any of the burden.

"Although, even in the light of the chronic and consistent underfunding, Judge DeGrasse believes that he lacks the power to prevent the state from forcing the city to provide the necessary funds, it is clear that such a solution would be grievously unfair," Bloomberg said in a statement.

"The wrongs imposed on the city's students resulted from the state's failures, and if new funds are required, the legislature must make certain that these funds come from all of the state's taxpayers."

Rebell said Bloomberg "is going to have to move off of his adamant position." CFE has calculated that the city should pay between 20 and 24 percent of the new education spending. Gov. George Pataki has said the city should provide about 40 percent of any new funding.

Rebell added that CFE is putting the finishing touches on a bill it plans to present to the legislature that would ensure DeGrasse's order is followed. He expects it to be introduced sometime after the legislature's President's Day break.

(See NYC on page 5)

Pa. court again dismisses Reading's NCLB lawsuit

Second challenge is almost same as previous attempt, panel rules

The Reading (Pa.) School District's second lawsuit against Pennsylvania's accountability system under the No Child Left Behind Act has been rejected by a state court.

A three-judge panel from the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania dismissed Reading's second lawsuit against the state department of education on Feb. 8. The district plans to appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, district lawyer Richard L. Guida said yesterday.

The panel concluded that three of Reading's arguments were identical to issues it raised in its first challenge, and the fourth was really a variation on a previous argument.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education "is obviously pleased with the Commonwealth Court decision," spokeswoman Stephanie Suran said. "We hope the Reading School District will accept the results. The Department of Education remains committed to working with district officials to assist them in meeting the requirements" of NCLB.

District alleges unfunded mandate

Guida said the district has authorized an appeal to the state high court, which still hasn't decided whether to hear Reading's first NCLB challenge.

In the first lawsuit, Reading said the state department did not provide the technical assistance required by law (ED, Dec. 23, 2003). The Commonwealth Court rejected that notion, saying technical assistance is not required until after sanctions are levied (ED, Aug. 10, 2004).

The district says in the new lawsuit that, even after sanctions have been levied, the state still is not provided the required technical assistance, he said.

Reading also argued that it will cost \$26 million to implement improvement plans for the city's five sanctioned schools. The district only expects to receive \$8 million in Title I money for improvement purposes.

"We're disappointed, but we've been disappointed before," Guida said.

The decision is available online at www.courts.state.pa.us/OpPosting/CWealth/unpublished/572MD04_2-8-05.pdf.

—Jason Wermers

Daily Briefing

Budget 2006

Boehner opposes cuts to GEAR UP, TRIO

House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Boehner, R-Ohio, on Tuesday said he objects to President Bush's proposal to eliminate the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and get rid of two of the five TRIO programs (ED, Feb. 8).

Speaking at the annual conference of the American Council on Education, Boehner said he supports GEAR UP and TRIO and opposes "the proposed changes and reductions."

GEAR UP provides competitive matching grants to states and partnerships of schools, colleges and community, business or religious groups to help middle school students prepare for college. The two TRIO programs on the chopping block, Upward Bound and Talent Search, provide outreach and support services to disadvantaged high school and college students.

But despite opposition from legislators on both sides of the aisle and many in the higher education and general education communities, Sally Stroup, the Education Department's assistant secretary for postsecondary education, said, "We have no intention of changing our budget proposal; it is what it is."

She noted that the money for the GEAR UP and TRIO programs had been folded into Bush's high school initiative (ED, Jan. 13). "If these outreach programs are working so well we assume schools will continue to work with people to keep funding alive," Stroup said.

Capitol Hill

Bill aims to prevent parents from losing custody to help children's mental needs

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, planned to reintroduce a bill Tuesday that would prevent families from having to lose custody of their children in order to give those children access to mental health services.

The bipartisan Keeping Families Together Act would help states improve communications between different agencies that serve children with mental health needs, including education, child welfare and juvenile justice. It also aims to increase home and community-based services for children with mental or emotional disorders and give states an incentive to support such services.

Collins submitted the same bill in the 108th Congress. It was sent it to the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, but the committee never took action.

House lawmakers also were expected to introduce a similar bipartisan bill Tuesday.

A 2003 report by the Government Accountability Office found at least 12,700 cases in fiscal year 2001 in which parents placed children in welfare or juvenile justice systems for the sole purpose of accessing mental health services.

Study Hall

National school arts funding policy should focus on appreciation, not just supplies

Individual benefits from arts education — from reduced stress to increased test scores — can be bolstered through more public appreciation of arts, according to a RAND Corp. study released today.

Sponsored by the Wallace Foundation, the study found strong individual experiences with art could create bonds that strengthen community and encourage greater empathy.

It advises early exposure to the arts through school programs and neighborhood art exhibitions and performances. The study also calls for more research into what researchers call art's "intrinsic benefits" including pleasure, cognitive growth and the ability to "connect people more deeply to the world."

The study, Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of Arts, is available at www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG218.

Newsmakers

Rotherham named to Virginia state board

Virginia Gov. Mark Warner has appointed Andrew Rotherham, director of the Progressive Policy Institute's 21st Century Schools Project, to the state board of education.

Rotherham will serve on the board for the next four years, helping further improve Virginia's education system.

"Virginia's public schools and universities have been very good to me, and I'm excited to have the opportunity to give something back," Rotherham said. "Gov. Warner has set a high bar for commitment to education in Virginia, and I'm honored to have the chance to help continue that work."

Funding Alert

Classes can create safe driving campaigns through Project Ignition high school fund

The National Youth Leadership Council is offering grants to high school classes to create safe driver media campaigns.

Project Ignition, cosponsored by State Farm, will provide \$2,000 grants to the 25 schools with the best student-created ideas for campaigns on safe driver issues, from seat belt use to drunken driving.

The finished projects will be judged on impact, content, originality and the quality of service-learning practice. The 10 best campaigns will be shown at the 2006 National Service-Learning Conference in Philadelphia. There, one project will be selected Best in Show, earning the school an additional \$10,000 grant from State Farm.

To find out more about the grants, see www.sfprojectignition.com.

Perkins reauthorization

Witnesses call for fully funding states' administrative costs

A plan to reduce states' administrative costs — which made it into last year's failed vocational education bill and has been reintroduced this year — drew sharp criticism from witnesses during a House Education Reform subcommittee hearing Tuesday.

Among those opposing the proposal to reduce from 5 percent to 2 percent the limit on how much federal vocational education funding states can spend on administrative duties was Patrick Ainsworth, assistant superintendent of the California Department of Education.

"The proposed reduction in state administration ... will result in a significant loss of direct support to California's schools and students," he said.

California would have to operate a "bare-bones" administration with no money to carry out monitoring or provide technical assistance as the law would require, he added.

Everything comes with a price

Delaware's associate secretary of education, Lewis Atkinson, echoed these concerns.

"My colleagues across the country and I are concerned about H.R. 366's proposed reduction of state administrative funds. ... I urge you to restore the state administrative funds from 5 percent for the larger states and raise the minimum for state administration for small states to at least \$500,000," he said.

Russ Moore, chief executive officer of the Central Educational Center in Newnan, Ga., said he supported increasing accountability, but the proposed reduction would mean fewer funds to administer reform.

"This committee has called for greater state and local accountability and flexibility, but with this new accountability comes greater expense," Moore said.

The subcommittee's ranking member, Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Calif., noted that witnesses from the home states of both subcommittee

What's at stake

Witnesses objected to a plan to cap states' administrative costs, saying it would shortchange several important duties, including:

- Monitoring.
- Technical assistance.
- Accountability.

Chairman Michael Castle, R-Del., and Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Boehner, R-Ohio, called for the full five percent.

"I hope that's a good sign," Woolsey said as Castle chuckled. "I hope that means we can restore state administrative funds."

A moot point?

The first reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act since 1998 fell short last year when the 108th Congress ran out of time.

Castle reintroduced legislation, H.R. 366, last month (ED, Jan. 27).

Meanwhile, President Bush has proposed cutting the program and folding it into his high school reform effort (ED, Feb. 8), which Woolsey said cannot be ignored.

"We need to address that and make sure what we do [on the committee] does not become moot," Woolsey said.

Castle reiterated his support for folding Tech-Prep grants into the state grant program, but assured other members that it would not mean a reduction in the Tech-Prep budget.

"Through this reauthorization, we want to ensure that all state programs incorporate important lessons learned from the former separate grant program and strengthen the ties between secondary and postsecondary education," he added.

—Stew Magnuson

NYC (continued from page 3)

Beyond New York City

Among other things, the bill would go beyond helping New York City schools, Rebell said. It would call for an additional \$8.4 billion each year so that all cities in the state would be able to provide more resources to educate their neediest children. That could be a talking point between CFE and Pataki should they seek to avoid further court action.

While vowing to appeal the order, Pataki called for a statewide solution "that will benefit children in New York City and every corner of the state."

Joseph Wayland, a New York-based lawyer

who has worked with CFE on *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York*, No. 74 (N.Y. 06/26/03), said the order has significant implications for public school students all over the state. The New York State Court of Appeals ruled in that case that the New York City schools were not receiving enough state funding to provide an adequate education.

"The opinion is another step in what is a remarkable constitutional drama playing out in the courts of New York in our lifetime," he said. "The courts are bending over backward to give the state every opportunity they can while still holding them constitutionally responsible."

—Jason Wermers

JTIA (continued from page 1)

Century Competitiveness Subcommittee markup, told *Education Daily* he probably will do so again today.

“We’re [talking] to our colleagues to develop a strategy on that. But I suspect we’ll be putting a number of them before the full committee,” he said.

Among the most likely are amendments that would:

- Add \$750 million to WIA programs (ED, Feb. 10).
- Undo provisions in the bill affirming that faith-based organizations may hire workers on a religious basis and that such practices do not constitute discrimination.

- Lift JTIA’s 30 percent cap on the proposed \$1 billion for in-school job training programs for students ages 14 to 21.

Regarding the latter, Tierney noted that there are the no such restrictions on the out-of-school jobs programs portion of the law.

“I think it ought to be a flexible situation both ways,” he said, “because there are a number of states where the schools really have good programs and are successful.”

Tierney wasn’t optimistic about passage of

GRADUATION (continued from page 1)

To be considered college-ready, a student must have received a high school diploma, scored at or above basic literacy on the NAEP reading assessment, and passed the following course requirements: four years of English, three years of math and two years each of natural science, social science and foreign language.

Based on those criteria, the number of students ready for college upon graduation rose from 25 percent to 34 percent from 1991 to 2002.

Since 1997, when results by race became available, readiness increased by 4 percent among black students, 3 percent among Hispanic students, and 2 percent among white students.

However, the number of minority students ready for college still lags far behind their white counterparts: in 2002, 40 percent of white students were deemed ready, compared to 23 percent of black students and 20 percent of Hispanic students.

Rates vary from state to state

Nationwide, the Manhattan Institute report found the graduation rate has remained steady, from 72 percent in 1991 to 71 percent in 2002. State graduation rates varied widely, however, from a high of 89 percent in New Jersey to a low of 53 percent in South Carolina in 2002.

Disparities in the graduation rates between white and minority students also remained a problem. In the class of 2002, 78 percent of white students nationwide earned a diploma, compared

Next stop: Senate

Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass., believes a Senate version of legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act will be “much improved.”

“Hopefully, that will be the [version] that carries in conference,” he said.

Sen. Michael Enzi, R-Wyo., chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, has introduced a bill, S. 9, that is expected to go before a HELP subcommittee next month.

Last year’s attempt to reach a compromise bill failed when there was no agreement on the composition of a conference committee.

any amendments. “The discipline on that side is pretty severe,” he said of the Republican-controlled committee.

He explained that re-introducing the measures “creates a record for the Senate” that there’s “a healthy number of people voting on our side, even if they are all Democrats.”

The Senate may begin work on its version next month (*see sidebar, above*).

—David Hubler

NCES method critiqued

The Manhattan Institute report critiqued the National Center for Education Statistics’ Current Population Survey, the basis of federal methods for computing completion rates, saying:

- It does not count prison or mental hospital populations, both of which include a high percentage of dropouts.
- It includes private school graduates in the rates used for public schools.
- It cannot distinguish between a diploma and a GED or other alternative certificate.
- It relies on self-reporting.

to 56 percent of black and 52 percent of Hispanic students.

The report called for an overhaul of the way the government tracks state graduation rates, calling the numbers “so improbably high that they would be laughable if the issue were not so serious.”

For example, in 2001, the National Center for Education Statistics listed the completion rate for Georgia as 71.1 percent, while the state report required by the No Child Left Behind Act lists the rate at 62 percent, and the Manhattan Institute report puts the number at 55 percent.

Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002 is available online at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_08.htm.

— Sarah Sparks