



Straight A's

Public Education Policy And Progress



FY 2005 BUDGET RELEASED: President Opens Door to High School Initiatives, but Disappoints School Districts by Underfunding NCLB

Last week, with the release of his fiscal year 2005 budget, President Bush took the next step toward fulfilling his State of the Union promise to improve education opportunities for older students. As part of the President's \$583 million *Jobs for the 21st Century* proposal, the U.S. Department of Labor would receive \$250 million for a community college initiative to train workers for jobs in high-growth fields, and the U.S. Department of Education would receive \$333 million for several small initiatives to increase the educational achievement and attainment of middle and high school students.

In addition to the Jobs for the 21st Century program, the President's proposal included a \$1 billion increase for Title I and another \$1 billion for special education. Unfortunately, the rest of the budget was largely a disappointment to the education community.

In releasing his \$2.4 trillion spending plan, President Bush said that his budget reinforces the three overriding national priorities: winning the war on terror; protecting the homeland; and strengthening the economy. Specifically, the budget increases defense spending by 7 percent and homeland security funding by 10 percent. It also proposes making the President's expiring tax cuts permanent, at a cost of \$131.6 billion over five years. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Education is slated to receive \$57.34 billion, a \$1.68 billion increase over last year. This proposed 3 percent increase, if enacted, would mark the smallest percentage increase for education since fiscal year 1996.

Once again, the President's budget fails to fully fund the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. For fiscal year 2005, *NCLB* programs would receive \$24.91 billion, an increase of \$448 million. This is still *\$9.4 billion* short of the funding authorized by Congress in the original legislative agreement. Title I funding, despite the President's proposed increase of \$1 billion, would remain at more than \$7 billion below the \$20.5 billion level authorized by *NCLB*. Currently, only 5 percent of Title I funding goes to high schools, and it is expected that any incremental increases in the program will continue to flow disproportionately to elementary schools.

The budget proposes the complete elimination of funding for thirty-eight programs in the education budget, including the Dropout Prevention program (funded at \$5 million last year), the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program (\$33.8 million), the Smaller Learning Communities program (\$174 million), Comprehensive School Reform (\$233.6 million), and the National Writing Project (\$17.9 million). In total, education programs that accounted for \$1.4 billion in spending last year have been denied funding in the President's budget.

President Bush Releases FY 2005 Budget

(Continued from p. 1)

In response to critics, **U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige** defended the President's budget for education, noting that the request would cap a five-year increase in U.S. Department of Education spending of nearly \$22 billion, or 61 percent. "President Bush has once again provided record support for our nation's students, parents, schools, and teachers," Paige said. "In the last three years, we have witnessed watershed moments in education. I believe that one day, we will look back on these years and say that this was the turning point." He noted that the \$1.7 billion increase for the U.S. Department of Education was the largest dollar increase of any domestic agency.

Read Secretary Paige's complete statement at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/02/02022004.html>.

Funding levels for all education programs are available in the U.S. Department of Education FY 2005 budget summary, available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget05/summary/05summary.pdf>.

Here is a quick look at selected federal education programs that can help middle and high school students get an excellent education, and those programs' funding levels in the President's budget.

Program	FY 2004 Funding Level	FY 2005 Bush Budget
Title I	\$12.34 Billion	\$13.34 Billion
Jobs for the 21 st Century— Department of Education component	N/A	\$333 million
Comprehensive School Reform	\$233.4 million	Eliminates program
Title II: Teacher Quality	\$2.93 Billion	\$2.93 Billion
21 st Century Learning Centers	\$999 million	\$999 million
Smaller Learning Communities	\$174 million	Eliminates program
Dropout Prevention	\$4.97 million	Eliminates program
Elementary and Secondary School Counseling	\$33.8 million	Eliminates program
National Writing Project	\$17.9 million	Eliminates program
Special Education (IDEA)	\$10.07 Billion	\$11.07 Billion
Carl D. Perkins Vocational & Technical Program	\$1.33 Billion	\$1 Billion
TRIO	\$832.6 million	\$832.6 million
GEAR UP	\$298.2 million	\$298.2 million
Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants	\$88.89 million	\$88.89 million

Source: U.S. Department of Education FY 2005 budget summary

A Closer Look at the Jobs for the 21st Century Initiative

President Bush's budget sets aside \$333 million in new funding to help ensure that all students are prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. The Striving Readers program would receive \$100 million of the total to focus on developing and implementing research-based interventions to improve the skills of teenage students who read below grade level. The U.S. Department of Education budget summary noted, "secondary school educators currently have little information to guide their decisions about which practices and programs are effective in helping to raise the reading achievement of teenage students." The Striving Readers initiative would test a variety of interventions through experimental studies to assess their effectiveness, and disseminate the results widely to schools and districts.

The Jobs for the 21st Century initiative also includes \$120 million for a new Secondary Education Mathematics program that will provide 100 to 140 competitive grants to help ensure that secondary school math teachers are highly qualified.¹ Another \$40 million would go toward an Adjunct Teacher Corps that would make approximately 60 to 100 awards to partnerships to place well-qualified individuals from business, technology, and other professions into secondary schools on an adjunct basis. Enhanced Pell Grants for State Scholars would provide \$33 million for an additional Pell award of up to \$1,000 to low-income students who participate in the State Scholars program; \$12 million would be used to increase the number of states implementing State Scholars programs, which encourage low-income students to complete a rigorous four-year course of study. The final \$28 million would go to the Advanced Placement (AP) program to ensure that teachers are well trained to teach AP and International Baccalaureate courses and to increase the rigor of the high school curriculum.



FROM THE CAPITAL TO THE CLASSROOM: Center on Education Policy Report Examines Year Two of NCLB

A new report from the Center of Education Policy (CEP) credits the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* with focusing the attention of the United States's large, decentralized education system on common goals: raising student achievement; closing achievement gaps; and improving qualifications of teachers in every classroom. However, the report also notes that many school districts experience difficulty with requirements that they perceive as being too stringent or unworkable. These problems are often magnified because of limited funding and staff in some states and school districts. The report stresses that this "capacity gap" will become even more critical as states and districts move closer to the key deadlines of the act and as more schools are identified as "in need of improvement." Ultimately, it concludes, districts and schools will need "more than federal directives and sanctions. They will also need financial and technical support from the federal government and the states."

"The law is beginning to have a significant impact not just in state capitals but in district offices and classrooms around the nation," said **Jack Jennings, director of CEP**. "While much of the debate and headlines have focused on test scores and lists of 'failing schools,' the law's requirements for additional help for schools that need it—and states' and school districts' ability to provide that support—will have a more profound and lasting effect over time."

¹ To pay for this initiative, the Bush budget proposes to transfer \$139 million from the Math and Science Partnership program, administered under the National Science Foundation, to the Mathematics and Science Partnership, administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

From the Capital to the Classroom (Continued from p. 3)

The report, *From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 2 of the No Child Left Behind Act*, describes the main aspects of *NCLB* implementation during calendar year 2003 at the federal, state, and local levels. Information in the report is based on a survey of 47 states and the District of Columbia, a nationally representative survey of 274 school districts, and in-depth case studies of 33 urban, suburban, and rural school districts.

While school districts worked hard to expand student testing, determine which schools have not made “adequate yearly progress,” and address other urgent deadlines in 2003, the report found that requirements with later deadlines—such as the mandate to upgrade teacher qualifications—have not received the same attention. Therefore, while states and districts report that an overwhelming majority of their teachers are highly qualified, these assertions are, at best, questionable.

In 2003, the second year of *NCLB*, the report found the effects of the law became “broader and deeper.” More school districts, especially suburban districts, discovered that they had schools in need of improvement. At the same time, urban and other very large districts, which already had a relatively large share, identified even more schools in need of improvement. Urban districts are twice as likely to have a school in need of improvement as their nonurban counterparts.

Although states and school districts are already providing additional help to schools designated “in need of improvement,” the CEP report notes that many school leaders are concerned that federal resources may not be sufficient to address significant staffing and funding challenges associated with the law—especially as districts move closer to the law’s next major deadlines. By the 2005–06 school year, all teachers must be “highly qualified,” and by the spring of 2014, 100 percent of students must meet proficient levels of achievement.

The complete report and case studies are available at <http://www.cep-dc.org/pubs/nclby2/>.



TURNING THE TABLES ON “OVERIDENTIFICATION”: Report Finds Limited-English-Proficient Students Underrepresented in Special Education Programs

It has been well documented that black students are overrepresented in special education programs, and historically, limited-English-proficient students sometimes were as well. But a new study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education has concluded that limited-English-proficient (LEP) students are now *underrepresented* in such programs. Nationwide, 13.5 percent of all students receive special education, but only 9.2 percent of English-language learners (ELL) do.

As reported in *Education Week*, some districts are reluctant to assign ELLs to special education classes because they fear being considered unfair or mistaking a lack of English skills for a disability. The report *Descriptive Study of Services to LEP Students and LEP Students with Disabilities* is the first to provide information about English-language learners with disabilities based on a nationally representative sample. Of the 3,852,540 limited-English-proficient students in the United States, 76.9 percent are native Spanish speakers and approximately 10 percent are students with disabilities.

Teachers need training to meet the needs of these students, but many do not receive it. Nationwide, only six of ten special education teachers who teach at least three ELL students had received relevant training in the past five years. Only one state (Illinois) provides an endorsement for teachers in both bilingual and special education.

The urgency of meeting the needs of LEP learners continues to grow. According to *Education Week*, the study showed that from 1992 to 2002 the number of students studying English as a second language in U.S. schools increased by 72 percent, while the number of teachers who had at least one such student in their classrooms more than tripled.

“This is an issue that is going to continue to face the school system. We’re unprepared,” said Leonard M. Baca, a professor in the University of Colorado at Boulder’s master’s program in bilingual special education.

For a summary of the study’s findings, visit the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition on the Web at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/miscpubs/siac/descript/part4.htm>. The full 484-page report is scheduled for posting on the site later this month.

For the referenced *Education Week* article see <http://www.edweek.com/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=18Language.h23>.



NOT YET OUT OF REACH: Milwaukee Program Works to Reintroduce Dropouts to School

To anyone who doesn’t know better, Brian Morgan could easily pass for a detective or police officer. He hits the streets daily, looking for young people, armed with nothing more than a name and a possible location.

But he’s not looking for them because they have broken the law, but because he wants to help get them back in school and on a path to success. In a recent article in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Joel Dresang profiles Morgan and **REACH-Milwaukee**, a program that works to reduce the number of high school dropouts and contribute to the economic development of the community.

Dresang notes that educating the young people of Milwaukee might very well be the greatest challenge to resurrecting Wisconsin’s economy. Of all the states, Wisconsin has the greatest achievement gap between blacks and whites in eighth-grade reading and math scores. Based on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading test, a full 58 percent of African-American students scored “below basic,” compared to 27 percent of white students.

According to **Art Rolnick, senior vice president and director of research for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis**, educated children are less likely to cause trouble and commit crimes and are more likely to become productive wage earners and taxpayers. In Wisconsin, Rolnick’s assertions are supported by statistics. While only 13 percent of Wisconsin’s adults lack a high school education, they represent 46 percent of the state’s prison population and 46 percent of the state’s welfare program participants.

Not Yet Out of Reach (Continued from p. 5)

In Milwaukee alone, nearly 89,000 residents who are twenty-five and older have less than a high school education. Dresang writes that had these individuals finished high school, Milwaukee “would have almost 2,800 more workers and \$560 million a year more in earnings, using national unemployment data and state earnings estimates based on education level.”

Today, most jobs demand strong cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills. As a result, jobs that were once available to high school dropouts are disappearing rapidly. The article cites a census report that says that in 1975, full-time year-round workers without a high school diploma made 90 percent of the earnings of a high school graduate. By 1999, “those without a high school education earned only 70 percent of those who did. Workers with a bachelor’s degree made 1.8 times the income of high school graduates in 1999, up from 1.5 in 1975.”

By enrolling in the REACH-Milwaukee program, a youth who is not currently in school can qualify for a fifteen-week free training program sponsored by the Automobile Dealers Association of Mega Milwaukee. Program participants who finish the training program often land jobs making \$13 an hour. The REACH program also can help participants pass proficiency tests and receive their high school diploma.

“Educating Youth: An Economic Challenge” is available (free registration required) at <http://www.jsonline.com/news/metro/jan04/200647.asp>.



STUDY CALLS FOR ADDITIONAL \$7 BILLION FOR “SOUND BASIC EDUCATION” FOR NEW YORK SCHOOLCHILDREN

Providing the opportunity for a “sound basic education” to every student in New York will require an additional \$6.21 billion, according to preliminary findings from a new costing-out study released last week. The study, conducted by the American Institutes for Research and Management Analysis and Planning, Inc., also recommended small class sizes, universal pre-kindergarten, and additional resources for English-language learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students.

The *New York Adequacy Study*, released by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), was a central requirement of the New York Court of Appeals ruling that threw out the state’s school-funding formula last year. The court ruled that the state had failed to ensure that students in New York City schools had the chance for a sound, basic education as guaranteed by the state constitution. **New York Governor George E. Pataki (R)** and the state legislature were ordered to fix the system by July 30, 2004.

“Delivering the promise of a sound, basic education has always been the key to securing our children’s future and now we know what it will cost,” said **Michael A. Rebell, CFE’s executive director and counsel**. “This study determines the actual costs of meeting children’s educational needs as required by the court. We invite the governor and legislature to put aside partisan politics and take this opportunity to work with us to ensure that a sound basic education is actually made available to every student in the state.”

The research team that produced the report was charged with answering the question: “What is the incremental cost of extending to all New York’s public school students an opportunity to acquire knowledge specified by Regents Learning Standards?” Over fifteen months, researchers “sought counsel from professional educators and held conversations with representatives of taxpayers, school board members, parents, legislators, and other interested constituencies.”

According to the *New York Times*, it is still unclear whether the New York Court of Appeals will back the report’s findings, or “even equate a basic education with a Regents diploma.” However, the article did suggest that the report will function as a starting point for a lively debate in the state legislature over how New York, already facing a \$5.1 billion deficit, can meet the court order. The chairman of Governor Pataki’s Commission of Educational Reform, Frank G. Zarb, has said that the legislature should take the report seriously. In addition, some of the governor’s own witnesses in the lawsuit helped to conduct the study.

Rebell has called for the funding shortfall to be phased in over the next three to four years and reiterated CFE’s call for a \$2 billion “down payment” in the state’s budget this year, an amount far greater than the \$147 million increase the governor proposed. For his part, Pataki has proposed to fix New York City schools with profits from video lottery terminals. According to Pataki, the lottery machines, once operational, are expected to generate at least \$2 billion a year.

This preliminary report of the New York Adequacy Study research team is available on the CFE Web site at <http://www.cfequity.org/>. A final, more extensive report will be released in March.

The complete *New York Times* article is available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/05/education/05school.html>.

D.C. High School Students Face Great Challenges, but Some Find *Hope in the Unseen*

Over the past year, Ballou High School in Washington, D.C., has been in the news for all the wrong reasons: fights in the halls; a temporary closing as the result of mercury stolen from a science classroom and spread around the school; and, last week, a seventeen-year-old star football player shot and killed outside the school cafeteria.

But there is another side to Ballou and its students which serves as an inspiration and example of what students in this high-poverty, urban school—and others like them—can accomplish. In *Hope in the Unseen*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Suskind tells the story of Cedric Jennings, a Ballou honor student who, after graduating at the top of his class, went on to Brown University. Cedric’s high school struggle to overcome the challenges facing a ghetto youth bent on academic achievement—including the inner-city code of youthful male behavior and a community environment that was less than supportive of his aspirations—is a must read for educators and others looking at increasing graduation rates.

The drive to succeed should not be underestimated as we work to improve our high schools. Other students at Ballou share Cedric’s goals, including one who, following the shooting, told the *Washington Post*, “I can’t be concerned about everything. I’ve got to go to school and do my work and graduate.” They deserve our support.

More detailed reviews of *Hope in the Unseen* are available at <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0767901266/103-5605984-4183847?v=glance>.

Straight A’s: Public Education Policy and Progress is a biweekly newsletter that focuses on education news and events both in Washington, D.C., and around the country. The format makes information on federal education policy accessible to everyone from elected officials and policymakers to parents and community leaders. The Alliance for Excellent Education is a nonprofit organization working to make it possible for America’s six million at-risk middle and high school students to achieve high standards and graduate prepared for college and success in life.



ALLIANCE FOR
EXCELLENT EDUCATION

1101 Vermont Ave., NW
Suite 411
Washington, DC 20005

Phone 202 842-4888
Fax 202 842-1613
Alliance@all4ed.org
www.all4ed.org

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Susan Frost, President
Jason Amos, Associate Editor

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