

EDUCATION DAILY®

The education community's independent daily news service

NCLB IMPLEMENTATION

EdTrust: English learners see spending gap

Funding gap also apparent in high-poverty, high-minority districts

By Sarah D. Sparks

Education officials and civil rights advocates laud NCLB for highlighting achievement gaps between students adept in English and those who aren't.

Yet increased attention to English-language learners has not yet translated to equal financial support, according to the 2008 annual funding report by The Education Trust.

Of eight states in which at least one in 10 students was an English learner in 2005, only one — New Mexico — did not spend hundreds or even thousands of state and local dollars less per student in districts with high concentrations of ELL students than it did in districts with few ELL students.

The spending gaps ranged from \$158 less per student in Oregon to \$4,530 less per student in Alaska. And New Mexico, the most equal, gave only \$5 more per student to districts with more ELLs.

That inequity forces schools with high concentrations of English learners to rely on federal Title III grants, which far from make up the difference; in California, for example, Title III provided only \$95 per student in 2007–08, compared to a funding gap of \$357 per student.

“We really see it as an emerging issue. As we look at the growth in ELL, there are some states that are seeing an increase from year to year of more than 20 percent,” said Carmen Arroyo, research director for EdTrust.

“There's this [overlap] between ELL, poverty and minority” populations that intensifies funding inequities.

The gap in spending for ELLs echoes continuing spending inequities for districts with high-poverty and high-minority student populations (see chart, p. 6).

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Today's Highlights

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SCHOOL SAFETY

CDC survey finds decline in school-related murders

By Sarah D. Sparks

The good news: Fewer students are dying in school-related murders now than in the 1990s. But before school officials breathe a sigh of relief, experts warn that fewer murders may not mean U.S. schools are much safer than they were before.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mortality survey released Thursday found that from 1992 to 2006, overall and single-victim school-associated student homicide rates fell from .07 to .03 per 100,000 students. Since 1999, 116 children have died in school-related violence — less than 1 percent of all school-age murders.

Murder is a key benchmark of school safety, according to Dennis White, research analyst for the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, because it has a stronger effect on the school community than other types of violence.

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Clinton, Obama back 'whole child' movement of NCLB

By Frank Wolfe

In the Democratic debate in Las Vegas on Tuesday, Sens. Hilary Clinton of New York and Barack Obama of Illinois voiced support for "whole child" measures of NCLB that would increase community involvement in students' education to improve academic achievement and career success and reduce the high minority dropout rate.

The advocacy is significant, as many education stakeholders view community involvement as crucial to move beyond what they view as NCLB's single-minded focus on testing and accountability. Indeed, Clinton's and Obama's short discourse about education was striking for its laser-like focus on nonacademic components of school success.

"You know, this has to start in the families," Clinton said. "This is what I've done for 35 years. We've got to do more to give families the tools and the support that they should have so that they can be the best parents. ... We also need more involvement from the community."

Clinton spoke of her role in partnering with the debate sponsor, 100 Black Men of America, to create in New York City an Eagle Academy for Young Men — a high school for Latino and black males. The 100 Black Men of America organization helped mentor the students.

For his part, Obama signaled that he would not use NCLB to punish schools and would not base "how we fund our schools on a standardized test."

"We need after-school programs and summer-school programs, because minority youth and poor youth are less likely to get the kind of environment and supplemental activities that they need," he said.

Obama also stressed his background as the child of a single mother who missed a father figure growing up to mentor him. "We have to have our parents take their jobs seriously — and particularly African-American fathers, who all too often are absent from the home, have not encouraged the kind of nurturing of our children that they need," Obama said. "The schools can't do it all by themselves. Parents have to parent."

Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, said Clinton's and Obama's views are likely a reflection of the strains teachers now face.

"I think what Clinton and Obama are hearing from teachers is that the teachers are doing what they can to help kids in schools, but the teachers are really feeling under strain," Jennings said. "They need help from parents and the communities."

Jennings said breaking down barriers between schools and communities requires an attitudinal shift on the part of teachers and parents, particularly minority parents who may have had bad experiences with schools in their own past.

"Teachers have to welcome parents, and parents have to feel like they can approach teachers," Jennings said. "If we ever want to close the achievement gap, we have to have community involvement in schools."

Winds of Katrina

Obama's and Clinton's support for community partnership with schools echoes comments made earlier in the week by Doris Voitier, superintendent of Chalmette, La.'s St. Bernard Parish Public Schools — a district of 4,200 students that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"In this age of accountability, the child has been left out of this entire process," Voitier said at a forum sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators. "Looking at the entire child is something we have to do."

St. Bernard schools reopened 11 weeks after the storm and became true "community schools," as they frequently became the only providers of social services. Indeed, Katrina wiped out the hospital in the district, and school administrators opened school-based health clinics, Voitier said.

In addition, St. Bernard schools partnered with area higher education institutions, including Tulane University and Louisiana State University, to address student mental health needs. St. Bernard schools also developed new after-school programs and entered into partnerships with 4-H and the New Orleans City Ballet to offer students extracurricular activities.

"We know a child performs better when his world is broadened," Voitier said.



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Funding hurdle may stunt early childhood councils

By Erin Uy

State councils dedicated to coordinating local early childhood agencies have grown in number and broadened the scope of their mission to include children beyond the early years and into adolescence, experts say.

Early childhood advisory councils are primarily state funded, but federal lawmakers have displayed support for the groups through programs such as Head Start, which includes provisions for states to establish the councils. However, a lack of Head Start funding may counter the expansion efforts of councils. Depending on the state, that can play a key role in coordinating agency services and funding streams as well as aligning program goals.

“We need our foundation programs to get more resources so states can support these programs,” said Adele Robinson, director of public policy for the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Education stakeholders are pleased federal lawmakers are urging states to establish ECACs, but states are stymied at a funding hurdle, Robinson said.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices reported in a recent survey the following statistics about ECACs:

- 31 states have at least one ECAC, and five reported they did not have one.
- About half of all ECACs report to the governor’s office, and about one-third report to

the state Legislature and/or to the state department of human services.

- About half of those 31 ECACs were established through an act of state Legislature, and about a quarter were established by executive order.

ECACs boosted in number after 2000 as states began establishing them to coordinate public early childhood education agencies, pre-K administrators, health care agencies and private sector providers. The approach aimed to establish a comprehensive system among agencies, maximize efforts and resources, and serve as a vehicle for policy change.

About half of all ECACs combine resources from several state agencies and grants and are funded at or below \$500,000. Also, about half of all ECACs identified other funding sources such as Head Start State Collaboration Office Grants and Part C of IDEA — both federal programs. But funding for ECACs from Head Start is through formula grants, and money is only allocated if available.

Phillip Lovell, vice president of education for First Focus, said the shortage in funds will likely impact the effort for councils to expand their scope of service. More than half of all ECACs coordinate with a P-16 or P-20 council, which is an example of the broad perspective child providers hold, he added.

“The 0-5 piece of the puzzle is connected to other parts of states’ child-focused efforts,” Lovell said.

“If those early investments aren’t followed up by sustained investment, the return on those early investments will diminish.”

SPECIAL EDUCATION

OSEP funds study of special ed Ph.D. programs, candidates

By Mark W. Sherman

The Education Department’s Office of Special Education Programs is funding a \$1.2 million effort to learn more about the nation’s supply of doctoral candidates in special education.

Led by Deb Deutsch Smith at Claremont Graduate University, the project will update Smith’s 2001 research that found the number of special education doctorates had fallen 30 percent since the 1980s and that a third of special education faculty positions were unfilled at any given time.

The forthcoming study aims to find out if there has been any progress, according to Smith, professor of special education and principal investigator of the *Special Education Faculty Needs Assessment*. “Stay tuned as this three-year study unfolds to see whether there is a continuing shortage of doctorates,” she said.

Each year, fewer than 300 people receive a doctorate in special education, Smith said. And not all of them go into teaching the next generation of special education teachers. Many already hold administrative positions in school districts, for example.

Smith will first try to determine how many doctoral programs exist. Some are listed in course catalogs but have no students, she said. Others are bona fide programs not labeled as special education pathways, so counting them is trickier than it seems.

Next, she will survey students working on their doctorates to obtain a sense of what they plan to do once they graduate. She said she will also look at faculty retirement patterns, “because we think it is substantial ... [and] if they’re beginning to age out, we’re going to have a bigger shortage.”

This week, members of the Higher Education Consortium for Special Education are scheduled to raise these concerns with lawmakers in Washington and to press for more money for the Personnel Preparation line item in the OSEP budget.

After all, Smith said, without enough special education faculty, it is difficult to create a corps of highly qualified teachers, required by NCLB.

“Does the nation have the capacity to prepare sufficient numbers of qualified [special ed] teachers?” she said. “We don’t know.”

Capitol Hill watch

Congress members call for science debate

Congressional lawmakers have joined a grassroots group rallying support for a presidential debate focused on science and technology issues.

So far, eight congressmen have joined Science Debate 2008, a group of Nobel laureates, business leaders, university administrators, and government and organizational leaders to persuade presidential candidates to hold a science- and technology-focused debate.

The organization believes those issues are at the core of some of the country's most important social and economic issues: economic security, energy use, health and global warming.

Congress has focused on science and technology as the key components to boosting the United State's competitiveness status, mostly recently in the America COMPETES Act.

House Committee on Science and Technology Chairman Bart Gordon, D-Tenn., announced his support this week.

"I'm confident that the same enthusiasm and coordinated effort that led to the passage of the America COMPETES Act last year will bring this debate to fruition," Gordon said in a statement.

Other Congress members to join ScienceDebate2008 are representatives Vernon Ehlers, R-Mich.; Sam Farr, D-Calif.; Wayne Gilchrest, R-Md.; Rush Holt, D-N.J.; Jay Inslee, D-Wash.; Betty McCollum, D-Minn.; and Jim Ramstad, R-Minn.

Education Department

IES rated 'outstanding' in department assessment

The Institute of Education Sciences received the highest possible rating — "outstanding" — from the Education Department in a recent annual assessment of all offices.

IES was one of two 20 ED offices in FY 2007 to earn an "outstanding" rating.

The rating system is the department's primary means of managing and tracking the performance of its primary offices and is designed to drive performance, distinguish performance among offices, and enable the alignment of offices' performance plans with ED's overarching priorities.

IES earned its outstanding rating, in part, for its intervention and reports released through the What Works Clearinghouse, the launch of the College Navigator Web site, and the release of three new publications of its *Practice Guides* series.

Across the Nation

Illinois

State to expand ACT usage

Districts in Illinois will have the option of administering the ACT college-entrance exam for all interested high school freshman and sophomores, the *Daily Herald* reported.

SCHOOL SAFETY

MURDERS (continued from page 1)

"It doesn't occur in a vacuum," he said. "What we generally mean by safety is an absence of violence, but that is not necessarily true when you consider the emotional and psychological effects of the family and friends of the victim — or the perpetrator. And publicity has a tendency to expand that network beyond those who actually knew the victim."

Safety officials also benchmark school-related murders because they are one of the few clear statistics available, said William Modzeleski, associate assistant deputy secretary for the Education Department's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

ED has fought since NCLB was signed in 2001 to get states to develop uniform, rigorous definitions of school safety, but standards vary wildly from state to state. That makes it difficult to get a clear, detailed picture of a school's safety, he said.

"It's no one indicator. If you look at what's going on in schools, you have to move beyond numbers and indicators and look at culture and climate," Modzeleski said.

He attributed lower murder rates in part to better training for educators and administrators on how to spot early warning problems, such as students who feel disconnected from school or say they don't have a trusted adult to talk to.

"At least we have a clear understanding that if we don't pay attention to the minor crimes, minor annoyances, they can escalate up to major problems," he said.

William Lassiter, manager of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence in Raleigh, N.C., agreed; his state defines and tracks 17 different offenses to create school safety profiles.

He argued that states should take as much care with standards and accountability for school safety as they do for academic progress.

"I would contend that a child who doesn't feel safe when he walks into a classroom isn't going to do well in that classroom academically," Lassiter said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report is available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5702a1.htm.

Illinois gives the ACT to all high school juniors as part of the Prairie State Achievement Examination, which is used to determine whether schools meet state and NCLB accountability benchmarks.

The program will cost between \$2.3 million and \$2.4 million, the paper reported. The state promoted the program to give students and teachers more assessment data because Illinois does not test high school freshmen and sophomores.

Massachusetts

Patrick may boost school budget

Gov. Deval Patrick next week will unveil a budget with a \$368 million boost in education, *The Boston Globe* reported.

The plan will include \$223 million for local spending, \$26 million for extended school day programs, \$23 million for pre-K, \$2 million for tutoring for struggling schools, and \$4.5 million for school improvement.

The budget increase proposal comes even as officials contemplate how to confront a \$1.3 billion deficit this year.

Though the boost would be significant, a forthcoming report from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center suggests it won't be enough to cover all of Patrick's initiatives, which include providing universal early education, free community college education, universal full-day kindergarten and extended school days, the newspaper reported.

Ohio

State associate superintendent to lead board of education

Mitchell Dan Chester, Ohio's senior associate state superintendent and a former Connecticut education official, was selected Thursday among three finalists to serve as the education commissioner for the state board of education, according to *The Boston Globe*.

The state's nine-member board voted unanimously for Chester, 55.

He stood out among the other finalists, Lowell (Mass.) Public Schools Superintendent Karla Brooks Baehr and The Wallace Foundation Education Director Richard Laine, because of his "national presence" and "local experience that's very important to people in the field," Paul Reville, state education board chairman, told the newspaper.

Among the goals Chester hopes to achieve as state education commissioner are offering higher pay for teachers in high-needs schools as a way to attract employees and extending the school year in those schools, *The Globe* reported.

Chester has also mentioned improving charter schools, which he said have not met expectations, the newspaper said.

He enters the position as the board attempts to fix problems of failing schools, low graduation rates and high school graduates unprepared for college.

Tennessee

State considers financial education class as high school requirement

A pending decision to integrate a consumer financial education class into Tennessee schools' required curriculum has received support by some area agencies.

The Tennessee Board of Education is scheduled to vote on the issue Jan. 25, which would change an elective consumer financial class into a requirement. If passed, the move would please education stakeholders who advocate for the integration of soft skill-type classes in high schools across the country.

The proposed finance class would focus on teaching topics such as money management, spending, credit, income, saving and investing.

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of East Tennessee, a nonprofit agency that offers financial advising, supports such policy that would encourage stronger consumer financial knowledge and education about personal finances — particularly for young adults who will likely play a role in Tennessee's future economy.

Newsmakers

NCTAF states post high *Quality Counts* grades

Eight states partnering with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future were rated among the top 10 by Editorial Projects in Education's annual *Quality Counts* report.

"We believe NCTAF partner states are performing well on these teaching profession indicators because they have maintained a clear, consistent and sustained focus on quality teaching in schools organized for success," NCTAF President Tom Carroll said.

Seventeen NCTAF states were in the top 25 states in *Quality Counts*. The states, in order, are: South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Ohio, Hawaii, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Missouri, Washington and New Jersey.

Upcoming Events

NCPI to host performance-pay forum

The National Center on Performance Incentives, supported by the Education Department, will bring together more than 20 of the nation's top experts of teacher performance-pay plans for a forum next month.

The keynote speakers will include Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City public schools and vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, and James W. Guthrie, director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University.

What: Policy conference: "Performance Incentives: Their Growing Impact on American K-12 Education"

When: Feb. 28-29

Where: Marriott Nashville at Vanderbilt University

For more information on the conference or to download materials, see www.performanceincentives.org/conference.

Funding gaps per state, 2005

According to the latest analysis by The Education Trust, most states made little headway on closing the gap in spending between high- and low-poverty schools and between high- and low-minority schools. The chart below lists states' status as of 2005, from those with the worst funding gaps to those who spend more per student in the highest poverty and minority schools. A negative number indicates that fewer dollars were provided to high-poverty or high-minority districts.

Hawaii was not included in the analysis because it has one school district. Figures include a 40 percent adjustment for low-income students.

State	Gap between high- and low-poverty districts	State	Gap between high- and low-poverty districts	State	Gap between high- and low-minority districts	State	Gap between high- and low-minority districts
N.Y.	-\$3,972	Idaho	-\$371	N.Y.	-\$3,544	Ala.	-\$500
Ill.	-\$2,827	Wash.	-\$292	N.H.	-\$2,332	Mich.	-\$358
Pa.	-\$1,708	Miss.	-\$267	Wyo.	-\$2,034	Okla.	-\$294
N.H.	-\$1,662	Ind.	-\$238	Ill.	-\$2,021	Va.	-\$250
National average	-\$1,532	Neb.	-\$237	Neb.	-\$1,763	Wash.	-\$167
Mich.	-\$1,388	S.D.	-\$228	Kan.	-\$1,594	Miss.	-\$166
Del.	-\$1,126	Fla.	-\$199	Mont.	-\$1,540	Vt.	-\$135
Wis.	-\$990	Conn.	-\$162	Texas	-\$1,385	Fla.	-\$133
N.C.	-\$825	Iowa	-\$157	National average	-\$1,275	N.M.	-\$126
Mont.	-\$810	Okla.	-\$72	Wis.	-\$1,221	Utah	-\$122
Mo.	-\$803	N.D.	-\$40	Colo.	-\$1,206	Tenn.	-\$81
Vt.	-\$798	Md.	-\$23	Nev.	-\$1,094	S.C.	\$81
Texas	-\$796	Ohio	\$73	Pa.	-\$1,030	Ga.	\$134
Nev.	-\$737	Tenn.	\$155	N.D.	-\$951	Ky.	\$152
Maine	-\$718	Wyo.	\$174	S.D.	-\$939	La.	\$229
Ala.	-\$692	Ark.	\$230	Del.	-\$933	W.Va.	\$238
Ariz.	-\$653	Ore.	\$381	Maine	-\$864	Ore.	\$277
R.I.	-\$653	Ky.	\$462	Idaho	-\$824	Ind.	\$428
Kan.	-\$632	N.M.	\$491	Md.	-\$803	Mo.	\$535
La.	-\$560	Mass.	\$513	N.C.	-\$738	Ark.	\$547
Va.	-\$526	Utah	\$523	R.I.	-\$716	Minn.	\$833
Colo.	-\$518	Minn.	\$1,134	Calif.	-\$661	Ohio	\$1,032
Calif.	-\$436	N.J.	\$1,918	Iowa	-\$574	Mass.	\$1,116
Ga.	-\$436	Alaska	\$5,720	Conn.	-\$563	N.J.	\$1,840
W.Va.	-\$383			Ariz.	-\$539	Alaska	\$3,952

Source: The Education Trust

GAP (continued from page 1)

EdTrust found that most states made no progress from 1999 to 2005 in closing the average \$1,500 per student gap for high poverty districts and \$1,200 per student gap for high minority districts.

Overall gaps remain

Moreover, in 16 states, including Illinois, Florida and Texas, inequalities between poor and minority districts and their whiter, wealthier

counterparts have increased during the same period. Kati Haycock, EdTrust president, said the latter trend is likely to increase as states such as New York that dedicated more money to poor and minority districts feel the budget pinch.

"As the economy worsens, policymakers are going to be seriously tempted to backpedal and take back resources and spread them all over the place rather than focusing them on education," Haycock said.

"That is going to really undercut our efforts to get all kids to high standards."