

THE SCHOOL BELL

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Accountability Measures to be Implemented as Soon as Next Year

Some of the accountability measures will happen as soon as next year, such as money for tutoring, public school choice, etc. That said, it is logistically improbable for schools to provide the supplemental services provisions that soon. According to the bill, each state must do the following before offering money to parents for tutoring: 1) The Ed Dept must put out guidance to states. 2) Each state must develop criteria, within federal parameters, setting forth what supplemental services providers must do, or what standards they must meet to be an eligible supplemental service provider. 3) Based on the State's criteria, each State must then compile a list of all possible eligible supplemental service providers. 4) Each Local Education Agency with a school in corrective action must notify parents of their option for supp services, and provide them with a list of eligible providers in the geographic area of the LEA. 5) After a parent picks a provider, the LEA must then contract with that provider to provide the actual services.

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ED BILL SIGNING SETS OFF SEISMIC SHIFT TO STATES

"Let two principles prevail - to help or at least do no harm"

Washington, D.C.- With the flourish of his presidential pen, Pres. George W. Bush set off a seismic shift of responsibility and mandates to American state governments and schools. As the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was signed into law, NEA President Bob Chase urged state lawmakers and schools to let common sense be their guide in implementing the new law to maximize, rather than reduce, student learning.

"The true test of this bill's mettle will be in the states," said Chase. "As states begin implementing the new testing provisions, policymakers must practice common sense and let two principles prevail - to help or at least do no harm."

To avoid the pitfalls many states experienced with poorly developed testing and accountability systems, NEA joined other education groups to produce a guide for state policymakers to implement quality tests. (www.aasa.org/issues_and_insights/assessment/Building_Tests.pdf) "States cannot implement tests on the cheap and expect to improve student achievement," said Chase.

Chase said the testing and accountability measures in the final package were improved significantly, focusing more on fixing problems, rather than merely labeling and abandoning the schools that need the most help. As a result, states are directed to use high quality tests and to provide parents and policymakers information that provides a more complete picture of student learning - not just one test score. "If done correctly, this is the kind of accountability that will help close the achievement gap and target action to schools that need the most help," said Chase.

With 44 states facing budget deficits, federal help in footing the extra cost of education reform is imperative. Chase urged Congress and the President to complete work in making up the special education shortfall when Congress reconvenes on January 23. "Inadequate support provided to states that are suffering severe economic decline is lamentable," said Chase. "Because the new law fails to make special education funding guaranteed, our states' ability to deliver basic support to schools and students will continue to be dramatically hampered. This bill imposes multi-year mandates on states and schools without providing multi-year funding." Congress is scheduled to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act (IDEA) this year - a prime opportunity to rescue states from a fiscal burden that hurts children and public education.

Congress' refusal to pay its pledged fair share and the current economic slump has forced states to cut more than \$11 billion from their education budgets in the past year. In response to budget cuts, schools across the nation are increasing class sizes, delaying purchases of classroom technology, and scaling back after-school classes. According to the National Governors Association, states now face a \$35 billion shortfall in the wake of a national recession.

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 2.6 million elementary and secondary teachers, college faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

Department Announces Education YES! Hearing Dates

Six public hearing dates have been scheduled by the Department of Education in order to receive substantive feedback from the public regarding the state's new school accountability system. Chief Academic Officer William Bushaw said the hearings for Education YES! A Yardstick for Excellent Schools will be extremely important as the Department moves forward with the new system. "We need to hear the public's opinion on this new framework," Bushaw said. "This system, when implemented, will use multiple measures to assess schools, rather than relying solely on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test. It's important to understand the community perspective on this proposal." The hearings are scheduled for:

January 15, 7 P.M.

Marquette

Marquette Public Schools High School

1203 W: Fair Ave.

Contact: (906) 225-4400

Gaylord

Gaylord Community Schools Middle School

600 E. 5th St.

Contact: (989) 705-3080

January 16, 7p.m.

Lansing

Lansing School District Eastern High School

220 N. Pennsylvania

Contact: (517) 325-6000

Grand Rapids

Kent Intermediate School District

2930 Knapp St. NE

Contact: (616) 364-1333

January 17, 7 P.M.

Detroit

Detroit Public Schools

Golightly Career and Technical Center

5536 Saint Antoine St.

Contact: (313) 578-0047

Saginaw

Saginaw City School District

Lifelong Learning Center

1903 S. Niagara

Contact: (989) 759-2200

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins promised to build a new accountability system for Michigan schools on June 18, Bushaw's first day on the job, after he concluded that the state's system of school accreditation was flawed.

The knowledge-based system, as it is currently presented in Education YES!, factors in multiple measures when gauging school performance. Under the plan, schools would also receive letter grades as an overall achievement indicator. Schools are expected to receive their first letter grades by spring 2003. A copy of the Education YES! report can be found by accessing the Department's web site, located at www.state.mi.us/mde.

Training Schedule 2001-2002

February 19, 2002 "Grievance Processing for Presidents and Building Reps"

February 26, 2002 "Probationary Teacher's Workshop"

March 19, 2002 "Understanding your District's Finances"

April 23, 2002 "MEA Financial Services"

May 16, 2002 "Your Legal Rights (teachers)."

All trainings will be 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the MEA office in Three Rivers. Refreshments will be provided. The MEA in Three Rivers is

committed to your professional growth and success. Don't hesitate to call with questions or for more information: 616 279 5285. See you at the office!