



Merry Christmas!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PET President Dennis Farrell

**“Teachers
By
Calling...”**

**Professionals
By
Choice!”**

**“Your
Professional
Alternative”**

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Saturday, November 15, 2008 was another exciting day in the history of Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET). Board members and state office personnel met to make strategic plans for the next five years. The day began with a review of the association's history by Walter Jewell, first PET president and current executive director. Significant contributors to PET's progress have been Bernard Bull, second PET president; Dewey Esquinance,

technology leader and long time board member; and Cathy Kolb, PET president the past four years. Much was learned from these key leaders as we began to plan for future growth and image enhancement.

Using the knowledge of how we began led us to begin determining “who we are.” We identified our mission and values as the foundation from which we should serve our membership.

PET...Who We Are.

- We are a professional association of educators that embraces the responsibility of bringing honor to the teaching profession.
- Our primary mission is to create a quality educational experience in a safe environment for our students.
- Membership benefits include excellent liability coverage and legal protection at an affordable price.
- We concentrate on education issues and the improvement of teaching and do not support compulsory membership or political endorsements.

PET...What We Value.

- PET values the intelligence of its members to make their own political and personal decisions, therefore it does not endorse or contribute to any political candidate or party, nor does it endorse, contribute to, or lobby for controversial social issues.
- PET values the professional status and professional compensation of educators, and seeks to further them.
- PET values the child and recognizes the essential duty of the teacher.
- PET values the responsibilities and rights of teachers, and provides its members guaranteed professional liability insurance and legal representation.
- PET values the right of freedom of association for teachers to belong to any or all professional education organizations of their choosing.

From this foundation, we analyzed the internal strengths and weaknesses of our organization. We then looked at the world around us (an environmental scan) to determine what opportunities and threats we saw coming our way in the future.

Having performed both the current and future analysis, we were able to identify six high potential alignments. From the six alignments, we set priorities and decided that we should move ahead on three of these. During this next year, you will see an emphasis on marketing, retention of members, and communication.

I am excited about the coming year. We are an organization built on honesty,

integrity, and the intelligence of our members. During this next year we will be communicating more with you and helping you know how you can be more involved. In addition, it is during this next year that we plan to no longer be “Tennessee’s best kept secret.”

This holiday season and looking forward to 2009 makes me think of a salutation often used by a friend in Australia. It is a warm greeting of good will. I mean this for PET and for each of you.

Good on You,

Dennis

FROM OUR EXEC...

Uncertain Times

As I write to you we are in the midst of uncertain times. The economy is in territory that it has never experienced. We certainly have had recessions and depressions as bad or worse, but this is the first one caused by the policies of a bungling Congress and an administration which thinks that it can fix anything without addressing the root cause of the problem. Where will this lead? Certainly, I do not have the answer.

I remember when the teachers where I worked were very envious of the General Motors employees in our county. They had better retirement, health care and higher wages. That envy is now gone. The teachers feel a job security because they work for the government. But, I know several state employees who feel a real insecurity in working for the government.

We will soon have new administrative leadership in Washington and this will bring about changes at the Department of Education. What changes? Will they be good or bad? Most certainly you will be working under new regulations in the near future.

At the state level the Republicans will control both houses in our state legislature for the first time since reconstruction. Certainly new changes are coming in the education climate in Tennessee. What will they be? Will they be good or bad? We shall soon see. PET will be working with those in our legislature to help make positive changes. All that

uncertainty can sure put people in an apprehensive mood. One thing you do not need to worry about is your membership in PET. Our insurance carrier is strong and well funded. I am not so certain about the TEA/NEA carrier AIG. It seems I heard something about them in the news, over-and-over. Last week, I spoke to our General Counsel and he is planning on adding another attorney to the team who is looking forward to working with PET members.

Although it gets to be more difficult each month, we are dedicated to keeping our dues low. Our costs are rising, but we realize that our members are also facing a squeeze on their finances. We hope to counter PET's financial squeeze through increased membership. The larger the membership the smaller the portion of each member's dues that must be spent for fixed costs. Good stewardship of your dues money in the past will also help us through these times. Also, remember that PET carries Identity Fraud Protection on each of our members. This is a very important benefit during these times. So while times may get rough out there, you can rest assured that PET is here to help if needed. I hope that you all have a very happy, peaceful and blessed Christmas season.

Walter Jewell

Teacher Next Door

The Teacher Next Door program was established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to offer single-family houses, townhouses and condos for sale to a teacher at a 50 percent discount. The goal through the Good Neighbor Next Door program is to encourage teachers to buy homes in low and moderate-income neighborhoods. For example, if a HUD home is listed for \$100,000, a teacher can buy it for \$50,000. To make a HUD home even more affordable, you may apply for an FHA-insured mortgage with a down-payment of only \$100 and you may finance all closing costs.

The Teacher Next Door program is open to any person "employed full-time by a public school, private school, or federal, state, county, or municipal educational agency as a state-certified classroom teacher or administrator in grades K-12." Participants must certify that they are employed by an educational agency that serves the school district/jurisdiction in which the home they are purchasing is located. A teacher wishing to purchase a home under the Teacher Next Door program must be in good standing with their employer. Your employer must certify that you are a full-time teacher or school administrator.

For more information: <http://www.fhainfo.com/teachernextdoor.htm>



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Members can help keep the publication coming on a regular basis by submitting articles and ideas. We welcome submissions by letter, email, and computer disk in .doc files.

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Chaplain's Corner

One morning while reading the newspaper Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite was shocked to find his name listed in the obituary column. It was an obvious mistake, but nonetheless, there it was. In the obituary, he was being negatively remembered as someone who had made a fortune through explosives, which were used for war. It bothered Nobel to see himself described as the "merchant of death." As a result of this experience Nobel decided to change the course of his life. He committed himself to world peace. In his will, he left most of his fortune to the establishment of an annual prize for "champions of peace" as well as awards for chemistry, physics, medicine, and literature. So, when Alfred Nobel comes to mind, do you think of dynamite or the Peace Prize?

Another man living long ago changed his negative course as well. His name was Paul, formerly known as Saul of Tarsus. As a relentless persecutor of the early church, he was determined to stop the spread of Christianity. After his dramatic conversion on the Damascus road, Paul devoted the rest of his life to preaching and teaching the Gospel, and building the church. Today, we remember him not as a persecutor but a missionary, church planter, and writer of most of the New Testament epistles.

If you were to read your obituary today, what would it say about you? How will you be remembered? It's never too late to change direction. Seek and ask God for guidance. Change is on the horizon.

Brian Wiesinger



Students' Bank Loans Money to Start Businesses

All around the world, groups of students are making a difference in the lives of others. Perhaps after reading the following information you and your students can brainstorm ways in which you might make a difference. PET would like to hear your ideas!

**Send your ideas to:
Professional Educators of TN
810 Crescent Centre Drive, Suite 130
Franklin, TN 37067**

A few hundred dollars is not enough money to start a business in most places, but in some poor countries that much money or even less can help a woman start a business that can give her a path out of poverty and change her family's life. The problem is that most banks will not loan money to low-income people. However, some banks, called *micro banks*, do give small loans to help low-income people start businesses.

Justin Blau, a student at Meadows School in Las Vegas, Nevada, learned about micro banks as he was preparing for a school debate on health conditions in poor countries. Blau decided that micro banking is a good way to help people, so he started the Meadows School Micro Bank. The bank will offer loans of several hundred dollars to women in Latin America. About 70 students have joined Blau's micro bank project. So far, they have raised \$25,000.

People say the Meadows' School Micro Bank is the first bank of its type started by students in the U.S. With loans from the micro bank, women can buy items such as a sewing machine, tortilla-making supplies, or a cow or chickens to help them make money. Loans can be used to buy all kinds of equipment and supplies or to improve health and education conditions.

MORE STUDENT SERVICE PROJECTS

- Students at Trent Lott Middle School in Pascagoula, Mississippi, participate in a different community service project each month. In September, students raised money for the local humane society. In November, students collected food for the needy and sold shirts to raise money to help injured veterans. This month, students will collect toys for Toys for Tots and visit retirement homes.
- Eighth graders at Villa Duchesne Middle School in St. Louis, Missouri, make small blankets for animals and donate them to the St. Louis Humane Society.

For more information: http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/newsforyou/pdfs/newsforyou107.pdf





GRANT OPPORTUNITIES



American Association of School Librarians: National School Library Media Program of the Year Award

The National School Library Media Program of the Year Award recognizes exemplary school library media programs that ensure students and staff are effective users of ideas and information and are fully integrated into the host school's curriculum. Maximum award: \$10,000. **Eligibility: school districts and single schools within a district - public as well as non-public - from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Deadline: Jan. 2, 2009.** <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslawards/natlsimprogram/2009nslmpy.pdf>

Outstanding Earth Science Teacher Award



National Association of Geoscience Teachers Outstanding Earth Science Teacher awards are given for exceptional contributions to the stimulation of interest in the Earth Sciences at the secondary level. Maximum award: \$500 classroom improvement funds. **Eligibility: middle and high school teachers of earth science. Deadline: Feb. 1, 2009.** <http://www.nagt.org/nagt/programs/oest.html>

ING: Unsung Heroes Awards

The ING Unsung Heroes awards program recognizes innovative and progressive thinking in education through monetary awards. Maximum award: \$25,000. **Eligibility: full-time educators, teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or classified staff members with effective projects that improve student learning at an accredited K-12 public or private school. Deadline: April 30, 2009.**

<http://www.ing-usa.com/us/stellent2/groups/dc/documents/companylobinformation/001143.pdf>

Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association: ExploraVision Awards

The Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association ExploraVision Awards Program encourages kids in all grades to create and explore a vision of future technology by combining their imaginations with the tools of science. Maximum award: \$10,000 U.S. Series EE Savings Bond; all expenses paid trip with families, mentor, and coach to Washington, DC, for a gala awards weekend in June 2009.



Eligibility: K-12 students. Deadline: Jan. 28, 2009. Read more at <http://www.exploravision.org/about/>

Cable in the Classroom: Leaders In Learning Awards



Cable in the Classroom's Leaders In Learning Awards recognize teachers, administrators, and community leaders who are helping to improve and transform education for children in and out of school, creating 21st-century learning environments that children need in order to succeed in the world that awaits them. **Maximum award: \$3,000. Eligibility: teachers, administrators, and community leaders. Deadline: Dec. 17, 2008.**

Captain Planet Foundation: Grants for the Environment

The Captain Planet Foundation funds hands-on environmental projects to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities.

Maximum award: \$2,500. Eligibility: schools and nonprofits. Deadline: Dec. 31, 2008.

Action for Nature: International Young Eco-Hero Awards

AFN International Young Eco-Hero Awards recognize the individual accomplishments of young people whose personal actions have significantly improved the environment.

Maximum award: \$500. Eligibility: youth ages 8-16. Deadline: Feb. 28, 2009.



Astronauts Memorial Foundation: Technology in Education Award

The Astronauts Memorial Foundation's Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award recognizes excellence in the development and delivery of technology programs in the classroom or in the professional development of teachers. Maximum award: \$500 and recognition at the 25th National Space Symposium in Colorado Springs, CO, March 30-April 2, 2009. **Eligibility: K-12 educators and district level personnel in the field of educational technology. Deadline: Jan. 16, 2009.**



PET MEMBER SURVEY 2008-2009 RESULTS

The following questions were on a wide variety of subjects. The wording of each question does not imply that these are the opinions of the association or leadership. Most of you strongly agreed with some of these statements and strongly disagreed with others. We must know the opinions of our members so that you will be represented properly. If there is not a clear pattern on an issue, we will not represent the association on that subject.

The results are presented in two ways. The first is the percentage of members who agree with the statement we must have at least a 70% agreement to represent this as an opinion of the association. The second number gives the strength of opinion on the issue. Ten would represent that all members strongly agree and a 0 would represent that all members strongly disagree. A five would show that the membership is completely split on that issue.

A percentage of agreement of less than 30% would be interpreted to show that we should resist those areas.

1. PET should continue the current policy of not endorsing, contributing to, or working for any candidate for public office or political party.	95.8%	9.57
2. PET should continue to refrain from endorsing, contributing to, or lobbying for issues which are not directly related to education or the profession.	100%	9.76
3. Classroom teachers should have the authority to remove a disruptive or dangerous student from their classroom until such time as appropriate action has been taken by administration and that action reported to the teacher.	97.5%	9.64
4. I support allowing PET and other non-union members to be teacher representatives on the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System board.	96.6%	9.39
5. I am aware that my PET membership includes Identity Theft Resolution Service and Identity Fraud Expense Reimbursement.	53.8%	5.88
6. I would be comfortable with a portion of my salary being based on the achievement of my students if that assessment was not based on a single test.	47.1%	5.13
7. I would be comfortable with a portion of my salary being based on the achievement of my students if that assessment was based on a single test.	10.9%	1.49
8. I am aware that in Tennessee the average salary for teachers in districts that do not have a formal negotiation process is about \$1200 per year greater than in those school districts who do have a bargained contract.	31.1%	4.44
9. I would choose an average 4% reduction in class size rather than an average 4% increase in pay and benefits. PET members were split in previous years	30.8%	4.06
10. The Tennessee legislature should allow boards of education to train and equip volunteer teachers and administrators to carry firearms to protect the students and staff in school buildings and at school functions.	38.1%	4.69
11. All Tennessee school districts should be allowed to become "Special Districts" where the school board has the power and responsibility to set the tax rate for school operations	28.6%	5.03
12. I understand that charter schools are public schools and would consider working in one if given the opportunity.	51.3%	6.27
13. The most important factor in student achievement is a knowledgeable and caring teacher.	62.2%	6.73
14. I would like to attend a multi-district PET meeting in my area.	40.3%	6.09

15. I appreciate that, should I need it, PET's insurance policy allows me to use an attorney of my choice or have PET appoint one to defend my employment rights and criminal allegations. **100% 9.66**
16. Athletics and music programs are important to the image of a school and an important part of the development of students and should not be cut because of budget issues. **85.7% 8.40**
17. I would like to meet and talk with the president of PET. **16.0% 5.06**
18. I have been told or given "rumors" or propaganda which is anti-PET this school year. **35.3% 4.27**
19. It would be disruptive in our school for PET to counter false claims and attacks by libel or slander suits against other teachers or administrators in our district. **27.7% 4.66**
20. NCLB should be scrapped and that money used to reduce the federal deficit. **53.8% 6.38**
21. I recommend PET to my friends and colleagues. **97.5% 9.22**

The following answers are in no particular order. Those answers which are **bolded** were reported most often.

22. What reasons do you hear from peers for not joining or rejoining PET?

Didn't know about PET; Owing loyalty to the union for bargaining; Don't know the officers; No representatives came to the school; They think PET is a "fly-by-night" fringe group; The union gives awards; We would lose our health insurance; **TEA has told so many bad things about PET; have always been with TEA**; No local; Burned by the unions – will not take another chance; False statements by TEA; Can't afford \$149 at one time; too much like the union; They have been told that PET is a part of NEA; No payroll deductions; Fear of harassment of non-union teachers; Union is larger; No lobbyists in Nashville; They have been told that they have to join the union; Pressure from the local union; Told that they will not get tenure; Too late to drop union membership

23. What type of professional development seminars or other programs could PET offer in your area that you would attend?

Special Education, Classroom management; Math methods; Seminar on Charter Schools; Time Management; Addressing standards with children no-where near grade level; Teaching over subject areas; Tennessee adaptation to NCLB; Guided Reading; Classroom discipline; Dealing with problem parents; Middle School Science; Writer's workshop; Internet websites like "Wikipedia", blogs, social networking; **Workshop on PET and the benefits**; School safety; Foreign language instruction; **Legal rights of teachers; Retirement seminars**; Howard Gasner; Circle of Courage Philosophy; Brain based research

24. Are there legislative concerns, not addressed in this survey, which you feel need to be addressed?

Special Education Portfolio Assessment, K-12 Physical Education, **Retirement improvement; School year beginning too early; Salary**; Integrating technology; Physical Assaults on teachers; Improvements to TVASS; Waivers for teachers being certified in different areas; Revisionist History should be replace with true history

25. When talking to colleagues about PET what features do you highlight? Mark what you believe is most important with an "A" and any others you may talk about with a "ü"

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| _that we are a much better monetary value, | Marked 92%, most important 30% |
| _that we provide our members with superior insurance and legal coverage, | Marked 83%, most important 19% |
| _that we only deal with educational issues and leave social issues to the individual, | Marked 88%, most important 26% |
| _that we do not give money or assistance to political parties or candidates. | Marked 86%, most important 25% |

If you would like to talk with the PET staff on any of these issues, please call. Thank you for your participation.



IN THE NEWS

Today's High School Students Are Less Likely to Graduate

A study by the Education Trust indicates that American students today are less likely than their parents to graduate from high school, the Associated Press reports, making the United States the only industrialized nation where that is the case. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, states are required to meet graduation targets every year, but states set the targets themselves and they set them low. Bob Balfanz, a researcher at Johns

Hopkins University, explained that state and school officials required to improve test scores to avoid penalties got a break on graduation rates and seized it. "A lot of states said, 'Well, we're under a lot of pressure; let's not make this too hard on ourselves,' " Balfanz says. "They were given a loophole, and they took it." Meanwhile, lax tracking of who actually graduated was found to be masking the

dropout crisis. The federal government is expected to mandate soon that states use a common tracking system, and schools will be judged not only on their overall graduation rates but also on the percentage of black and Hispanic students who graduate. Among minority students, more than one in three drops out of school.

Read more at: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/front/6074145.html>

High Dropout Rate Adding to Economic Concerns

The nation's "persistently high" high school dropout rate is adding to concerns about the growing economic crisis, the Wall Street Journal reports. According to a recent study by the nonprofit America's Promise, only about 70 per cent of public high school students graduate in four years, with only 52 percent in the 50 largest cities doing so. The study says a 50-percent reduction in the number of dropouts would generate an additional \$45 billion a year in tax revenue. Marguerite Kondracke, president of America's Promise, calls dropouts "our next class of nonperforming assets." Public officials also are worried about rising costs for social programs and the criminal justice system, where dropouts account for 75 percent of state prison inmates. **Read more at:** http://online.wsj.com/SB12245501316article/84522477.htmlmod=rss_what's_news_us

Chronic Absenteeism in NYC Elementary Schools

"While New York City has long struggled with attendance problems in the high schools and middle schools, problems at the elementary schools have been largely overlooked until now," says the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School in releasing a report about chronic absenteeism in the lower grades. Last year, according to the report, more than 90,000 children in grades K-5 had more than 20 percent of enrollment miss at least one month of school, and the proportion approached one-third of the students in high-poverty neighborhoods.

The report details how chronic absenteeism at an early age can signal "much more serious problems in a family, such as domestic violence, child abuse, mental illness, and criminal justice system involvement, all commonly associated with child welfare involvement." It calls for attacking the problem with strong partnerships involving public schools, community organizations, and other institutions, and it suggests an approach for "targeting schools with the greatest need, including a possible structure for supporting practical assessments."

See the report at: <http://www.newschool.edu/Milano/nyc affairs/documents/StrengtheningSchoolsOct08.pdf>

Online Data Tracking Changes the Grading Dynamic

The advent of grade-tracking programs that students and parents can monitor online is changing the nature of interactions between parents, students, and teachers, the Washington Post reports. Users can log in to see fluctuations in grade point average, and students can use the program to calculate by what amount they need to raise

their grades, or gauge the impact of a bad test or quiz. Since parents can keep abreast of their child's progress, parent-teacher conferences are no longer the setting for unpleasant surprises. On the other hand, the programs provide ample ground for the over-controlling tendencies of some parents. The service is a by product

of the move by most districts toward tracking and controlling student data to pinpoint areas of weakness and achievement, in response to the data emphases of the No Child Left Behind Act. In addition to reviewing grades, many programs allow students to download homework assignments or chat with teachers online.

Read more at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/11/02/AR2008110202054.html>

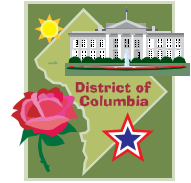


D.C. Chancellor and Mayor Plan to Improve Schools

The Washington Post reports that D.C. Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee and Mayor Adrian Fenty may seek federal legislation declaring the D.C. schools to be in a "state of emergency," a dramatic gambit that would eliminate the need to bargain with the Washington Teachers' Union and allow them to build a system essentially from scratch, much as has happened in New Orleans. The proposals were contained in a draft statement that Rhee and

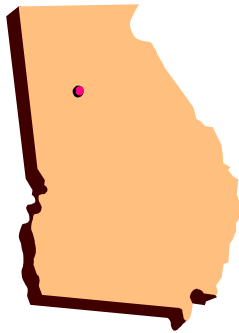
Fenty had been slated to deliver in late September, but their news conference was cancelled and its proposals never made public. The Post obtained the draft statement via the Freedom of Information Act. The draft also states that Rhee intends to explore local and federal legislation to assume the power to create charter and "autonomous" schools operated by the District, in which staff and parents would have a higher degree of freedom to shape

academic programs. This power had been held by the D.C. School Board but lapsed with the mayoral takeover of the school system last year. Union leaders doubt these ideas can gain traction in the current political environment.



For more information: http://www.washingtonpost.com/pdyn/content/article/2008/11/15/AR2008111502456_2.html

Georgia Backs Off Class Size Mandate



Budgetary concerns have led state officials in Georgia to pull back from enforcing a Truth in Class Size law enacted two years ago. Back then, notes the Macon Telegraph, Gov. Sonny Perdue was threatening to withhold funding from any school districts that failed to comply with the law, which called on schools to limit class sizes to 20 students for kindergarten, 21 students for grades 1-4, and 28 students for grades 4-8. Now, however, Perdue has asked the state education board to "grant all reasonable class-size waiver requests" during the next two years. Said Superintendent Sharon Patterson of the Bibb County schools: "If we go over one student, we're expected to hire one extra teacher. It's money that is not available."

Read more at: <http://www.macon.com/198/story/495085.html>

Research Suggests Comprehensive Teacher Inductions Have Little Effect in 1st Year

A new study published by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. concludes that more intensive and expensive mentoring and professional development for new teachers has little impact on teacher retention, classroom practice, or student achievement in the teacher's first year. The large-scale randomized controlled study of the effects of two comprehensive teacher induction programs involved 1,009 teachers in 418 elementary schools in 17 medium and large urban school districts in 13 states. According to Mathematica, "comprehensive teacher induction provides novice teachers with carefully selected and trained full-time mentors; a curriculum of intensive and structured support that includes orientation, professional

development, and weekly meetings with mentors; a focus on instruction, with opportunities to observe experienced teachers; formative assessment tools that permit ongoing evaluation of practice and constructive feedback; and outreach to school-based administrators to enlist their support for the program." Though treatment group teachers spent significantly more time in induction activities, the impact of this was not discernable when compared with the group of teachers who were inducted in the prevailing method of their district. The report cautions, however, that these results only apply to teachers' first year, and further data will be collected for two more years to analyze longer-term impact.

See the report at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094034.asp>



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

New Rules Aimed at Highlighting, Improving Low Graduation Rates

By Maria Glod, Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, October 29, 2008; Page A15

New federal rules made final yesterday will tighten enforcement of the No Child Left Behind law, including requiring schools nationwide to use a single formula to calculate high school graduation rates. The administrative change was one of several the Bush administration has put in place in an effort to put a final stamp on the 2002 education law considered one of the president's most significant domestic initiatives. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, speaking yesterday after a visit to a high school in Columbia, S.C., said she took action because renewal of the law has stalled in Congress.

"We're still having school this year and next year," Spellings said. "And while I'm confident that the Congress will get this work done eventually, I think my responsibility is to make sure that these policies and these laws are in good shape when I leave the Department of Education." In the most significant shift, states must begin using a single graduation-rate formula, which counts the percentage of ninth-graders who earn a diploma within four years, by 2011. Spellings said the uniformity is intended to shine a light on the nation's dropout problem and force schools to take steps to ensure that more students earn diplomas.

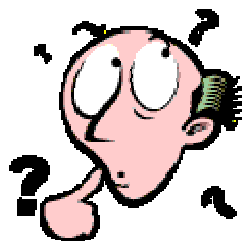
The new rules also require officials at low-performing schools to better inform parents about a key requirement of the law -- that certain children must be given an opportunity to participate in government-funded tutoring or the chance to transfer to a higher-performing school. National Education Association officials, who have been critical of the federal law, said the administration should not tinker with regulations in its waning days. "The next president of the United States and the next secretary of education deserve the right to work with the next Congress and leave his or her mark on federal education policy, not have their hands tied by ill-timed and piecemeal changes," NEA President Dennis Van Roekel said.

But the new rules earned praise from both sides of the aisle. Melissa Wagoner, spokeswoman for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), said the changes would "allow schools to innovate while Congress works on new legislation to improve and strengthen the No Child Left Behind law." Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (Calif.), the top Republican on the House education committee, said the new rules would help parents with children in low-performing schools seek options. "While hundreds of thousands of students have already been able to take advantage of these new choices, many more stand to benefit from the reforms outlined today," McKeon said.

Sudoku

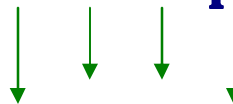
The objective of Sudoku is to enter a digit from 1 through 9 in each cell, in such a way that:

- Each horizontal row contains each digit once
- Each vertical column contains each digit once
- Each sub grid or region contains each digit once



				9	7		2	
	8	2	5	6			4	
7				8		6	1	3
	3	4	8	1		2	9	
	1			4			3	
	6	7		3	5	4	8	
4	7	9		2				8
	5			7	9	3	6	
	2		1	5				

Need Help?



SOLUTION:

4	7	9	8	5	1	3	2	6
2	9	3	6	7	4	1	5	8
8	5	1	3	2	9	6	7	4
1	8	4	5	3	9	7	9	2
9	3	5	2	4	7	8	1	6
7	6	2	9	1	8	4	3	5
3	1	9	4	8	2	5	6	7
9	4	7	1	9	5	2	8	3
5	2	8	7	9	3	6	4	1

THE MOORE SCHOOL LAW REPORT

DR. RICHARD MOORE



BITS & PIECES 1. Were you a participant in any interesting or bizarre fieldtrips when you were in the first grade? Well, have you heard the latest from California? Eighteen first-graders (ages 5 and 6) took a fieldtrip on a bus to city hall in San Francisco to attend the wedding of their teacher and her lesbian partner. The mayor of the city officiated over the event. The principal said the trip was “a teachable moment”. Others in the community are calling it an “indoctrination of young children” and “inappropriate.” www.onenewsnow.com, 10-15-08



2. A high school student in Dallas, Texas, was initially refused the right to wear her rosary with a cross, but the school district has changed its position. School officials believed her rosary and cross constituted a gang symbol. The Dallas Police Department stated that a rosary is not a gang symbol, except when it is accompanied by other gang related symbols. The student wore none of the other gang related items. The school district was threatened with a lawsuit for religious discrimination. www.onenewsnow.com, 10-6-08

3. A Connecticut second-grade teacher resigned after she and her husband appeared on The Howard Stern Show. She and her husband competed against two other couples in an “Ugliest Guy and Hottest Wife” contest and won \$5000. The teacher wore a bikini and made sexual comments about her husband during the taping. The teacher, Marie Jarry, plans to sue to regain her job. Jarry said she made a mistake when she took a sick day to be on the show, but she said she did nothing peculiar on the show. Jarry planned to use the prize money to complete her master’s degree. The teacher alleges that the union lawyer told her the district was threatening immediate suspension and would begin termination if she did not resign. She stated that she was further told that the district could have her arrested for fraud and could have her teacher’s license revoked. Jarry called Stern about the punishment and he informed her that the person financing the contest would give up to \$5000 more for her to fight the resignation. www.myrecordjournal.com, 5-30-08, www.wfsb.com, 9-17-08

Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles

Issued by the U.S. Department of Education, June 1998; Part II*



Teaching about religion: Public schools may not provide religious instruction, but they may teach *about* religion, including the Bible or other scripture: the history of religion, comparative religion, including the Bible (or other scripture)-as-literature, and the role of religion in the history of the United States and other countries all are permissible public school subjects. Similarly, it is permissible to consider religious influences on art, music, literature, social studies. Although public schools may teach about religious holidays, including their religious aspects, and may celebrate the secular aspects of holidays, schools may not observe holidays as religious events or promote such an observance by students.

Student assignments: Students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.



Religious literature: Students have the right to distribute religious literature to their schoolmates on the same terms as they are permitted to distribute other literature that is unrelated to school curriculum or activities. Schools may impose the same reasonable time, place, and manner or other constitutional restrictions on distribution of religious literature for special regulation.

Students garb: Schools enjoy substantial discretion in adopting policies relating to student dress and school uniforms. Students generally have no Federal right to be exempted from religiously-neutral and generally applicable school dress rules based on their religious attire in general, or attire of a particular religion, for prohibition or regulation. Students may display religious messages on items of clothing to the same extent that they are permitted to display other comparable messages. Religious messages may not be singled out for suppression, but rather are subject to the same rules as generally apply to comparable messages.

*For more USDOE guidelines as well as legal documentation on religious holidays, refer to the Thanksgiving and the Easter card.

Important Information For The College Bound Student

STUDENT LOAN ACCESS

The Department's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) has developed a new website to publish and disseminate information about the agency's authority to purchase federal student loans under the *Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act*. The latest post a *Federal Register* notice, outlines the final terms and conditions under which the agency will buy loans made by lenders who are unable to sell them to other investors. The terms are consistent with those the department unveiled in May, as part of a broader, four-part plan (<http://www.ed.gov/students/college/aid/loans.html>) to ensure students will be able to access the federal student loans in the 2008-09 academic year. Want more details? FSA is facilitating a series of live, Internet-based briefings (or webinars) on the department's purchasing authority and, specifically, the plan to implement that authority. **Read more at: <http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/ffelp/>.**



*****Remember getting started early is the best way to attain financial aid.**
***** Many scholarships and grants have deadline dates or are first come first served!**



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