

Week of October 15, 2007

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATORS CITE NCLB'S FLAWS

It appears the yellow brick road leading to re-authorizations of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) will run through California, writes **David Hoff** of Education Week. In addition to the 50 U.S. House of Representatives members, the chairman and senior Republican on the House's education committee and Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** represent California. This invariably places added importance on the politics within the state, and how those constituents and their locally elected officials view NCLB. A recent joint resolution, which passed both chambers of the California legislature, includes typical complaints of the law, stating it isn't flexible enough, is inadequately funded, and places too much importance on reading and math scores. However, the resolution adds additional "wants" to the litany of necessary reforms, namely that parents should be allowed to remove their children from NCLB testing, without the schools falling prey to the accountability systems. In addition to this resolution, a letter, vehement in its opposition to any merit pay plan, signed by some state legislators was recently sent to Pelosi. Unfortunately for the U.S. and California, there doesn't appear to be a wizard anywhere on the path to reauthorization.

Read Article –

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/NCLBActII/2007/10/california_legislators_speak_o.html

S.C. PIONEERS IN SINGLE GENDER CLASSES

Boys and girls are usually seen as different entities requiring different needs, especially when compared to planets (Venus, Mars, etc.). One educator, **David Chadwell**, believes this extends to learning styles and therefore thinks that the best way to engage and educate students is to do so in classrooms tailored to each gender, reports **Seanna Adcox** of the Associated Press. Chadwell, the country's first and only statewide coordinator of single-gender education, wants South Carolina to lead the country in offering single gender programs, and new rules under the No Child Left Behind Act have made it easier to implement same sex education. Chadwell believes that separating the sexes, especially during the middle school years, can free children of self-doubt and peer pressure and provide lessons geared uniquely to that sex. Boys don't appear to hear as well as girls and thus would be taught through microphones. Boys also tend to have more difficulty paying attention, so teachers would incorporate movement into a lesson, such as throwing a ball to a student who has been called upon. South Carolina teachers in all-girl classrooms have learned to speak more softly, as girls tend to take yelling more personally. In some South Carolina schools, boys learn algebra through skateboard parts and measuring tape, while girls learn fractions by interviewing each other and using their surveys to determine the fraction of girls who have dogs. While same sex education seems to be an interesting phenomenon, there are detractors. **Kim Gandy**, president of the National Organization of Women, questions whether single gender programs' successes are due simply to good teachers and smaller classes, not sex segregation. However, a Columbia, S.C. parent, who was initially hesitant about same sex education, said his daughter has flourished because she wasn't self-conscious of boys' opinions of her, and consequently became more engaged in school activities and has gained additional confidence. **Quinn Martin**, an eighth-grade boy, said he started making the honor role after entering an all-boys program, saying "it's easier to learn." Still, there is one undeniable benefit to same-sex education: less hair pulling.

Read Article - <http://www.abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=3671737>