



# THE ACHIEVER

## STATE OF FLEXIBILITY

As of last week, 11 states have applied for State-Flex authority. Those states are **Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas.** For those of you who live in one of these states, this means that your state education leaders have applied to take advantage of one of the new flexibility provisions provided by *No Child Left Behind*. State-Flex gives expanded decision-making authority to the states and local districts. Participating state leaders would have the authority to consolidate funds under a number of federal programs in order to support their communities' unique needs for making schools better and for improving academic achievement.

See our new Power Point presentation on standards & assessment, *Closing the Achievement Gap*, at [www.nclb.gov/next/closing/index.html](http://www.nclb.gov/next/closing/index.html)

## READY TO READ, READY TO LEARN

The next Satellite Town Meeting, scheduled for May 21, 8-9pm EST, calls attention to the science and seriousness of early childhood development. During the hour, Under Secretary of Education, Gene Hickok, and his guests, including Dr. Susan Neuman, Assistant Secretary for Secondary and Elementary Education and a noted early childhood researcher, will discuss such issues as: (1) What effective preschool, Head Start programs and other child care programs look like; (2) What do teachers, parents and grandparents, and child care providers need to know to prepare children to be successful in school; and (3) How early childhood programs can meet the needs of all children no matter how diverse their backgrounds. For more information, please visit: <http://registerevent.ed.gov>.

### QUICK TIP

Helping children become better readers includes making sure they have plenty of opportunities to have conversations with adults. Research shows that children gain important language skills from conversing. It is never too early to talk with children, including babies and toddlers.



Engage the children around you in conversation. For example, "Tell me about the house you drew." Help children expand their vocabularies. One easy way to do this is by talking about things you see during every day activities. For example, "Look at all the vegetables at the store this morning. Let's see how many we can name."



Always do your best to answer a child's question. Sometimes this can be difficult if you are tired or busy. Try to find encouragement from knowing that you are helping the child acquire the basic language skills he or she needs in order to read well.

## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AT SCHOOL

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Department officials are working with state and local educational, health, emergency management, law enforcement and homeland defense agencies to ensure that schools are prepared to respond to any terrorist attack. The Education Department wants to ensure that the appropriate officials in your community know how to recognize a threat and how to respond in the event of an attack.

Department officials are also working with the Secret Service to provide useful information to school administrators, educators, law enforcement professionals and others who have protective and safety responsibilities in schools to assist them in preventing incidents of school violence. To request a copy of the Safe School Initiative's final report, please contact: **1-800-USA-LEARN**.

## U.S. HISTORY RESULTS

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According to the 2001 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the results of which were published recently, the average scores of the nation's fourth, eighth and twelfth-graders are low. The good news is that although scores are not where we would like them to be, fourth and eighth-graders have shown some improvement since 1994. Twelfth-graders, however, have not. The percentage of twelfth-graders who scored "Below Basic" in history fell from 36 percent in 1994 to 33 percent in 2001. For more information, please visit

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ushistory/results/>.

## MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

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Secretary Paige requests that you observe the National Moment of Remembrance, honoring those who have died in service to our great country, by pausing for a moment of silence at 3pm EST, May 27<sup>th</sup>.



### SNACKS FOR GROWING BRAINS

How do clouds form?

As warm air passes over the ocean or large open lakes, the air picks up water vapor. As the air warms, it rises because warm air is less dense than cold air. As the warm air rises, the air cools and the water vapor in the air condenses to form clouds of water droplets. Clouds that form at the surface of the Earth are known as fog.

The \_\_\_\_\_ are the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

- A. Watergate Papers
- B. Bill of Rights
- C. Federalists Papers

*We hope you find the No Child Left Behind e-newsletter of interest. We will be sending these out regularly. You can also check out our website, which is updated daily, and serves as a one-stop shop for parents and families, teachers and principals, local and state officials, and members of the business and civic communities. If you have any questions or suggestions about topics you would like to know more about, please e-mail [nochildleftbehind@ed.gov](mailto:nochildleftbehind@ed.gov). If you would like to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please e-mail [listproc@inet.ed.gov](mailto:listproc@inet.ed.gov), and write this message: unsubscribe NoChildLeftBehind.*