

Rural Education Updates from the U.S. Department of Education

Partners and Friends,

Welcome to the Education Almanac, rural updates from the U.S. Department of Education. Each month, the Office of Rural and Community Engagement at the U.S. Department of Education highlights opportunities, events, news, and other information relevant to rural schools and communities. We will also feature schools and leaders who are rethinking education in order to make a positive difference in rural students' lives. We welcome your feedback and questions. Please feel free to share them to rural@ed.gov.

Thank you,

Michael Chamberlain

Office of Rural and Community Engagement

U.S. Department of Education

Opportunities from ED

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) State Grant is a discretionary grant program that encourages eligible entities to provide support, and maintain a commitment to eligible low-income students, including students with disabilities, to assist the students in obtaining a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) and to prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education. The application deadline is August 7, 2019.

The State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP): Tribal Education Agency Development Discretionary Grant Program is designed to promote Tribal self-determination in education; improve the academic achievement of Indian children and youth; and promote the coordination and collaboration of Tribal educational agencies with SEAs and LEAs to meet the unique education and culturally related academic needs of Indian students. The application deadline is August 12, 2019.

The \$5 million Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant Program provides grants to SEAs to support model programs that enable a student from a low-income family who has experienced trauma that negatively affects the student's educational experience to access trauma-specific mental health services. The applications deadline is August 14, 2019. For additional information, please see the program webinar or contact TraumaRecovery@ed.gov.

The Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant Program provides competitive grants to support and demonstrate innovative partnerships to train school-based mental health services providers for employment in schools and LEAs. LEAs that meet the eligibility requirements for the Small, Rural School Achievement program or the Rural and Low-Income Schools program are among those that qualify as high-need LEAs. The application deadline is August 15, 2019.

American History and Civics Education: National Convenings is a program from the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership with the Department. This is a special funding opportunity to bring together educators, researchers, and other practitioners to assess how American history, civics, and government are taught in K-12 education, with the goal of spotlighting innovative approaches, learning strategies, and professional development practices. The application deadline is August 12, 2019.

Serve as a Peer Reviewer!

The Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant Program is currently recruiting qualified peer reviewers. If you're interested in becoming a peer reviewer please submit your resume to traumarecovery@ed.gov.

The Institute of Education Sciences now has a new online Peer Reviewer Recruitment form. All STEM education experts are encouraged to consider signing up to become a peer reviewer!

The Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) is always looking for peer reviewers (especially in STEM) in order to identify the most qualified grant applicants. Read the FAQs to apply to be a peer reviewer for OPE. If you have a program preference, please indicate it.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities – Competitions Opening Soon!

IES Research Funding Opportunities On-Demand Webinars

The Institute of Education Sciences is hosting a series of on-demand webinars for those interested in fiscal year 2020 funding opportunities. The webinars are presented by staff from the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) and the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and resources include presentations, transcripts, and closed-caption video recordings. For more information on specific competitions, visit the IES funding opportunities website.

Department News

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION BETSY DEVOS TRAVELS TO NORTH CAROLINA AND SOUTH CAROLINA TO SUPPORT EDUCATION FREEDOM SCHOLARSHIPS, AMERICAN WORKERS

Secretary DeVos recently traveled to North Carolina and South Carolina to promote education freedom and workforce development.

She joined North Carolina Lt. Gov. Dan Forest on July 17 for a roundtable discussion on how Education Freedom Scholarships (EFS) can assist students. The following day in South Carolina, the Secretary, Gov. Henry McMaster and Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman held another roundtable discussion on how these scholarships can enhance education opportunities in South Carolina.

In South Carolina, Secretary DeVos also commemorated the one-year anniversary of President Trump's Pledge to America's Workers by visiting Nephron Pharmaceuticals in West Columbia. Nephron has hired

400 new workers since becoming one of the 280 companies who have signed the pledge and committed to create more than 10 million employment opportunities over the next five years. While on site the Secretary revealed that five additional South Carolina companies had signed on.

SECRETARY DEVOS ATTENDS PARENTS CHALLENGE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Secretary DeVos earlier traveled to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to highlight the Department's commitments to rethinking education for all students and promoting education freedom at the Parents Challenge 20th Anniversary Celebration. Parents Challenge provides scholarships for local students to attend public and private schools.

DeVos offered remarks and participated in a panel discussion titled "Why Choice Matters." She described Education Freedom Scholarships as "the biggest, boldest plan yet for students" in her remarks. "It's a federal tax credit that doesn't grow the federal government in any way," she explained. "Instead, it fuels states to develop more opportunities for their students. I believe education freedom is the most meaningful way we can improve student achievement in this country."

BOB KING CONFIRMED AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR THE OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

On July 11, the U.S. Senate confirmed Bob King as the Department's assistant secretary for the Office of Postsecondary Education. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos congratulated King, stating that "his knowledge and expertise will be a tremendous asset as we continue to rethink higher education in order to better serve all students and prepare them for successful lives and careers."

Most recently, King was president of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. His previous positions include chancellor of the State University of New York system and president and CEO of the Arizona Community Foundation. He earned a law degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law and served three terms in the New York State Legislature.

ESSA UPDATE: INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Secretary DeVos recently approved two additional states, Georgia and North Carolina, to assess student achievement in new, creative ways. The Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority pilot, part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is designed to encourage local involvement in the development of the next generation of assessments. Under this program, states can try out new and innovative assessments on a small scale, avoid double-testing students on both statewide and pilot exams and devise strategies for implementing such assessments statewide over time.

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT

Antoinette Love was not only accepted into a record-setting 116 colleges and universities and awarded over \$3.7 million in scholarships, she is also a first-generation college student who inspired her father to go back to school.

NEW ED-FUNDED PBS KIDS TV SHOW “MOLLY OF DENALI” HIGHLIGHTS RURAL ALASKA NATIVE CULTURE

The Department’s Ready to Learn Television program recently provided funding that helped develop a new PBS KIDS show that is the first ever nationally distributed children’s show with an Alaska Native lead character. The series, titled Molly of Denali, premiered on July 15 and showcases aspects of Alaska native culture as well as daily life in rural Alaska. WGBH Boston produces the show and involves more than 60 Alaska Natives in every aspect of development and production. Along with other Ready to Learn programs, Molly of Denali is designed to teach children about informational text, which is a fundamental component of literacy education.

SECRETARY DEVOS’ OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS REFORMS ARE DRIVING RESULTS FOR STUDENTS

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education has released new data showing that students who file civil rights complaints under U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos’ leadership are served more efficiently and effectively than students who filed civil rights complaints during the previous administration. OCR has, on average, resolved almost double the number of civil rights complaints per year compared to the prior eight fiscal years. Additionally, OCR has achieved a 60 percent increase in the number of complaint resolutions that required schools to make changes to protect students’ civil rights.

“The backlog of cases we inherited should have troubled everyone, as we know justice delayed is justice denied.” Secretary DeVos said. “While many have tried to distort the nature of our approach, the numbers tell the truth. Our approach has been more effective at supporting students and delivering meaningful results.”

A NEW ERA IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

July 1 marked the beginning of a new era in career and technical education (CTE) as states began to implement the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). Perkins V will provide nearly \$1.3 billion to states, school districts, and community colleges this year alone for career and technical education initiatives. The new law gives local leaders greater freedom and flexibility than ever before to decide how best to use the federal investment in CTE to prepare young people and adults for careers.

To date, the Department has received, reviewed, and approved every state’s Perkins V one-year transition plan. Full four-year Perkins V state plans are due to the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education in April 2020.

DEPARTMENT LEADS RURAL CHARTER SCHOOL SESSION

Annie Hsiao of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and Michael Chamberlain of the Office of Rural and Community Engagement led the Rural Homeroom discussion at the National Charter School Conference in Las Vegas, NV on July 1. Rural charter school leaders from across the country shared their experiences in providing opportunities for rural students to succeed.

ORCE ADDRESSES PANHANDLE AREA EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

ORCE's Michael Chamberlain updated the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium's (PAEC) 52nd Annual Leadership Conference, held in Miramar Beach, Florida, July 23-24 on ED programs and initiatives, such as EFS and Perkins V. The presentation also included a discussion of the new Disaster Recovery Unit in OESE. Many PAEC districts were dramatically impacted by Hurricane Michael in October 2018.

Upcoming Events

FSA PARTNER SUMMIT – APPALACHIAN REGION

On Thursday, September 26, 2019, Federal Student Aid (FSA), in collaboration with Morehead State University and the Appalachian Education and Workforce Network, will host the 1st FSA Partner Summit in the Appalachian region.

The event will bring together partners from key organizations, institutions, and agencies in the Appalachian region to gain new knowledge about financial aid initiatives in support of individuals who want to pursue post-secondary education by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. If you are interested in attending this event, please send your contact information (first name, last name and email address) to Maisha.Challenger@ed.gov.

REGISTER NOW FOR HBCU WEEK CONFERENCE

Registration is now open for the 2019 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week Conference, September 8-12 in Washington, D.C. Presidents and other representatives from HBCUs, federal agencies, corporations, and foundations will participate in discussions on significant issues of interest to the HBCU community.

Rural News

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REQUESTS APPLICATIONS FOR TRIBAL COLLEGES RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

The Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program was designed to assist Tribal Colleges in building institutional research capacity through applied projects that address student educational needs and meet community, reservation or regional challenges. It is a competitive program through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Eligible institutions may propose projects in any discipline of the food, agricultural or natural resource sciences. The closing date is August 9, 2019.

FROM THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION OFFERS PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is currently seeking proposals from eligible organizations to partner on a new high school entrepreneurship summer program. The program will provide comprehensive entrepreneurial training and supportive services to selected high school students who will be seniors during the 2020–2021 academic year. Read the Request for Proposals, which must be submitted by close of business on the newly extended deadline of September 6, 2019.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR ARC'S ANNUAL SUMMIT

Innovative ideas. Productive partnerships. Local leadership. These are some of the strategies hundreds of Appalachia's leaders, thinkers, and doers will be discussing at what is shaping up to be the biggest ARC Annual Summit to date. Register now to join the conversation! Some sessions are already sold out!

News from the Field

RURAL MONTANA STUDENTS BECOME CITIZEN-SCIENTISTS THROUGH PLACE-BASED LEARNING

Six Montana students are warmed by a campfire with their teacher, Judy Boyle, and some of their parents who have come along on the “field study trip.” The students, ranging from first to seventh grade, journal about the symbiotic relationships and geothermal features they observed and recorded during the day. Place-based education is one way Boyle enables her students to engage with science, their natural environment and community.

“Place-based learning is taking your students out in the real world,” Boyle said. “It’s the real-world application of what they’re doing in school.”

Read more about this innovative school in rural Montana.

Share and Connect

Find more information and updates on rural education at the Department’s Rural Education Resource Center.

Do you know of a rural school or school leader whose innovative approach would be a great fit for our Rethinking School feature? Do you have a story to share? Do you have friends or colleagues who would be interested in receiving the Education Almanac? You can connect with us at rural@ed.gov.

All the Best,

Office of Rural and Community Engagement

U.S. Department of Education

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