Nominations for the Crystal Star Awards are now open.

Top Stories
Up to 40% of the students who do not graduate from high school can be identified as early as the sixth grade. http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/living/education/11154763.htm

The U.S. Department of Education is restructuring.
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/03/04/26eddept_web.h24.html

A new survey has found that nine of every ten principals consider education graduates unprepared for what awaits them in the classroom. http://www.edschools.org/reports_leaders.htm

Funding Sources
CDW-G and Discovery are giving away three wireless computer labs plus 30 additional technology prizes. Deadline: May 1, 2005. http://www.discoveryschool.com/cdwg

The ING Unsung Heroes awards program is designed to recognize classroom heroes who "take teaching to new heights and make learning fun." Deadline: April 30, 2005.
http://ing.com/unsungheroes/


Policy Updates
NASSP has outlined legislative recommendations that focus resources on initiatives that are needed in order for high schools to improve the academic outcomes of their students.

Assessing Patterns of Resource Distribution (APRD) is a free online tool that compares district spending for schools with different students and programs, pinpointing possible inequities.
http://www.schoolcommunities.org/resources/APRD/welcome.php

International Notes
Australian Prime Minister suggests that students drop out and get a trade.

In Jeddah, the Presidency of Girls Education has begun a program to educate girls.
http://www.arabnews.com/?page=7&section=0&article=60224&d=10&m=3&y=2005

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) will sponsor its annual Global Action Week April 24-30.
http://www.campaignforeducationusa.org/events_default.asp

Students With Disabilities
Under the No Child Left Behind Act, school systems across the country have been forced to disclose the abysmally low academic test scores of students with disabilities.
The 2004 update of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) made several significant changes to the Individualized Education Program (IEP). http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=978


**Effective Strategies**

**Alternative schooling**

Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) is a successful response to the problem of low achievement in inner city and rural public schools. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9576-2005Mar29.html

**Early Literacy**
*Reading Rockets* is a new resource for parents and classroom teachers that provides information about the different types of reading difficulties a child may experience. http://www.weta.org/static/pressroom/reading/ http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/

A new report from the Alliance for Excellent Education provides insights from a panel of education researchers on how to improve the reading proficiency of middle and high school students. http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/index.html

**Educational Technology**
Many school districts are using global-positioning-satellite and radio-frequency tracking systems to follow their buses. http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/03/02/25gps.h24.html

*Distance Education Courses for Public Elementary and Secondary School Students: 2002-03* is the first national survey to explore distance education courses for public elementary and secondary school students. http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005010


**Resources & Tools**
The U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher-to-Teacher initiative offers free online professional development opportunities. www.ed.gov/teacherinitiative

The full text of *Qualified Teachers for At-Risk Schools: A National Imperative* is available at http://www.ncrel.org/quality/partnership.htm.

Some districts now want to require their best teachers to teach in high-poverty schools. Is it ethical for teachers to refuse to teach in high-poverty schools? http://www.teacherleaders.org/misc/HTSethics.html


We appreciate comments from our readers. Please contact us at ndpc@clemson.edu Sources: ECS, Education News, Commentaries, & Reports, EDWeek, GLEF Edutopia, NASSP Bulletin, PEN Weekly, RFP Bulletin, TLN News