

## Bulletin Update - Florida Mentoring

December 29, 2004

### Appropriations Bill

On December 8, 2004, President Bush signed into law P.L. 108-477, an appropriations bill providing Fiscal Year 2005 funding for 13 federal agencies, including the Department of Education. Under the agreement, funding for the Department's discretionary programs increases from \$55.66 billion to \$56.58 billion, a \$920 million boost.

Among the highlights:

- \* \$12.74 billion for Title I grants to local education agencies;
- \* \$1 billion for Reading First, \$104 million for Early Reading First, and \$25 million for the new Striving Readers initiative for struggling middle and high school readers;
- \* \$10.6 billion for special education grants, an increase of \$500 million (5.2 percent); and
- \* \$12.36 billion in Pell Grants for five million low- and middle-income undergraduates.

For more information: <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/>. (State-by-state data is available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/>.)

### Discretionary Education Grants

To aid parties interested in discretionary monies, the Department released an updated "Grantmaking at ED: Answers to Your Questions About the Discretionary Grant Process" that provides a non-technical summary of the types of grants offered by the agency and how grants are competed and awarded. The booklet goes through application, review, award, administration, grant closeout, and audit. <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/grantmaking/index.html>

### SafetyNET Background Checks

In another action before adjourning, Congress extended the SafetyNET background check pilot program by an additional year, until January 31, 2006. If you are interested in conducting background checks through the SafetyNET pilot, please learn more and sign up at <http://www.mentoring.org/safetynet/>.

### Season's Readings! Book Drive

It's not too late to give the gift of reading. The Season's Readings! book drive collects and distributes new and gently used books for children to community programs, schools, family literacy programs and not-for-profit agencies supporting reading activities for children. Florida's state agencies will once again participate in the holiday book drive by hosting drop-off locations in Tallahassee and regional offices throughout the state. The deadline for book donations is January 14, 2005. For more information [www.volunteerfloridafoundation.org](http://www.volunteerfloridafoundation.org). For a list of suggested holiday reading materials, visit [www.justreadfamilies.org](http://www.justreadfamilies.org).

Please forgive any cross-posting and advise us at [FLAmentoring@aol.com](mailto:FLAmentoring@aol.com) if you would like names added or deleted from the Bulletin Update - Florida Mentoring. For prior issues, please visit the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, under Monthly Mentoring Update at: <http://www.volunteerfloridafoundation.org>

### Happy New Year!

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**Be a mentor. Be a big help.**