

CASN NEWS JUNE 2009

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ANNOUNCEMENT: SUMMER TIME HIATUS

To honor that many CASN News participants are on summer holidays and will not be checking email, CASN News will also take a Summer Hiatus. With the exception of any time sensitive CASN News Brief, there will be no new editions of CASN News until mid or late August. All of us at CASN wish you time for fat summer books; long, lazy walks; adventures and renewal; and time with family and friends.

LEGISLATION ALERT: ED ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY

The Secondary School Innovation Fund Act, introduced recently by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA), is a refined (according to many - improved) version of the earlier proposed GRADUATES Act.

This legislation would provide competitive grants to states and districts for innovative models and programs that improve middle and high school student achievement and prepare students for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Specifically it would

- Expand on the success of emerging models like multiple pathways to graduation, early college high schools and dual enrollment, and early warning intervention systems.

- Support a variety of secondary school strategies such as personalization, improved transitions and alignment, expanded learning time, postsecondary and work-based learning opportunities, and a rigorous curriculum aligned with postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Provide resources for high-quality research and evaluation to ensure funding is leveraged for programs with a proven track record in raising student achievement.

President Obama has said, "Dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It's not just quitting on yourself; it's quitting on your country." Indeed, over one million students drop out of high school each year, jeopardizing their futures and costing our economy billions of dollars in lost wages. This legislation will help to stem the flow of high school dropouts by implementing scalable innovation that benefits all students.

This is an important time to contact your elected representatives to urge your support for this legislation and/or for other education legislation that matters to you. You should reference The Secondary School Innovation Fund Act (S.968), introduced by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) OR The Secondary Innovation Fund Act (HR-2239), introduced by Representative Dave Loebsack (D-IA). Both the Senate and House versions of the Act have been referred to Committee in their respective bodies.

SUPPORT GROWS FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

Teachers unions, governors and state education leaders voiced support for national academic standards at a recent congressional hearing on the subject. "The purpose ... is to raise the bar for all states by drawing on the best research and evidence," said Arkansas' education commissioner, Ken James. "The most basic way ... is to guarantee that what is being taught in classrooms in every ZIP code of this nation is both rigorous and relevant."

In his opening statement at the hearing on national education standards, House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA) noted that state standards in the United States typically cover a larger number of topics in each grade level, compared to the highest-performing countries where standards cover a smaller number of topics in greater depth. As a result, American schools end up with a curriculum that is "a mile wide and an inch deep."

"So far, a core of forward-thinking states has been leading the way toward stronger, common standards," Miller said. "Let me be clear: I want this committee, and the Congress, to do whatever we can to support this state-led, bipartisan effort. That's why we're here today -- to learn more about this work and to hear from you all about how the federal government can best support it."

Miller said the recently enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and its \$5 billion Race to the Top fund would help U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan encourage states to improve standards and assessments so that they are aligned with career-and-college readiness.

He said the fund will lay the foundation for the significant changes that are necessary to "truly improve our schools, make sure students graduate with the skills they need, and cultivate a workforce that can compete globally."

Chairman Miller's opening statement, witness testimony, and video of the hearing is available at <http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/2009/04/strengthening-americas-competi.shtml>

RELATED STORY: STATES TO SHARE COMMON BENCHMARKS

A single set of benchmarks could soon shape what students in 46 states and the District of Columbia learn, under an agreement between the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. "This is the beginning of a new day for education in our country," said U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Alaska, Missouri, South Carolina and Texas are the only states currently not on board with national benchmarks.

article: http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-06-01-state-standards_N.htm

full press release: http://www.ccsso.org/Whats_New/Press_Releases/13359.cfm

CONGRESS MAY CONSIDER FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS

Hundreds of thousands of high-school students nationwide are getting a head start on their college degrees by enrolling in college classes while still in high school. A bill moving through Congress would offer federal grants to support such partnerships. Some educators say the model could encourage more disadvantaged students to consider college. (source: Washington Post)

BILL TO SPARK STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Serve America Act will engage middle level and high school students in community service through a new Summer of Service program that would allow them to earn up to \$1,000 for college costs. The bill also creates Youth Engagement Zones for low-income secondary school students and out-of-school youth, which are designed to improve student engagement, attendance, behavior, achievement, high school

graduation rates, and college-going rates by using community service to help teach students about specific issues.

NEW JERSEY PILOTS PERSONALIZED LEARNING PLANS

The New Jersey Department of Education is testing individual student-learning plans at 16 middle and high schools. Starting in the fall, every sixth- and ninth-grader will get a personalized plan with academic, career and personal goals. The results at the schools will help educators determine whether to implement the program statewide beginning in the sixth grade.(source: Philadelphia Inquirer)

COLORADO PROMOTES COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSES FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

In an effort to lower its drop-out rate and help win more stimulus money, Colorado's governor has signed a House bill into law that would allow students in grades 9 through 12 to take an unlimited number of college courses at a community college with school districts picking up the tab (if a student does not complete a class, the bill requires parents to pay the tuition). Students who stay for a fifth year of high school can use a state subsidy set aside for all Colorado high school graduates to pay their tuition.
(source: Denver Post)

OBAMA SEEKS TO TURN AROUND 5,000 SCHOOLS

President Barack Obama intends to use \$5 billion to prod local officials to close failing schools and reopen them with new teachers and principals. The goal is to turn around 5,000 failing schools in the next five years, said Education Secretary Arne Duncan, by beefing up funding for the federal school turnaround program created by the No Child Left Behind law. Obama doesn't have authority to close and reopen schools himself. That power rests with local school districts and states. But he has an incentive in the economic stimulus law, which requires states to help failing schools improve. Duncan said that might mean firing an entire staff and bringing in a new one, replacing a principal or turning a school over to a charter school operator. The point, he said, is to take bold action in persistently low-achieving schools.

"If we turn around just the bottom 1 percent, the bottom thousand schools per year for the next five years, we could really move the needle, lift the bottom and change the lives of tens of millions of underserved children," Duncan said.

Combined with the budget plan released last week, Obama may have as much as \$5 billion to facilitate the initiative, which could translate to \$1 million for every school targeted for turnaround.

The turnaround program currently receives about \$500 million a year. The stimulus legislation boosted funding to \$3.5 billion. Obama's budget would add another \$1.5

billion by shifting dollars away from traditionally funded programs....The Title I program, the biggest source of federal dollars for schools, will rise from \$13.4 billion this year to \$22 billion next year. But funding would drop to just under \$13 billion in 2010, a reduction to help pay for the school turnaround fund. (sources: USA Today, Ed Week, Teacher's Magazine)

NEW PUSH TO PREPARE HS STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE WITHOUT NEED FOR REMEDIATION

Each year, more than a million U.S. college freshmen take remedial classes -- and some are laying the blame on a disconnect between high schools and colleges. But with a recent push by President Obama to once again make the United States the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020, change is on the horizon. Included in the February stimulus law is a requirement that states receiving stabilization funds work to improve courses and tests so that high school graduates can succeed in college without remedial classes. The requirement represents an important shift in federal policy which until now has focused on promoting college access and financial aid. (source: New York Times)

GATES FOUNDATION SAYS THAT TEACHER QUALITY IS THE KEY FACTOR

For the past six years, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation spent billions of dollars to test the idea that smaller high schools might result in higher graduation rates and better test scores. Instead, the Foundation discovered that the essential key was more effective teachers. As a result of testing its hypothesis, the Foundation is taking a different path with its education grants and encouraging programs and strategies to develop and support effective teachers. http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALegM5gBfu1Zu7alsLeH_NGiMaHbc7A#nQD98F58R80

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=58946>

GOVERNORS' REPORT SHOWS TEACHER QUALITY LACKING

The U.S. public education system has failed to recruit top teachers, according to a new study from the National Governors Association. Although many countries take their teacher workforce from the top 5–30% of college grads, the United States isn't pulling from a similarly high-achieving pool. Only one in 10 new teachers in the United States scored in the 90th percentile on their high school standardized tests—a decline by half since 1964. The report calls for the improvement of teacher and principal training and retention, as well as more relaxed certification requirements for skilled professionals who want to switch to teaching.

MILLION WORD CHALLENGE INSPIRES ELL STUDENTS TO READ

Sarra Said, 15, could not speak a word of English when she moved to the U.S. less than two years ago. But now she's a vociferous reader who has plowed through more than 40 books -- more than 1.5 million words' worth -- since October as part of a school challenge intended to expose English-language learners to more literature. "I want to put a generous helping of books in front of the students, and I hope they enjoy the taste," said Jayne Huseby, who chairs the school's department of English-language development.

PROMISING PRACTICE FROM THE FIELD: FROM THE FIELD: STUDENTS LEARN ADVANCED SCIENCE WITH HELP OF UNIVERSITY, ZOO

Indiana high-school students use cutting-edge techniques to analyze the DNA of dolphins in order to track their lineages. The project, a collaboration of schools, the Indianapolis zoo and research centers, is meant to expose students to the field of bioinformatics, a combination of molecular biology and information technology.

STUDY: HELPING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS SET GOALS IMPROVES THEIR GRADES

Teaching middle-school students why doing well in school is important to their future and helping them develop effective ways to study may do more to improve their grades than homework help, according to a Harvard University researcher's analysis of 50 studies involving more than 50,000 students. Adolescents' burgeoning planning and decision-making skills can make middle school an especially effective time to use such strategies to overcome students' decreasing interest in school, lead researcher Nancy Hill said. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/05/090519134711.htm>

STUDY: ACHIEVEMENT GAP TIED TO MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH PLACEMENT

Rigorous middle-school math and better access to advanced high-school classes could help narrow the racial achievement gap, University of Illinois researchers say. "Students who take more advanced math courses in middle school lengthen their lead over time, and ... advanced courses lead to even higher achievement," said Christy Lleras, an assistant professor of human and community development. "But the opposite is also true. Lower math placement in middle school ... translates into ... greater achievement gaps in high school." <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/04/090420121423.htm>

REPORT: IMPACT OF STRONG AMERICAN SCHOOLS' ED IN '08 CAMPAIGN

A new report documents how Strong American Schools' ED in '08 campaign, an organization created by the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, became a successful independent advocacy initiative in the 2008 election season and helped turn the need for education reform from a low-priority campaign issue into one of Barack Obama's top policy priorities as president. ED in '08 pushed stakeholders to address three priorities: high standards, quality teachers, and extended learning time. Despite encountering a variety of hurdles -- the economic crisis, a changing political landscape, ED in '08 met its most critical target.

http://www.strongamericanschools.org/files/SAS_Report_09_v17_FINAL.pdf

REPORT: THE WIDGET EFFECT

According to the New York Times, "Education reform will go nowhere until the states are forced to revamp corrupt teacher evaluation systems that rate a vast majority of teachers as 'excellent,' even in schools where children learn nothing. A startling new report from a nonpartisan New York research group known as The New Teacher Project lays out the scope of the problem."

The Widget Effect, a new report from The New Teacher Project, studied teacher-evaluation systems in 12 districts and found that more than 90% of teachers received satisfactory ratings. In some districts, the figure reached 99%! Yet the report also found that 60% of teachers and 84% of administrators in high-poverty schools believe tenured teachers in their schools deliver poor instruction. Education Trust argues that "evaluation systems that rate virtually everyone as "satisfactory" not only saddle too many students with weak teaching, they disguise the accomplishments of truly remarkable teachers. Students and teachers need and deserve honest evaluation systems. <http://widgeteffect.org>

Related article: To learn more about identifying teacher effectiveness, see Education Trust article, "The Real Value of Teachers." <http://www.edtrust.org>

PAPER: INCREASING COLLEGE ACCESS THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED MODELS OF POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION, PLANNING, AND SUPPORT

A new paper from ESR (Educators for Social Responsibility), explores four comprehensive school-based models for achieving postsecondary preparation, planning, and support, and identifies key policy changes to support these models. Among the Organizing Principles that Reduce Roadblocks to Increase College Access are:

- Build a strong college-going culture in which all adults support postsecondary aspirations.
- Adjust the college-going process to meet students' needs.
- Make a postsecondary plan an exit requirement for every student
- Establish a formal schedule of college & career labs, deadlines, and "sign-offs" for completion of specific college preparation and career planning documents at every grade level for every student.
- Build the counseling staff's postsecondary knowledge, skills, and expertise.
- Provide every student with attentive, regular, and timely guidance, assistance, and support throughout the entire college-going process.
- Provide continued support to students and families between high school graduation and college enrollment.

NOTE: You can download the report at the Educators for Social Responsibility web site:
<http://www.esrnational.org>

REPORT: DIPLOMAS COUNT: GETTING A HANDLE ON COLLEGE-READNINESS

The 2009 edition of Education Week's "Diplomas Count," examines an idea of particular currency right now, backed by President Obama, that some form of postsecondary education is crucial to student success after high school. What "college readiness" means is open to debate, however, with no consensus on how to measure it or ensure all students attain it. From a practical standpoint, many high schools aren't equipped to help students navigate the college-application and financial-aid system -- particularly schools in low-income areas. Advocates are now pushing for a revamped NCLB that would assess high schools in part based on indicators such as how many students enroll in two- or four-year colleges, and how well they do in entry-level credit-bearing coursework there. The most significant sign of momentum in state policy, the report finds, is an increase in the number of states taking steps to craft a definition. For 2009, 20 states have described the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in entry-level college courses. These range from course-taking recommendations to minimum scores on standardized tests. Seven states include academic elements and/or "soft skills," such as time management and successful study habits, as prerequisites for success in college. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/11/34exec.h28.html>

REPORT: CALIFORNIA EXIT EXAM

California's exit exam may be preventing as many as 22,000 students annually from graduating from high school, according to a report by Stanford University researchers. The test has had no positive effect on student achievement, the researchers said, and girls and minorities are 15% to 19% less likely to graduate than before the exam requirement began. To view the executive summary and/or the full report, visit the Institute for Research on Education Policy and Practice web site: <http://irepp.stanford.edu>

REPORT: WHAT DISTRICTS CAN LEARN FROM OAKLAND

According to a new evaluation of the Oakland Unified School District (CA) New Small Schools Initiative, the small schools reform initiative has accelerated student achievement and improved academic opportunities in many of the district's highest need communities.

The initiative is the focus of a newly released study by the School Redesign Network at Stanford University (SRN). Using quantitative and qualitative research, the study found that students generally experienced larger achievement gains in Oakland's new small schools than in the schools that existed previously. Statistical analyses of student achievement on California Standards Tests (CST) from 2003-04 to 2007-08 examined school performance on key measures of success while controlling for student characteristics, prior achievement, and stage of school development. Case studies were also conducted of seven new small schools that had shown strong value-added growth for students to identify features associated with their success.

The study - Oakland Unified School District New Small Schools Initiative Evaluation - is authored by SRN Co-Executive Director, Ash Vasudeva, SRN Founding Director and Stanford University Professor of Education Linda Darling-Hammond, and Stanford University doctoral students Stephen Newton and Kenneth Montgomery.

Below are key findings and policy recommendations from the study:

Findings on OUSD outcomes

New small schools have been, on average, more productive than older schools at elementary & high school levels.

New schools typically become more effective as they mature.

At the high school level, particular school design features were found to be positively associated with academic productivity (that is, strong learning growth for students).

These features include:

- ~ project-based learning
- ~ interdisciplinary courses

- ~ block scheduling
- ~ career/technical education or internships
- ~ advisory systems

Across school levels, school staffing strongly influences academic productivity. On average, having a greater proportion of less experienced teachers (i.e., those in the first or second year of teaching) was found to significantly reduce schools' academic productivity.

Policies and Practices for Successful Small Schools

Certain policies and practices were found to benefit new and existing schools. These lead to the following policy recommendations:

Classroom practices

Use personalization strategies (such as advisory systems and looping) that allow students to be well-known.

Develop coherent instructional programs that are focused on authentic, hands-on instruction relevant to students' lives.

Develop performance assessments of student learning that inform practice, promote a strong academic culture, and provide a focus for teacher professional development.

Proactively engage parents and the community.

District/school practices

Encourage district administrators and coaches who work with teachers and school leaders to problem solve rather than merely managing mandates.

Support professional learning communities for teachers and principals to foster instructional improvement.

Encourage appropriate school autonomy to support innovation and responsive decision making.

Create school development supports, such as the successful OUSD incubator, that provide vital planning time and a process for school design teams to clarify their school vision, explore best practices, and recruit staff.

Personnel

Recruit mission-driven principals who are mentored to succeed in leading school redesign.

Develop skilled teaching faculties which offer a balance of experienced and new teachers who are committed to the school's mission.

District practices

Examine the current and potential trajectory of a school when considering continuation or phase-out (since new schools generally grow more productive over the first few years).

Create strong local pipelines into teaching that can create a stable teaching force. In Oakland, the district has been developing a "grow your own" program for bringing local young people and paraprofessionals into teaching and has been strengthening its

relationships with local universities and its capacity to hire promising student teachers trained in Oakland.

Create effective teacher hiring and support practices that include hiring teachers in early spring, strengthening mentoring to reduce teacher turnover, and projecting actual staffing needs to avoid unnecessary layoffs.

OPINION PIECE: THOMAS FRIEDMAN ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

In an editorial in The New York Times, columnist Thomas Friedman uses a recent McKinsey & Company report to press his opinion that we are no longer a nation at risk, but one in decline. "The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools" has data that show American youth are no longer on a par with their counterparts in competing countries, and that in the words of the report, "the longer American children are in school, the worse they perform compared to their international peers." Friedman quotes Matt Miller, a co-author of the study, as saying that millions of American kids in modern suburban schools -- reputatively the best of our public system -- don't realize how far they lag behind their global cohort: "They are being prepared for \$12-an-hour jobs -- not \$40-to-\$50-an-hour." The bottom line is sobering: "If America had closed the international achievement gap between 1983 and 1998 and had raised its performance to the level of such nations as Finland and South Korea, United States G.D.P. in 2008 would have been between \$1.3 trillion and \$2.3 Trillion higher," Friedman writes. A closure of the racial achievement gap would have netted an extra \$310 billion to \$525 billion, and a closure of the socioeconomic gap would have yielded an additional \$400 billion to \$670 billion.

ARE THE SAT DAYS NUMBERED?

More colleges are making standardized entrance exams such as the SAT or ACT optional for students, but it remains uncertain whether the trend will fizzle or gain momentum. "I don't know if you can tell a tipping point until after it's happened, but it's very close," said Bob Schaeffer, a critic of such tests. (New York Times)

WEB RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Health Map

Use HealthMap (Powered by Google Maps) to view the status of different diseases around the world, compare between countries, and identify trends. HealthMap brings up to date data from multiple sources into one place for better visualizing. Click on the Blog link to access specific information about diseases including symptoms and treatment. Refine your search on the map by disease, category, or region of the world. This site can be viewed in French, Spanish, and several other languages. <http://www.healthmap.org/en>

Lesson: Nature's Pharmacy: Killing the Cure?

This best practice lesson provides students with an opportunity to explore ethnobotany within the realm of pharmaceutical development. The lesson begins with students reading and discussing an interview with Mark Plotkin, president of the Amazon Conservation Team and research associate at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. This is followed by reading and discussing an excerpt (available online) from *Medicine Quest: In Search of Nature's Healing Secrets*. Students then select one of the various projects to complete. Finally students conduct a microbiology lab in which they investigate the antibacterial properties of various herbs and spices. This is a rich and engaging lesson that develops scientific processes, illustrates the tie between science and technology, and introduces students to issues scientists and other researchers must face as they work to develop new pharmaceuticals. <http://www.actionbioscience.org/biodiversity/Plotkin.html>

Unilearning

This is a great site for working with writing for many levels and abilities. It is divided into 8 categories: effective and academic writing, essay and report writing, writing sentences, reading, note-taking, and critical thinking. Each section has an introduction or overview and is interactive for student use. Most of the parts of each section give both explanations and examples, and also link to quick examples of words students may need reminded of (such as what a "clause" is). It is worth using for a lesson or a series of lessons.

<http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/main.html>

A Sampling of Some Online Courses/Lectures (others can be explored at <http://ocwconsortium.org>)

Many high school students explore on line college courses/lectures as a means to explore possible career interests, as a test of college readiness, and for sheer interest and entertainment. Here are a few examples:

Physics 1: Classical Mechanics MIT

<http://www.ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Physics/8-01Physics-1Fall1999/courseHome/index.htm>

Professor Walter Lewin, a consummate showman, teaches Newton's laws of gravity, fluid mechanics, and other gems of introductory physics in the videotaped class. Passing physics is a must for those dreaming of becoming an engineer, and Lewin aims to bring the subject within anyone's reach. He often uses himself as the guinea pig to demonstrate concepts, and in one class swings horizontally on a pendulum to drive home a point about oscillations. "Physics works. I'm telling you," he shouts. You'll believe him.

Blender 3-D Design Tufts University <http://ocw.tufts.edu/Course/57>

This three-dimensional computer modeling course that focuses on Blender, a free software program that anyone can download, became an instant hit when it went public. Students learn to make 3-D objects, including a yellow submarine and a frog, from text, images, and video tutorials. The class helps groom future game designers and animators. Instructor Neal Hirsig, a drama major in college, is the ultimate self-learner. He taught himself 3-D modeling when he was a scene designer.

SAVE THE DATES

National Career Academy Coalition Annual Conference

November 1 - 3, 2009, Philadelphia <http://www.ncacinc.com/>

National Coalition of Essential Schools - Fall Forum

November 5 - 7, 2009, New Orleans <http://www.essentialschools.org>

2009 Education Trust National Conference

November 12 - 14, 2009 Arlington, VA <http://www.edtrust.org>

SOME FUNDING AND AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

State Farm Foundation Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grants

State Farm partners with Youth Service America to offer grants of up to \$1000 for the promotion of service learning around the United States and Canada. Projects are selected for their capacity to combine service with academic learning in order to cultivate well-rounded leadership among America's youth. Applications are available during the fall semester in order to select projects celebrating Good Neighbor Service Day the following spring. Youth applicants are encouraged to apply. http://www.statefarm.com/about/part_spos/grants/foundati.asp

UnitedHealth HEROES

UnitedHealthcare and Youth Service America are excited to offer the UnitedHealth HEROES service-learning grant program for youth-led community education projects in selected U.S. states and regions. These grants of up to \$1,000 support teachers, service-learning coordinators and students in the health professions to implement service-learning projects around childhood obesity and engage children and youth ages 5 to 25 as volunteers. The grants encourage semester-long projects that launch in February, and celebrate Global Youth Service Day in April. Information on grants for 2009-2010 should be available on August 1, 2009. Check <http://www.ysa.org> and/or <http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com> in August.

The Red, White, and Green Climate Control Grant

What better way to give back than by protecting the environment? The Civil Service Institute joined Youth Service America in the Red, White and Green Initiative to provide grants of up to \$500. Selected proposals actively encourage youth to implement environmentally friendly practices amongst their peers and the community at large. Grantees engage public officials in their projects to encourage environmentally friendly public policy. The program is currently in its third round of awards, to maintain a consistent public awareness campaign on environmentally friendly practices. (This is another funding opportunity which should be posted at <http://www.ysa.org> later this summer.)

Clay Aiken Grant - Bubel/Aiken Foundation and Youth Service America (YSA)

The Bubel/Aiken Foundation and Youth Service America (YSA) awarded grants of up to \$1,000 to support youth-led service projects in which youth with and without disabilities serve their communities together. These grants supported youth (ages 5-25), teachers, youth-leaders, youth-serving organizations, or organizations that serve people with disabilities in implementing service projects for Global Youth Service Day 2007. Projects addressed themes such as the environment, disaster relief, public health and awareness, community education, hunger, and literacy, and other issues that youth identified as a community need. <http://thebubelaikenfoundation.org>

Youth Rising

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention have worked closely with Youth Service America to identify youth at risk. Statistics show that greater involvement in extracurricular activities has a great potential to reduce criminal activity, and through this program with grants of up to \$1000, youth volunteers are given the means to pursue a myriad of service projects that will foster leadership and benefit their communities, encouraging the perception that youth are a valuable asset to the sustainability of local neighborhoods. <http://www.youthrising.org>

Project Ignite Grants: Encourage Teen-Driver Safety

Traffic accidents are the number #1 killer of teens. Your students can help stop these largely preventable tragedies.

Project Ignition, sponsored by State Farm Companies Foundation and the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), is an annual competition for high school students to promote teen-driver safety. Teams of students create "awareness campaigns" that employ any type or combination of media -- television commercials, radio spots, print ads, direct mail, web sites, special events, hip-hop performances, art exhibitions and more. To participate, school-based teams submit their proposals to NYLC. The top 25 teams will be notified in September and receive

a \$2000 grant to turn their proposals into a real campaign. Those campaigns are then judged in January 2010, with the top 10 teams each awarded an additional \$5000 to attend NYLC's National Service Learning Conference, where they present their campaigns to a national audience in March 2010 in San Jose, CA. The campaign chosen as Best of the Best earns that school another \$10,000 grant to continue its teen driver safety efforts. (NOTE: The application form is less than 3 pages, so apply now!

Application Deadline: June 30, 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year. TIME SENSITIVE!

To apply, go to <http://www.sfprojectignition.com> and download a form.

For more information, call Michael VanKeulen at 651.999.7378 or
mvankeulen@nylc.org

For information about NYLC, go to <http://www.nylc.org>

Adobe Youth Voices/What Kids Can Do: International Photo Competition

Adobe Youth Voices and What Kids Can Do invite youth around the world to submit photographs based on the theme of "Crisis and Hope," expressing themselves on both what is challenging and what gives hope in today's difficult world. Maximum award: Winning photographs will be showcased online, in a traveling exhibit, and in a book. Eligibility: all young people -- anywhere in the world -- between the ages of 12 and 19. Deadline: July 31, 2009. http://www.wkcd.org/AYV_Photo_Competition/Home_.html

Proposal Writing Resource: U.S. Department of Education's Freedom of Information Act Reading Room

Editor's Note: Often when we work with schools and districts on federal proposals, we encourage the proposal writing team to review copies of proposals that were successful in earlier grant competitions. The U.S. Department of Education's FOIA E-Reading Room makes this easier by providing "ready access to a rich variety of information -- without a FOIA request. Among the successful proposals currently included on the site are: Smaller Learning Communities, Magnet Schools Assistance Program, Foreign Language Assistance Program, Charter Schools Program, Carol M. White Physical Education Program, Teaching American History, Math & Science Grants, Elementary & Secondary School Counseling Program, Mentoring Program, Safe Schools-Healthy Grants

http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/readingroom_2.html