

CASN NEWS April 2007

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Graduate School of Education. Our focus is on high schools and high school redesign, especially redesign which includes Academies/small schools/smaller learning communities.

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Students are served best when classrooms are filled with "active participant[s], not passive consumer[s]. Education as the practice of freedom ... connects the will to know with the will to become."

- bell

hooks

REMINDER: REGISTRATION FOR FREE 2007 TEACHER-TO-TEACHER SUMMER WORKSHOPS BEGINS MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2007 (Space is limited! First come first served! And for our Hawaii and West Coast colleagues, set your alarms as the day begins earlier in the East.)

Be sure to mark Monday, April 9, 2007, on your calendar, as the first day to sign up to participate in an exciting professional development experience -- the 2007 Teacher-to-Teacher Summer Workshops -- free of charge. Prominent educators will discuss effective strategies for all grade levels and content areas.

Check with your district about receiving professional development credit for your participation. Space is limited so don't delay. To find out about updated locations and dates for the 2007 Summer Workshops go to <https://www.t2tweb.us/workshops/schedule.asp>.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT'S FY 2008 ED BUDGET REQUEST

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, along with Deputy Secretary Ray Simon (K-12), Undersecretary Sara Martinez Tucker (higher education), Director of the Institute of Education Sciences Grover Whitehurst, & Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education Troy Justesen, testified before relevant House & Senate appropriations subcommittees in support of the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 budget request. The budget focuses on three key priorities that build on what has been accomplished and learned during the past five years: improving chronically underperforming schools; increasing resources & rigor in high schools, especially in math and science; & making college more accessible & affordable.

About 2,000 schools across the nation are considered chronically underperforming. The FY 2008 budget requests \$500 million for school improvement efforts, such as hiring more teachers or reinventing the

school as a charter. Nearly \$200 million has been requested to attract & reward high-quality teachers in high needs schools. Three hundred million has been requested to support scholarship programs that would allow students to transfer to higher performing public or private schools, or receive free intensive tutoring.

Approximately one million youth drop out of high school every year in the U.S. and only about 50% of African-American and Hispanic students graduate on time. A recent report shows that even while students are earning higher grades, skill levels have declined. To help combat these problems, a significant increase in funding to increase the rigor of our high schools has been requested. Fourteen billion dollars has been requested for Title I funding and an additional \$365 million would help strengthen math, science, and rigor in elementary and secondary education.

Finally, the Bush Administration has requested the largest increase for Pell grants in 30 years, increasing the maximum award from \$4,050 to \$4,600. A total of \$1.2 billion has been requested to support the Academic Competitiveness and National SMART programs that provide grants that encourage students to take challenging high school coursework, and to major in math and science-related fields.
<http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget08/testimony.html>

SUPPORT FOR NCLB WANING

As the federal education law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), comes up for reauthorization, support is waning. Conservative Republicans in both the House & Senate are poised to gut the bill through bills they've introduced that will allow states to opt out of most of the law's most stringent requirements, including testing mandates, without losing funding. Republicans are leaning toward less federal involvement in education & believe states, localities, and parents should be responsible for ensuring that students achieve proficiency.

For Democrats, plans to revise aspects of the law, especially those concerning low-performing schools, are a priority. Adequate funding and a greater emphasis on professional development are also seen as critical. Democrats are, however, still committed to the major tenets of NCLB & believe that the federal government must be involved in ensuring all students are provided with the education they need to succeed.

The Bush Administration is attempting to stop the flood of dissent. Katherine McLane, press secretary for the U.S. Department of

Education, says, "We've made a lot of progress in the past five years in serving the children who have traditionally been underserved in our education system. Now is not the time to roll back the clock on those children." But, previous supporters of the bill & the President are concerned about what they're hearing from parents & states, even heavily Republican states. As Michael J. Petrilli, a former official at the U.S. Department of Education, puts it, "Republicans voted for No Child Left Behind holding their noses. But now with the president so politically weak, conservatives can vote their conscience."
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0321/p01s01-legn.html> and
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/14/AR2007031402741.html>

Related Resource: Link to NASSP Recommendations for Reauthorization of NCLB:

http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=969&DID=53791

\$3 BILLION INCREASE IN HOUSE BUDGET RESOLUTION FOR EDUCATION FUNDING FOR FY 2008

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the FY 2008 Budget Resolution that provides an education funding increase of \$3 billion over

current funding levels. Recently the Senate passed a resolution to increase FY 2008 funding for education by \$6 billion. Now, both the House and Senate need to reach a compromise version and then each body must pass that version. There is a long way to go. NOTE: Obviously, it appears that a significant funding increase may be a possibility for education. Continue your advocacy; Continue to contact your U.S. Senators and Representatives on behalf of education.

NEW MEXICO TO REQUIRE HS STUDENTS TO TAKE AN AP, ONLINE OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASS

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (D) is likely to sign into law next week legislation that by 2013 will require high school graduates to have an Advanced Placement, online or community college course on their transcript. State officials hope the options will be an incentive for students to stay in school in a state where the annual drop-out rate is about 5%.

<http://www.abqtrib.com/news/2007/mar/29/officials-expect-higher-graduation-requirements-cu/>

GROWTH OF ONLINE AP COURSES

Online AP courses are leveling the playing field for students who

attend schools that don't offer AP classes or who can't get into the AP classes they want. Almost 15,000 students, or 1.1% of the 1.3 million students who took an AP exam in 2006, said they took an AP course or review program online, and enrollment at several providers has doubled or even quadrupled in just a few years. (source: Education Week)

YOUTHBUILD HELPS BUILD SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE & LEADERSHIP

YouthBuild is a federal program that targets low-income youth ages 16-24 who earn high school diplomas or GEDs while learning job skills by building homes for the homeless and/or low-income families. Many of the program's participants have been in foster care, the juvenile justice system, on welfare, or homeless. The comprehensive YouthBuild program requires that students attend school, participate in community service projects – such as building homes for the less fortunate, learn job skills, and share in the governance of their program, thereby developing leadership skills and civic engagement.

The YouthBuild program in south Mississippi is working to restore the area from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. The participants find hope while they gain valuable job skills and complete high school through the program, just as their work gives hope to those for whom they build homes.

The Mississippi program begins in early April. Thirty-five students will receive a living allowance and can earn a scholarship if they complete 900 hours of education, training, and service work.

<http://www.wlox.com/Global/story.asp?S=6238690&nav=6DJI>

NATIONAL COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK LAUNCHES NATIONAL COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS

With the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation recent award of ten \$1 million grants to universities in nine states, National College Access Network (NCAN) & the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill announced the creation of the National College Advising Corps. The purpose of the corps is to significantly increase college enrollment & graduation among low-income high school & community college students through university-based access programs.

Following in the tradition of AmeriCorps & Teach for America, the College Advising Corps will recruit & train college seniors to work as college access advisers for one or two years following graduation. The

ten programs will provide support for low-income high school students to help them apply to postsecondary institutions that best fit their academic profiles, career goals, & personal circumstances.

The program is based on a successful model created by the University of Virginia (UVA) & funded by a lead grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. NCAN provided program support & substantial technical assistance to this UVA initiative. The National College Advising Corps will be directed by Dr. Nicole Hurd, who crafted the original UVA program and is the Director of Higher Education Initiatives at NCAN.

The National College Access Network's membership includes 237 access organizations located in forty-four states & the District of Columbia. NCAN has been a leader in the field of college access for more than a decade. Partnering with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, NCAN will provide technical support for programs, assist with the growth & expansion to additional universities, & help build bridges between K-12, local access programs, & the higher education community.

The grant recipients, who will be the first members of the Corps, are Brown University, Franklin & Marshall College, Loyola College in Maryland, Pennsylvania State University, Tufts University in collaboration with the Massachusetts Campus Compact, University of Alabama, University of California, Berkeley, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and University of Utah. For more information on the National College Access Network, visit <http://www.collegeaccess.org>

RESEARCH WE CAN USE: ACTIONS THAT EFFECTIVE DISTRICTS TAKE TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Much has been written about initiatives that can be undertaken in schools & classrooms to increase student proficiency. But increasingly, practitioners engaged in school reform are coming to understand the significant role school districts play in this important effort.

According to researchers Togneri and Anderson, the efforts of heroic principals, innovative charter schools, & classroom teachers who single-handedly turn around low-performing schools or classrooms are to be zealously applauded & encouraged, but ultimately their efforts produce "isolated islands of excellence". Large-scale improvement requires systemic effort of the kind that can best be accomplished at the district level.

Action 1: Take a Systemwide Approach to Improving Instruction

Improving school districts know that a quality classroom experience for each child depends on the existence of a well-designed, coordinated, & implemented system at the district level. This system starts with a vision focused on student learning & instructional improvement that is reflected in concrete actions, such as support for new & struggling teachers, the collaboration of instructional experts, strategic allocation of resources, & targeted professional development. Research indicates that a systemwide approach to improving instruction encompasses all schools & involves all parts of the district, from business operations & human resources to school board & union leadership and members of the community (McLaughlin & Talbert). *Some improving school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area teach their staff members to take a systemic approach to school reform. One example comes from a District where central office administrators meet twice a week to discuss issues and problems in the schools. "Everyone is there [...]," commented one administrator, "Personnel, Special Ed, Business, sometimes even Maintenance... so everyone gets to talk" (McLaughlin & Talbert).*

Action 2: Create a District Curriculum Aligned With Standards and Assessments

School districts that improve take the lead when it comes to articulating what the community wants its students to know & be able to do when they graduate with a "centralized and coordinated approach to curriculum, which is adopted district-wide" (Shannon & Bylsma). They understand that it is the district's responsibility to ensure that the K-12 curriculum is aligned, "that the material taught in the school matches the standards and assessments set by the state or district for specific grade levels [... and that] the school is teaching the content that is expected" (Johnston). In districts with aligned curricula, teachers have clear expectations about what to teach and what will be tested.

Aligning curriculum within and across schools can have a powerful effect. A 1999 study of four school districts in Texas found that in one, more than 80 percent of African-American students passed the 1999 state achievement test in mathematics, up from 42.2 percent five years earlier. In another, 90 percent of tested students passed all sections of the state achievement test (Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, Hogan, Koschoreck, & Smith). What did these districts have in

common? All of them "had aligned their curriculum and had developed instructional practices within the curriculum and linked them with assessments" (Shannon & Bylsma).

Action 3: Make Decisions Based on Data

School districts that show continued improvement base decisions on data rather than on habit or hunch. Their leaders are able to readily assess strengths and weaknesses in performance and instruction because they recognize that end-of-the-year standardized test results don't provide all of the information a district needs. Instead, they design multiple measures to assess school and student progress. Researchers found that one improving district, the Minneapolis Public Schools, illustrated this approach with its data system by collecting and analyzing data in more than 15 different areas, including attendance & suspension rates & school climate data (Togneri & Anderson). When districts have a clear understanding of the comprehensive picture, data-driven decision making is a "powerful educational reform tool" (Shannon & Bylsma).

Action 4: Redefine Leadership

For many years, two positions dominated school district definitions of leader: superintendent & principal. Recently, however, research has shown that leadership that effectively supports instructional improvement cannot come from one person-it must be distributed among a variety of stakeholders, including assistant principals, teacher leaders, & central office staff (Togneri & Anderson). Although the leadership is distributed, there is a common expectation that leaders will stay focused, set high expectations for both students & staff, & support increased capacity for improvement.

The superintendent and the principal still play key roles in leading school districts, but those roles are significantly changed. The "new" role of the superintendent is to ensure that the district & the community stay focused on high-quality teaching and learning; the principal's job is to help & support teachers in their efforts to succeed with students; & district office staff exist to support and assist schools (Skrla et al).

Action 5: Implement Strong Accountability Systems

In this era of high-stakes testing, students understand that there can be significant and personal consequences for low achievement. Districts dedicated to improving achievement hold staff members to similar standards of performance, and "all adults in the system [are]

accountable for student learning" (Shannon & Bylsma).

In Houston, Texas, the superintendent initiated district improvement when he held himself to a high level of public accountability, empowering the district staff to "pursue reform more aggressively than it otherwise would have" (Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy). Senior staff & principals were placed on performance contracts in exchange for higher pay & greater autonomy. Specific benchmarks were established & enforced, clearly reinforcing the notion that all school staff members were responsible for student success.

Action 6: Embed Quality Professional Development

Most districts provide professional development, but districts that improve pay close attention to the quality & quantity of what is offered. It should be based on a careful assessment of needs. It should be aligned, clearly supporting the district's vision & goals. And it should be embedded, incorporated into the school day and year in a cycle that moves from initial learning to practice to additional learning until mastery is achieved. Embedded professional development allows teacher leaders to mentor and support new or struggling teachers. It also provides excellent opportunities for collaboration among school & district staff & promotes the growth of strong professional networks within the district.

Action 7: Commit to Sustaining Reform

Perhaps not surprisingly, districts that improve over time take a long view of reform. "Research on improved districts finds that promising results come only after reform strategies have been implemented & sustained for a long time" (Shannon & Bylsma). Similarly, Togneri & Anderson found that improved districts "set their courses and stayed with them for years".

Conclusion

It is possible for districts to improve student achievement. The task might not be easy, but with coordinated & focused efforts it can be done. Taking a systemwide approach to improving instruction, creating a district curriculum aligned with state standards & assessments, using data to guide decisions, redefining leadership, implementing a strong accountability system, embedding professional development, & making the commitment to sustain reform are clear & actions that lead to improvement in district's ability to both support its schools and to improve student achievement.

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<http://learningfirst.org/publications/districts/>

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ALERT: HOW TO SUPPORT SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

Identifying underachieving schools has become a priority in recent years as federal & state accountability requirements turn the spotlight on poor performers, according to the new issue of R&D Alert from WestEd.

A growing body of research has illuminated the characteristics of these schools at one end of the spectrum as well as the characteristics of stellar schools at the other end, but much less is known about what specific qualities and strategies enable schools to change from low- to high-performing. "What's missing is the kind of how-to knowledge, the practical intervention strategies that people need in order to help

schools through the complex process of bringing about real improvement," says WestEd's Stanley Chow. "The information is in people's heads" and not yet formally or succinctly documented.

According to Chow's analysis, one key to school transformation is for external technical assistance providers to establish close collaborations & trusting relationships with internal advocates for change. The internal advocates can be school-based or may be district personnel, as... districts can play a significant role in turning around low-performing schools. When external assistance providers, such as local education funds, build strong relationships with internal advocates & other influential educators, their teamwork helps the key players sense trouble as it develops, choose appropriate responses, delegate responsibilities, & provide mutual support and encouragement. Working together, these inside/outside partners ensure that recommended practices to improve school performance gain traction & endure.

Too often, according to Chow, service providers design remedies for common educational problems, such as low reading scores or teacher isolation, and schools adopt interventions (or, worse, try to implement multiple initiatives) without a clear understanding of what changes they may need, or why. In other words, they seek a prescription before studying the disease. Helping schools find a focus -- by selecting strategic and manageable interventions and evaluating the effects on student learning -- is key to moving forward. Equally important is helping them maintain focus over time.

http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/rd-07-01.pdf

REPORT: LOOKING BACK & AHEAD AFTER A DECADE OF UPHEAVAL IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

The tenth edition of Technology Counts from Education Week is now online. Technology Counts 2007 grades states on leadership in

educational

technology, and finds wide variation among them in the core areas of access, use, and capacity. Also included is an interactive timeline that examines key educational technology trends over the past 10 years. The use that students and educators are making of digital technology has moved in new directions. Students are taking more tests on computers.

And

educators are making ever-greater use of digital data on student achievement -- principally standardized-test scores, but also other student

work organized in digital portfolios -- to make decisions about instruction. Much of that data analysis is being driven by test-based accountability, but not all. The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center now finds that, unlike 10 years ago, most states have technology standards for students and educators, for example. But few states test to see

if those standards are being met, so the degree to which schools are reaching them is unknown. Anecdotal evidence and research suggest that teachers' integration of digital tools into instruction is sporadic.

Many young people's reliance on digital technology in their outside lives stands in sharp contrast to their limited use of it in school. Large gaps, though, have emerged in students' use of computers at home based on their demographic backgrounds. So while disadvantaged students now have nearly as broad access to computers in schools as their more advantaged peers, at home they typically have much less.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2007/03/29/index.html>

SURVEY: STUDENTS, PARENTS & TEACHERS SPEAK UP ON EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

For the 2nd year in a row, students & teachers who responded to a national survey on educational technology expressed a strong desire for schools to focus more on integration of technology & real-world problem solving into math & science classes. In addition, an overwhelming 97 percent

of students, but just over half of teachers, say they think cell phones should

be allowed in school for emergencies & for connecting with parents.

The findings of the fourth annual Speak Up survey, recently released at a Congressional briefing in Washington, DC, collected ideas & views from more than 270,000 K-12 students and 21,000 teachers from all 50 states.

For the first time, the survey also included parents, & some 15,000 parents took

part. Participants were asked about their views on such topics as technology,

math & science instruction, 21st century skills, global collaboration, communication & self-expression, & schools of the future.

According to Justin Appel, reporting in eSchool News, the study shows that students want to learn math & science through real-world problem solving, visiting places where they can view science in action, & talking with professionals in the fields. Teachers also believe that teaching these subjects within the context of real-world problems is the most effective method, but a key challenge is that there is not enough instructional time to teach science. <http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/>

BENEFITS OUTWEIGH COSTS OF PROVIDING AMERICAN CHILDREN AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION

A new report sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Gerry Leeds of Great Neck, NY, focuses on the benefits derived from investing the funds to provide a high quality education to all of America's children. The research focuses specifically on the impact on black males.

Researchers performed a cost-benefit analysis of five interventions that have significantly boosted high school graduation rates for young black males, who are identified by the researchers as the Nation's most educationally and economically at-risk population. They found that if interventions are used that equalize graduation rates of white and black male students, there would be 24,000 new high school graduates every year, saving American society up to \$4.7 billion for each annual cohort. For every dollar invested in education, the researchers found, there are two to four dollars returned in public benefits through reduced public service costs such as health care, criminal justice, and public assistance and increased personal income and state and federal tax revenue.

<http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/returnstothepublic.pdf>

REPORT: GOING TO THE SOURCE: A PRACTICAL WAY TO SIMPLIFY THE FAFSA

This report from The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) recommends simplifying the FAFSA process by allowing financial aid applicants to ask the IRS to provide relevant income data directly to the U.S. Department of Education. This approach would decrease the length and complexity of the application form, reduce the possibility for errors, and decrease the administrative burden of data verification

that currently falls on colleges and universities.
http://www.ticas.org/pub_view.php?idx=2

NEA REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF HISPANICS IN EDUCATION

Richard R. Verdugo, Senior Policy Analyst in the National Education Association's (NEA) Human & Civil Rights Department, examines the status of Hispanic education by integrating results of a 2006 Education Summit convened by the NEA & the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) with information obtained from available research on five topics:

- Innovative classroom strategies for Hispanic students;
- School funding and educators' professional development;
- Early childhood education and postsecondary education;
- Immigration, migrant education, and English language learner politics; and
- Recruitment and retention of culturally, English language competent, highly qualified educators.

The report begins by describing the Hispanic population which grew from 12.5% of the total U.S. population from April 1, 2000, to 14.1% by July 1, 2004. Approximately 40.1% of the 41.9 million Hispanics in America in 2005 were foreign born. In slightly over four years, from April 2000 to July 2004, the Hispanic population grew by 17%, compared to an overall increase in population of only 4.3%. By 2010, Hispanics are expected to make up 15.5% of this nation's population; by 2030, 20.1%. Moreover, while the majority of Hispanics are found in the West and South of the U.S., their growth rate in the Midwest was 112% and 51% in the Northeast between 1990 and 2004. This phenomenal growth has a significant impact on the U.S., especially for its education system. particularly since the vast majority of Hispanics indicate that Spanish is their dominant language, with 21.44% reporting in 2004 that they either do not speak English at all or do not speak it well.

The growth in Hispanic population is largely influenced by the availability of jobs that require few skills. Frequently, manufacturing plants that hire large numbers of Hispanics are located in rural areas and in areas where there is little or no union presence. Cheap housing and the availability of jobs in the service sector are also draws for the Hispanic population.

Of the three major race-ethnic groups, Hispanics have the highest dropout rates. Nearly three times as many Hispanic students drop out of high school as white youth. Additionally, the educational achievement of Hispanic students remains low, regardless of grade

level, when compared to their white counterparts.

Traditional teaching methods do not work to raise the academic proficiencies of Hispanic children. Research suggests five strategies that are effective:

- Culturally-responsive teaching that stresses the everyday concerns of students, student social and academic responsibility, and an appreciation for student diversity;
- Cooperative learning where students interact in groups and work together in the learning process;
- Instructional conversations that emphasize extended dialogues between students and teachers;
- Cognitively-guided instruction that teaches students how to learn; and
- Technology-enriched instruction that is student-centered and offers interactive visuals.

The report offers a number of recommendations for school personnel, classroom teachers, professional development programs, parents, education policy makers, and the community that are intended to help increase the academic proficiencies of Hispanic students.

<http://www.nea.org/mco/images/hispaniced.pdf>

SURVEY: MANY TEACHERS SEE FAILURE IN STUDENTS' FUTURE

Ask a teacher whether her students are on track to earn a college degree, and she'll probably say "Sure."

Grant her anonymity, and you may get a different point of view.

In a wide-ranging survey being released Tuesday, nearly one in four teachers in urban schools paint a sobering picture of students there. They say most children "would not be successful at a community college or university."

Even more say students "are not motivated to learn."

In all, 23.6% of public school teachers at all levels say success in college would elude most students in their school. An additional 18% say they aren't sure.

The results were surprising even to the study's author, Brian Perkins, a professor of education law and policy at Southern

Connecticut State University in New Haven, Connecticut.

"I anticipated that there would be some teachers who feel that way," he says. "What I did not anticipate was the number who responded that they didn't think students would be successful."

White teachers seem to have the bleakest view: 24.5% predict failure in college, higher than among black (22.1%) or Hispanic (17.6%) teachers.

Part of the problem could be a perceived lack of support from parents: 57% of teachers say parents "are supportive" of the school and its activities; 28% say parents aren't supportive.

John Mitchell, director of educational issues for the American Federation of Teachers, says the findings could be largely the result of events that happened in the day or so before the survey.

"You go through a lot in a day, and you have days when you feel optimistic and days when you don't," he says.

But he says the results shouldn't be considered "a statement of (teachers') aspirations for the kids — it may very well be a statement that these kids aren't getting enough to make it through college."

Other findings:

- One in eight teachers say their school is not a safe place.
- 65.8% of black administrators say children are bullied regularly at their school; only 49.3% of white administrators and 29.7% of Hispanic administrators say the same.

The survey on school climate is among the largest teacher surveys ever. Sponsored by the National School Boards Association, it queried 4,700 educators from 127 schools in 12 urban districts. It has a margin of error of plus/minus 3 percentage points. (Source: US Today)

NOTE: To see the full survey, visit www.nsba.org/cube/whereweteach

REPORT: GETTING THERE --- AND BEYOND: BUILDING A CULTURE OF COLLEGE-GOING IN HIGH SCHOOLS, Corwin,

Z.B. & Tierney, W.G.

This report argues that high school students are best served by schools with a strong college-going culture that cultivates aspirations and behaviors conducive to preparing for and enrolling in college. It discusses key elements, common challenges, and strategies that schools can use to strengthen their college-going culture. NOTE: Download full report from the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at University of Southern California See <http://www.usc.edu/dept/chepa> ; then click on link to the report.

CASE STUDY: "IT'S DIFFERENT NOW": HOW EXIT EXAMS ARE AFFECTING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN JACKSON AND AUSTIN

Since much of the previous research on exit exams... has looked at national patterns of implementation and passing rates, this study aimed to benefit policy and practice by focusing on the local level. In particular, case studies were conducted in Jackson and Austin that examined how classroom instruction and other initiatives are preparing students for exit exams, as well as how these exams are affecting students' engagement in learning and their plans for postsecondary education.

<http://www.cep-dc.org/highschoolexit/JacksonAustin/>

REPORT: RIGOR PLUS SUPPORT: HOW SCIENCE TEACHERS USE LITERACY TECHNIQUES TO GET STUDENTS READY FOR COLLEGE

This report from Jobs for the Future highlights three early college high school science teachers who have created approaches to addressing literacy in a science classroom. These practices build students' skills in reading, writing, & thinking, & they also increase their understanding of science content & support their ability to think & solve problems like scientists.

http://www.jff.org/JFF_KC_Pages.php?WhichLevel=1&lv1_id=4&lv2_id=0&lv3_id=0&KC_M_ID=325

STUDY: RAW DEAL: SCHOOL BEVERAGE CONTRACTS LESS LUCRATIVE THAN THEY SEEM

The Center for Science in the Public Interest & The Public Health Advocacy Institute produced a document called *Raw Deal: School Beverage Contracts Less Lucrative Than They Seem*, which analyzes 120 school beverage contracts across the United States. The study

found that these contracts generate around \$18 per student per year for schools or school districts.

<http://www.cspinet.org/beveragecontracts.pdf>

GUIDE: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER: AN URBAN SCHOOL LEADER'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

The American Association of School Administrators has responded to concerns about chronic disease management and indoor air quality problems in schools by producing *Putting the Pieces Together: An Urban School Leader's Guide to Healthy Indoor Environments*. The document discusses the issues faced by many school districts such as overcrowding, financial barriers, & effective communication as levels of asthma and other chronic diseases continue to rise among students.

<http://www.aasa.org/focus/content.cfm?ItemNumber=8341&token=41563&userID>

SOME UPCOMING EVENTS

Breaking Ranks 2007 Urban Secondary School Showcase

NASSP and the Center for Secondary School Redesign will convene representatives from more than 20 of the most innovative and successful middle level and high schools across the country to share their programs and strategies for success in the Breaking Ranks 2007 Urban Secondary School Showcase in Chicago, IL, April 23–24, 2007. The showcase will offer presentations, forums, and hot topic breakout sessions that provide participants with an opportunity to engage with school representatives and other participants.

<http://www.cssr.us/showbrochic07.htm>

Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) Small Schools Summer Institute 2007

SAVE THE DATE! July 9-13, 2007, Miami Beach, Florida

Hosted in collaboration with Southeast CES Center, Nova Southeastern

University, Fischler School of Education and Human Services, and the

Florida School Choice Resource Center.

The CES Small Schools Summer Institute features

workshops and roundtables with some of the most effective small schools educators in the country, including those from CES Mentor Schools Urban Academy, Eagle Rock School, Boston Arts Academy, Quest High School, Wildwood School, and Fenway High School.

The Institute is open to individuals and school teams who are starting new, small schools, creating small learning communities, converting large schools into small autonomous schools, or who are looking to join a community of experienced practitioners with whom to share best

practices.

Info on Coalition of Essential Schools:

<http://www.essentialschools.org>

(NOTE: Registration Begins April 30, 2007.)

Project-Based Learning and the Community

This workshop invites K-12 teachers to reframe the Problem-Based Learning model through the lens of Appreciative Inquiry, focusing upon the assets of the local community in which their teaching is situated. With local community partners, K-12 teachers will design community-based projects for their grade & discipline with accompanying assessments linked to state standards. Considering the implications of relevance and relationships that this mode of teaching & learning implies, teachers will devote time to identifying the "rigor" inherent in utilizing the community as an authentic text for coursework & as a rich resource for curricular, experiential, & evaluation needs.

Workshop will meet July 23-July 27, 9:30-noon and 1-3:30 pm with an additional 10 hours required in teachers' local settings. 3

credits. Housing available in Bloomington for the week. Scholarships for Community Partners available. To register, contact: Claire J. King cljking@indiana.edu (812) 856-8233.

JOB POSTINGS FROM E3

Oregon Small Schools Initiative (OSSI): With the generous support of Meyer Memorial Trust & the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, E3 works with a cadre of large public high schools who have converted the school into multiple small, autonomous schools; additionally it works with educators, communities & organizations that created new small schools. E3 has several new positions, including an assistant director position and a school change coach position, open. Applications are due April 30, 2007. See <http://www.E3oregon.org> for more information.

SOME FUNDING & AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

ExxonMobil to Offer Cash Incentives to AP Students, Teachers

A \$125 million grant from ExxonMobil is being used to create the National Math & Science Initiative that will reward students who enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) classes & pay incentives to the AP teachers. The hope is that the promise of cash will encourage more students to take an interest in the mathematics & science fields. The mammoth ExxonMobil, the world's largest publicly traded oil company, hopes the initiative will help accomplish a goal of increasing by 50,000 the number of students passing AP tests in math, science, & English each year.

A portion of the program will focus on higher education. UTeach encourages students majoring in math & science to become teachers by offering a number of incentives. A pilot program in Texas resulted in double the number of students graduating with math & science teacher certifications. 80% of those new teachers are still in the classroom after four years.

The AP Incentive Programs, also piloted in Texas, will reward students from \$100 to \$500 for passing AP exams. Meanwhile, their teachers would be eligible to receive what could amount to thousands of dollars in bonuses, depending on the structure of the local program. The pilot has been very successful. In the 10 Dallas Public Schools campuses participating over the past 11

years, the number of students passing AP exams has increased from 71 in 1995 to 877 in 2006.

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/nation/stories/DN-mathscience_10nat.ART.State.Edition2.4450001.html

Information Technology Experiences for Students & Teachers (ITEST)

ITEST is designed to increase the opportunities for students and teachers to learn about, experience, and use information technologies within the context of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), including Information Technology (IT) courses. It is in direct response to the concern about shortages of information technology workers in the United States. Supported projects are intended to provide opportunities for middle and high school children and teachers to build the skills and knowledge needed to advance their study, and to function and to contribute in a technologically rich society. Additionally, exposure to engaging applications of IT is a means to stimulate student interest in the field and an important precursor to the academic preparation needed to pursue IT careers. The ITEST program seeks projects that demonstrate innovative and creative applications of IT in school and non-school contexts and is committed to preparing learners to benefit from and contribute to the growing national cyber-infrastructure.

ITEST has four components: (a) youth-based projects with strong emphases on career and educational pathways (b) comprehensive projects for students and teachers (c) renewals of existing projects (d) and an ITEST Resource Center.

Proposals for comprehensive projects for students and teachers will be accepted from all organizations with an educational mission. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, two- and four-year colleges and universities, businesses, informal science education organizations, professional societies, middle and secondary schools, and community agencies. Additionally, the ITEST program emphasizes the role that informal learning can have in influencing and nurturing interest in IT. Informal science education organizations include museums, science and technology centers, botanical gardens, zoos, and aquariums. These organizations already provide creative examples of IT

applications in exhibitions, programs, research, and administration. They are expected to be excellent partner resources for program design and management, and often have longstanding relationships with schools and community-based organizations.

Project duration for both Youth-Based Projects and Comprehensive Projects for Students and Teachers is expected to be three years. The funding level for Youth-Based Projects is up to \$900,000 (an annual average of \$300,000), while Comprehensive Projects for Students and Teachers will be funded up to \$1,200,000 (an annual average of \$400,000). Project duration for Renewals is two years. The funding level for Renewals is up to \$300,000 per year for Youth-Based Projects and up to \$400,000 per year for Comprehensive Projects for Students and Teachers. The Resource Center will be funded for up to five years at a maximum total funding level of \$5 million; annual average of approximately \$1,000,000.

Submission of preliminary applications is required. The next deadline for submission of preliminary applications is January 4, 2008. The full proposal must be submitted by May 8, 2008.
http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf07514

Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP)

(Federal Register: March 9, 2007 [CFDA# 84.165A])

Purpose of Program: The MSAP provides grants to eligible LEAs and consortia of LEAs to support magnet schools that are part of an approved desegregation plan. Through the implementation of magnet schools, these program resources can be used in pursuit of the objectives of the ESEA, which supports State and local efforts to enable all elementary and secondary students to achieve to high standards and holds schools, LEAs, and States accountable for ensuring that their students do so. In particular, the MSAP provides an opportunity for eligible entities to focus on expanding their capacity to provide public school choice to students who attend schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I, Part A of the ESEA (Title I).

Applications Available: March 9, 2007.

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: April 6, 2007.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 27, 2007.

Eligible Applicants: Local educational agencies (LEAs) or consortia of LEAs.

Estimated Available Funds: \$100,000,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$350,000-\$4,000,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$2,500,000 per year.

Estimated Number of Awards: 40.

Additional Information: Applicable regulations, priorities, and other information are available in the Federal Register notice.

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2007-1/030907c.html>

Toyota International Teacher Program - Galapagos Islands

The Toyota International Teacher Program for Galapagos Islands seeks to inspire the teaching of environmental stewardship through cross-curricular approaches. Teachers will explore how to develop creative teaching strategies for all subject areas, using the Galapagos Islands as a case study. Program participants will develop and deliver interdisciplinary presentations to Galapagueño educators, based on current or planned projects in their U.S. classrooms and schools.

While visiting this World Heritage Site, educators of all subject areas will observe and explore environmental projects, speak with experts, community advocates, & participate in group learning activities aimed at encouraging an internationally & environmentally oriented interdisciplinary curriculum. Program objectives include:

- To provide a professional development opportunity to build global skills and perspectives;
- To broaden awareness about environmental sustainability and stewardship and its interplay with education, culture and the economy; and,
- To expand collaborative skills through a professional presentation on integrating environmental studies across the secondary school curriculum.

Eligible applicants are U.S. citizens who are employed full-time as a secondary school classroom teacher (grades 7-12) and work in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Teachers must have a minimum of three years full-time teaching experience by the time of the program & expect to continue teaching at the secondary school level through at least the 2008-2009 school year. Though not required, participants are highly encouraged to have or attain the equivalent of at least two years of university level Spanish language ability in order to fully benefit from all program activities.

Expenses specific to the program will be covered by Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. This includes costs of program materials, transportation, meals, & lodging. Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. will also issue each participant's school a \$500 stipend to help defray the costs of participation during the school year.

The paper portion & online portion of the application must be submitted by no later than 4/23/07.
http://www.iie.org/Template.cfm?&Template=/programs/toyota/galapagos/galapagos_main.html

ING Unsung Heroes Awards Program

The ING Unsung Heroes program helps K-12 educators & their schools fund innovative classroom projects.

All full-time K-12 education professionals who are employed by an accredited K-12 public or private school are eligible.

Each year, 100 winners are selected to receive \$2,000 grants to help fund their innovative class projects. Three of those will be selected to win the top three awards of \$25,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000.

Applications for the 2007 awards are now available; application deadline is 4/30/07. <http://www.ing-usa.com/us/aboutING/communityconnections/ineducation/unsungheroes/index.htm>