

CASN News December 2012

CASN News is supported by the Career Academy Support Network and is based in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California Berkeley. CASN works primarily with high schools and districts engaged in high school redesign and with other stakeholders who support the college and career aspirations of youth.

To learn more about CASN and for free, down-loadable resources; videos about academy practices; an academy forms bank; and more, visit <http://casn.berkeley.edu> We also invite you to visit our new College Going Culture/College Access website at <http://collegetools.berkeley.edu>

BEST WISHES

All of us at CASN wish you the joys of the season. May there be magic in our teaching and learning. May our schools be filled with students and teachers who excel. May we dream big dreams, take more risks, and accomplish extraordinary things. May fair winds be in our educational sails.

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MORE ACT TEST-TAKERS ARE COLLEGE-READY; HOWEVER, THREE-QUARTERS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE STILL UNPREPARED FOR COLLEGE LEVEL WORK

One-fourth of this year's graduating class who took the ACT college-readiness exam met benchmarks in English, reading, math and science, indicating they could earn B's or C's in entry-level college courses. Students performed better in English and reading than in science and math, and the scores are an increase from 2005, when 21% of students were considered college-ready. While observers are pleased with the uptick in

overall readiness, they note that three-quarters of students still are unprepared for college-level work.

MAINE CONSIDERS ADDING 5TH YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL

Maine Gov. Paul LePage formed a task force last week to look at the idea of adding a fifth year of high-school classes that would allow students to earn either an associate's degree or credits toward a bachelor's degree. The concept is modeled after a program in North Carolina that provides students the opportunity for a fifth year and has received some initial funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

COLORADO HS INCREASES SCHOOL YEAR BY 39 DAYS (including some off-campus learning)

Manual High School in Denver will extend its school year in 2012-13 by 39 days, dedicating 25 of the total 210 school days to off-campus learning. The school's plans include opportunities for students to travel around the state and country, plus participate in community-based lessons. The school is among several in the district that has been granted innovation status and is not subject to all standard union and financial requirements.

A PROJECT THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

Indiana science teacher Michael Baer began a project-based lesson with a group of high-school students in 2009 that grew to unite the entire K-12 school district, plus the local community, to find a way to provide clean drinking water to residents of Haiti. In the end, a small group of students and teachers traveled to Haiti to implement their solutions and help install new purification devices.

TESTING TERRAIN SHIFTS FROM EXIT EXAMS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Fewer students are being required to pass exit exams to graduate from high school, but high school testing is increasing because more states are requiring college- and career-readiness tests, according to a Center on Education Policy study. Under national pressure to prepare students for college and the workforce, states are beginning to lean on exams like the SATs and ACTs to assess readiness. The newness of this trend shows in the numbers: Of the 11 states that currently require, or plan to require, college-entrance exams, five started doing so as recently as 2009-10.

MORE STATES USING VALUE-ADDED TEACHER EVALUATIONS *(or multiple measures approaches that include value-added)*

Thirty-two states have adopted teacher-evaluation models over the past three years, each based in part on students' test scores, according to a report from the National Council on Teacher Quality. Twenty-three states, including Oklahoma, are using a value-added model for at least a portion of assessments. In Oklahoma, tenured teachers can eventually be dismissed for poor performance.

NCEE ANNOUNCES HIGH SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM

A pilot program at 21 high schools in four states is aiming to prepare all students for community college by the completion of their second year in high school. The program, unveiled recently by the National Center on Education and the Economy, is based on "board-examination systems" used in England and other countries, and schools restructure their academic programs into lower- and upper-division classes. Students who pass a series of tests are allowed to attend community college after two years or continue in high school to pursue technical courses or a college-prep curriculum.

Excellence for All also requires schools to provide additional support and plans for students who are below grade-level in performance. There is a goal of every student passing the "Boards" by the end of 12th grade. As part of the pilot, participating high schools -- in Arizona, Connecticut, Kentucky, and Mississippi -- are working closely with feeder middle schools to provide students with the skills they will need in 9th grade.

FLORIDA BECOMES ANOTHER STATE TO REQUIRE ON-LINE LEARNING

A Florida law requires students -- beginning with this year's freshmen class -- to take an online class before they can graduate high school.

OHIO TEACHERS TEAM TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE

A program in Columbus, Ohio, has high-school teachers teaming up with college professors to prepare students for post-secondary education. The educators will co-teach about 200 sophomores and juniors in basic math and English courses with the aim of keeping them out of remedial courses in college. Roughly 41% of students who graduate from Ohio public schools and attend in-state colleges take remedial classes, state data show.

REPORT ON COMMON CORE IMPLEMENTATION

A new report from the Center on Education Policy finds that common core state standards in math and English language arts are moving closer to implementation at the district level in states that have adopted them. The study details districts' views about the impact of the standards, and their progress and challenges in implementation. Fifty-seven percent or more of the districts in states that have adopted the common core standards agree the new standards in math and English language arts are more rigorous than those they are replacing. Moreover, district officials see relatively little resistance to the standards from parents, community members, and local educators, with only 10 percent of districts considering resistance from teachers and principals to be a major challenge, and just 5 percent experiencing resistance from parents and community members. The results are based on a nationally representative survey of school districts conducted in the winter and spring of 2011. All responses came from districts in the 44 states that had adopted the standards at the time of analysis. To date, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the common core standards, which were released in June 2010 by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. To view the report: <http://www.cep-dc.org/>

GOOGLE LAUNCHES YOUTUBE FOR SCHOOLS

Google is aiming to provide educators and students access to educational content through a network called YouTube for Schools. The site is designed to link participating schools to educational videos from more than 600 partners such as the Smithsonian Institution and TED. Users also can access some 300 playlists created by teachers and organized by subject and grade level. <http://www.youtube.com/schools>

RESOURCES FROM MIT OPENCOURSEWARE

Highlights for High School

Steven King once said, "You can approach the act of writing with nervousness, excitement, hopefulness, or despair ... Come to it any way but lightly."

Refresh your writing with a short story, and check out Writing and Reading Short Stories (<http://e2ma.net/go/11543871763/4122807/112642490/12960/goto:http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/writing-and-humanistic-studies/21w-755-writing-and-reading-short-stories-fall-2006/>). This class focuses on the craft of the short story, which is explored through reading great short stories, writers speaking about writing, writing exercises, and conducting workshops on original stories.

Included is a set of helpful lecture notes, along with five examples of short stories written by students in the class. Also, see all writing resources on Highlights for High School

(<http://e2ma.net/go/11543871763/4122807/112642491/12960/goto:http://ocw.mit.edu/high-school/write-better/>)

TWO HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO RESOURCES FROM EDUTOPIA

Schools that Work: Critical Thinking: A Path to College and Career (features KIPP King Collegiate High School in San Lorenzo, CA) <http://www.edutopia.org/stw-kipp-critical-thinking>

Schools that Work: Academies Raise the Bar at a Comprehensive High School (Focusing on careers in green energy and manufacturing technology improves attendance and test scores at Laguna Creek High School in Elk Grove, California.) <http://www.edutopia.org/stw-career-techncial-education-academy-model-video>

SOME FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Fund for Teachers Grants

The Fund for Teachers provides funds for direct grants to teachers to support summer learning opportunities of their own design. Maximum award: \$5000. Eligibility: teachers who work with students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12, with a minimum of three years teaching experience, full-time, spending at least 50 percent of the time in the classroom at the time grants are approved and made. Deadline: varies by state. NOTE: only certain districts are eligible in many states. <http://www.fundforteachers.org>

Captain Planet Foundation: Grants for the Environment

The Captain Planet Foundation funds hands-on environmental projects to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. Maximum award: \$2500. Eligibility: U.S.-based schools and organizations with an annual operating budget of less than \$3 million. Deadline: January 15, 2012. <http://www.captainplanetfoundation.org>