CASN NEWS   MARCH 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

"I've had many teachers who taught us soon forgotten things, / But only a few like her who created in me a new thing, a new attitude, a new hunger / … What deathless power lies in the hands of such a person." - "Captured Fireflies by John Steinbeck

"Education may be the hardest civil rights fight of all. Discrimination is harder to prove and people often don't know what levers to pull to fix the problem." - Bill Gates at a recent Urban League Conference

Academy Factoid: In 2008, Nine out of Los Angeles Education Partnership's 12 Career Academies reported no dropouts, compared to a 29.6% dropout rate for LAUSD schools.

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NOTE: Trending now: Teacher Evaluations -- There have been many recent news stories regarding states that are developing state-wide teacher evaluation systems: The following two news briefs are but a sampling of similar stories in the news.

NEW COLORADO SYSTEM OF TEACHER EVALUATIONS
Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper recently signed into law new rules governing the evaluation of the state's teachers and principals. Under the new system, teacher effectiveness will be measured according to six standards, including the demonstration of content knowledge and student academic growth, with student test scores counting for 50% of teacher evaluations.

MAINE LEGISLATORS ADVANCE TEACHER EVALUATION BILL
A bill creating a statewide teacher-evaluation system cleared the Maine legislature's Education Committee on Thursday. The proposed system ties effectiveness ratings of teachers and principals to student progress, and allows for those who receive two or more consecutive "ineffective" ratings to have their contracts canceled. The bill, which now heads to the state House and Senate, also calls for more rigorous qualifications for teachers and requires districts to provide professional development for struggling educators.

Also, trending now...articles on online-learning:
MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS OFFER ONLINE-LEARNING OPTIONS
A growing number of school districts are using online-learning options to help at-risk students make up credits and stay on track to graduation. Such options are made available to students at home or in computer labs, libraries or classrooms, with many successful programs combining online learning with some face-to-face instruction. "Programs like this are going to be more important all of the time because we absolutely need to get more kids to graduate from high school," said Carrie Bisgard, online learning coordinator at Sierra Vista High School.

MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS CREATE THEIR OWN ONLINE-LEARNING PROGRAMS
Online-learning programs run by single school districts are seen as the fastest growing segment of the virtual-education movement. The growth is being driven, in part, by a desire to retain students who might otherwise choose out-of-district online schools. "We have students coming to us for a variety of reasons," says Randy Wood, principal of a new online school in Aurora, Colorado. "Whether it's kids that just want to accelerate their high school learning, kids who are working full time to support their families or themselves, or students with medical conditions."

SOME TEXAS DISTRICTS CALL FOR END TO HIGH STAKES TESTING
As Texas students started taking a new state-mandated test this week, districts across the state have gradually signed on to a resolution that says high-stakes standardized tests are "strangling our public schools."

The emphasis on state testing has become so prominent that **high school students could spend up to 45 of the 180 days in an academic year just in standardized testing**, Denise Williams, testing director for the Wichita Falls Independent School District, told the *Times Record News*. Those exams are stacked on top of classroom tests, Advanced Placement exams and college entrance exams like the SAT and ACT. Students in the third through eight grades now spend 27 days out of the year in testing, up from a previous 19 days.

REPORT: METLIFE SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER
One finding from the 2011 survey: Teacher job satisfaction is at the lowest it's been in more than two decades, likely as a consequence—at least in part—of the economic downturn and resulting cuts to education budgets, according to a national survey. (Editor's note: So think about ways to celebrate teachers/one another as educators and the important work we do.)
http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/contributions/foundation/american-teacher/MetLife-Teacher-Survey-2011.pdf

NEW REPORT: BUILDING A GRAD NATION (2012)
The 2012 report update of Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic, released March 19 by the Alliance for Excellent Education, America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises, and the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, shows that the nation continues to make progress, with more than half of states increasing graduation rates. The report also reveals that the number of "dropout factory" high schools—those graduating 60 percent or fewer students on time—decreased by 457 between 2002 and 2010, with the rate of decline accelerating since 2008. The number of "dropout factories" totaled 1,550 in 2010, down from 1,634 in 2009 and a high of 2,007 in 2002. The number declined by 84 between 2009 and 2010. As a result, 790,000 fewer students attended dropout factories in 2010 than 2002.

Key Report Findings:
    The national graduation rate increased by 3.5 percentage points between 2001 and 2009 from 72 percent to 75.5 percent in 2009.
    The South and the suburbs saw the largest declines in the number of "dropout factory" schools with 410 and 171, respectively, between 2002 and 2009.
    Contrary to 2008-09, progress in towns and rural areas stalled in 2009-2010.
    The following states saw the greatest change, decreasing the number of "dropout factory" schools by more than 50 between 2002 and 2010: Texas (-122); Florida (-62); and Georgia
    (-54). These states increased graduation rates during this period as well.
    If each state had a graduation rate of 90 percent, 580,000 additional students would have graduated in the class of 2011, increasing the GDP by $6.6 billion and generating $1.8 billion in additional revenue as a result of increased economic activity.
http://www.americaspromise.org/our-work/grad-nation/building-a-grad-nation.aspx

BRIEF: HOW STATES ARE DEFINING COLLEGE READINESS
The new issue of The Progress of Education Reform by the Education Commission of the States considers ways that states might define "college readiness," identifying for each approach the potential benefits, potential drawbacks and key components to consider. (short and worth a read.) http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse

STUDY: REACHING THE GOAL: THE APPLICABILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
This study examines the degree to which the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards are applicable to and important for postsecondary readiness. The study asked postsecondary instructors from a wide range of postsecondary courses and institutions to rate each standard on its applicability and importance to their course. https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/ReachingGoal-FullReport.pdf

NEW LINKED LEARNING CASE STUDY FROM SCOPE (Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education)
"Linked Learning in Porterville: Creating Capacity for Innovation and Change Through Collaborative Leadership and Community Engagement"
http://edpolicy.stanford.edu/publications/pubs/579

REPORT: MY VOICE STUDENT ASPIRATIONS SURVEY
A new national report describes results from a survey that asked students about their goals and aspirations. Key survey findings included that 87 percent of students are pushing themselves to do better in school and want to do their best. While some of the findings are encouraging, students also expressed that they feel undervalued in — and not all proud of — their schools. The results of the *My Voice™ National Report* offer educators and administrators unique insight into what motivates students to learn and succeed.
Conducted by the Pearson Foundation and the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, the most recent survey was conducted with 57,883 students (grades 6–12) during 2010–2011 academic year, representing more than 200 schools from across the United States. This comprehensive survey asked students to respond to questions about their school and learning environment that spotlight vital areas such as self-worth, engagement, and purpose.
Key survey findings from the *My Voice National Report* include:
   •   Almost all students believe they can be successful in school
   •   Nearly nine in ten students believe getting good grades is important
   •   Less than half of students think that their teachers care about them
   •   Nearly half of students say that school is boring
Additional findings in the report paint a mixed picture of how students feel and what is the best environment for success; the survey covers a wide variety of student opinions ranging from peer acceptance to teacher performance and academic motivation. http://www.qisa.org/publications/docs/MyVoiceStudentNationalReport2011.pdf

BRIEF: BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: EXAMINING LATE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

A new brief from the Center on Education Policy examines whether late graduation is worth the extra effort for students and their schools, finding the short answer to be yes. On-time graduation is preferable, but a recent study from the CEP using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 finds that late graduation pays off in academic outcomes and every aspect of life -- work, civic, and health. Late graduates do markedly better than GED recipients and dropouts, and when the data are controlled to compare students of equivalent socioeconomic status and achievement level, late graduates come close to on-time graduates in achievement. Late graduates are more likely to be minority or language minority students, live in a poorer household, and have two or more risk factors associated with dropping out. The brief recommends that schools be encouraged through accountability systems to keep all students in school until they graduate, regardless of how long it takes. And that accountability systems should also give schools credit for all students who graduate late, not just special education students and English language learners. http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Staffingstudents/Better-late-than-never-At-a-glance/Better-Late-than-Never-Examining-late-high-school-graduates-.html

NEW TOOLKIT SUPPORTS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS

The Family Engagement for High School Success Toolkit -- created by United Way Worldwide, AT&T, and the Harvard Family Research Project -- is designed to help nonprofits develop strong parent-school-community partnerships and provide networks of support to keep students on the path to high school graduation. http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/the-family-engagement-for-high-school-success-toolkit-planning-and-implementing-an-initiative-to-support-the-pathway-to-graduation-for-at-risk-students *(editor's note: available on Harvard Family Research Project website: http://www.hfrp.org)*

ANOTHER TOOLKIT: OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST) TOOLKIT

United Way Worldwide has a new resource to help "out-of-school time coalitions give more young access to high-quality programs. The Out-of-School TIme toolkit, funded by JCPenny, shows coalitions how to adopt a systemic approach to improving out-of-school time quality, access, sustainability, data collection and evaluation, and alignment and coordination.
http://outofschooltime.unitedway.org/

WEBINAR: THE SENIOR PROJECT: DEVELOPING DEEPER LEARNING AT SCALE

This recent Alliance for Excellent Education webinar/conversation on the Senior Project is archived on the Alliance's web site. The practitioner-participants emphasized ways in which the Senior Project serves as a capstone to K-12 learning and enables students to demonstrate their readiness for college and career and, at the same time, changes the culture of schools and even districts and communities. At one school, where they have been doing Senior Projects for fourteen years, the Senior Project is introduced in Spring of junior year and students might begin work on the community-based/field-work aspect

of their project in the summer before senior year. The webinar describes how schools build in support for Senior Project success through an English class or an advisory and/or a community expert/project mentor. Another aspect of the discussion focuses on how the Senior Project changes instruction and how skills such as research are benchmarked. The webinar also describes how and why the Senior Project became a statewide graduation requirement in Rhode Island. And there is also a discussion of ways to engage parents as resources and judges and ways in which schools can support all seniors taking a "learning stretch" students demonstrate and defend their readiness. Hear, too, about work to align Senior Projects with the common core standards, professional development that creates teacher mind-shifts, and the use of technology in Senior Projects.   http://media.all4ed.org/webinar-mar-23-2012 (worth a view or listen)

WEB RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS
RoboZZle.com and Scratch.MIT.edu
While few schools offer computer-programming courses at the middle- and high-school level, free computer programming resources such as RoboZZle and Scratch are available online. According to computer-science teacher Lauren Bricker, computer programming can help students learn important critical-thinking skills. Bricker adds, "These skills   are completely transferable...Students can use them to write a computer program or a history paper."
RoboZZle: *RoboZZle* is an addictive robot-programming puzzle game. The game mechanics are easy to understand, yet allow   for a wide variety of interesting puzzles. http://www.RoboZZle.com
Scratch: Scratch is a programming language that makes it easy for students and teachers to create their own interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art -- and share your creations on the web. As young people create and share Scratch projects,   they learn important mathematical and computational ideas, while also learning to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively. http://www.scratch.MIT.edu

Chartie.net
Create various types of graphs and charts - easily! Input data quickly, and explore multiple ways to show the data using the various types of graphs available. Easily see the relationships between the data as you play with the graphic. Note: Take (and save) a screen shot of your   chart as not all charts have been saved correctly. Once a chart has been published, it can no longer be edited. There is a short video tutorial on the homepage explaining how to use this site. This site uses Java.   http://www.chartie.net

Perplexing Parallelograms - a Geometry lesson
A surprising result occurs when two line segments are drawn through a point on the diagonal of a parallelogram and parallel to the sides. From multiple instances of this construction, students can arrive at various conjectures. The basis of this lesson is considering strategies for proving (or disproving) one of those conjectures. This lesson is a nice example of a result that might not be arrived at without the use of technology.

An applet, activity sheet, questions for students, suggestions for assessment, lesson extensions, and prompts for teacher reflection are included. http://illuminations.nctm.org/LessonDetail.aspx?id=L709

Reading Quest: Making Sense in Social Studies (Reading Strategies)
The ReadingQuest website is designed to help teachers with reading comprehension strategy instruction. A variety of resources are available, including directions for over twenty-five reading comprehension and content reading strategies and printable handouts and masters for transparencies. While designed with social studies in mind, this resource can be used to support students in any area of content-based reading. http://www.readingquest.org

FEATURED RESOURCES FROM THE CASN WEBSITE
Curriculum Database. Check out and/or contribute to the ever growing Academy Curriculum Database on the CASN website. You can search by industry/career sector and/or by subject area. http://casn.berkeley.edu/curriculum.php

Scheduling Guide for Small Learning Communities/Career Academies - An excellent resource for the master scheduling process.
http://casn.berkeley.edu/resources.php

SUMMER TIME AND THE LEARNING IS EASY -- SUMMER CONFERENCES
**2012 NAF NEXT (National Academy Foundation) July 16-19, 2012 Washington, D.C. Registration: http://next.naf.org

**Education Northwest - National Institute on High School Design and Improvement (From Structure to Instruction) - June 28-30 - Seattle, Washington http://educationnorthwest.org/event/sti12

**SREB (Southern Regional Education Board) - HIgh Schools That Work Summer Staff Development Conference - July 11-14, New Orleans http://www.sreb.org/page/11142?summer_conference.html

**Model Schools Conference - International Center for Leadership in Education = Kissimmee, FLorida - June 24-27, 2012
http://www.modelschoolsconference.com/

** PBL World - sponsored by the Buck Institute of Education and Napa Unified School District - at New Technology High School, June 18-22 http://www.pblworld.org

Hold the Dates:
** National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) Annual Conference - November 8-11, 2012, Renaissance Nashville Hotel.
** Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum 2012 - November 9-11, 2012, Providence, R.I.

** 2012 AVID National Conference, Transforming Schools for College Readiness, San Diego, CA December 5-8, 2012 http://www.avid.org/eve_nationalconference.html

SOME FUNDING AND AWARD OPPORTUNITIES
Captain Planet Foundation: Grants for the Environment
The Captain Planet Foundation funds hands-on environmental projects that encourage innovative programs that empower children and youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. Maximum award: $2,500. Eligibility: 501(c)3 organizations. Deadline: May 31, 2012.   http://captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants/

MetLife/NASSP: Breakthrough Schools
The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the MetLife Foundation are calling for entries in the search for the nation's top Breakthrough Schools. Applicants should be high-achieving middle or high schools, or schools that are making dramatic improvements in student achievement, whose best practices and outstanding results can inform other schools as they further their own improvement efforts. Honorees will be chosen based upon documented success in implementing strategies aligned with the three core areas of NASSP's Breaking Ranks II publication: collaborative leadership; personalization; and curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Maximum award: $5,000 recognition in the association's monthly magazine, Principal Leadership. Eligibility: high-achieving middle and high schools with 40 percent or more students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. Deadline: June 30, 2012.
http://www.principals.org/Awards-and-Recognition/MetLife-Foundation-NASSP-Breakthrough-Schools