

CASN News November 2007

CASN News is supported by the Career Academy Support Network at the University of California Berkeley, Graduate School of Education. CASN works to support high schools and districts engaged in high school redesign, especially those which are developing smaller learning communities and/or academies.

PLEASE SHARE CASN NEWS WITH OTHERS WHO MAY BE INTERESTED.

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"It is individuals, working, first of all, despite the system, and secondly, connecting with other kindred spirits, that will begin to develop the critical mass that changes the system." -- Michael Fullan

VETO OVERRIDE FOR FY 08 ED FUNDING FAILS IN U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The recent (November 15) House of Representatives fell two votes short in its attempt to override President Bush's veto of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education appropriations bill. The final vote tally was 277-141, with 226 Democrats and 51 Republicans voting to override the President's veto. Fifteen members of Congress did not vote. (A special appreciation to all of you who contacted your elected representatives to advocate for funding for education.)

ONE IN 10 AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS ARE 'DROPOUT FACTORIES'

The collective sigh heard at 6:39 a.m. (EDT) on October 30, 2007 was the result of a new Associated Press article hitting the wire on the analysis of U.S. Department of Education data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Nancy Zuckerbrod writes that more than one in 10 high schools across America are "dropout factories," i.e., a high school where no more than 60 percent of students who start as freshman make it to their senior year. While the number of schools failing to graduate students hasn't increased over the past decade, there also has been no decrease in such schools, which is not a status quo to be

maintained. Dropout factories affect the student population disproportionately, as the highest concentrations of failing schools are in large cities or high-poverty rural areas in the South and Southwest, and most of these schools have high minority enrollment.

But one school, the Baltimore Talent Development High School, has gotten it right. The school sits in the middle of a high-crime, impoverished neighborhood, but 90 percent of its students are on track to graduate on time. The majority of Talent Development High School students enter the 9th grade reading at a 5th or 6th grade level. The fact that children enter high school with such poor literacy skills signals that the problem of dropouts is not simply a high school failing, and raises questions about what high schools can be expected to do. It does seem that educators at Baltimore Talent Development High School have a positive approach, as one student said, educators "concentrate on what's best for us together...it's very family-oriented. We feel really close to them." http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/D/DROPOUT_FACTORYES?SITE=SCCOL&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED LURES BACK DROPOUTS

Los Angeles schools are turning to YouTube and MySpace to advertise alternative ways of earning diplomas for students who have dropped out or are on the verge of doing so. "For all of those young people out there who have dropped out, the message is very clear: Come back. Come back to school. We have resources for you," said Superintendent David L. Brewer. "We believe in second chances."

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND DILEMMA: WHAT IS PROFICIENT?

According to some educators, states that have set very low definitions of proficiency may be the only ones which meet NCLB requirements by 2014.

Are the demands of NCLB causing States to lower standards?

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/227/story/20587.html>

MORE ON NCLB: WORD IS....

(From the Ed Blogs) In spite of recent declarations to focus on the nation's education

agenda, the reauthorization of NCLB is at a standstill because no formal legislation has been introduced, according to The Washington Post. Polski3's View from Here ponders the implications of this gridlock: So, does this mean NCLB will continue as it currently is written? Does this mean that NCLB will not be funded for the 2007-08 fiscal year (or was it already funded by Congress for fiscal year 2007-08?) Is this action on part of the Senate Education Committee a way to kill NCLB? David Hoff of Education Week speculates that if Congress doesn't reauthorize soon, the current version of law could remain as is for the next three years.

TESTING MANDATE EXPECTED TO INCREASE TIME FOR SCIENCE

Some proponents of science education say they have faced no greater foe over the past few years than federally mandated tests in reading and mathematics, which have forced teachers to devote increasingly bigger chunks of class time to building students' skills in those two subjects. But if testing has squeezed science out, can testing also bring science back? That's the hope of teachers, scientists, and others who believe that a provision of the No Child Left Behind Act requiring states to begin testing students in science in elementary, middle, and high schools this academic year could compel schools to carve out more time for the subject....States will have to test students once a year in science within three grade spans: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/10/07science.h27.html?tmp=2014134409>

MAINE CONSIDERS REQUIRING SENIORS TO APPLY TO COLLEGE

A month after Maine's law encouraging all high school seniors to apply to college went into effect, the state's education commissioner is calling for such applications to become mandatory. If legislators agree, members of the class of 2009 would be required to complete a college application in order to be eligible for a high school diploma. http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/10/20/plan_requires_high_schoolers_to_apply_to_college_to_get_diploma/

INDIANA HS STUDENTS TO RUN GOAT FARM; BUSINESS PLAN

APPROVED <http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071028/>

PAY-TO-PLAY SAPS PARENTS' WALLETS, SIDELINES STUDENTS

More than 88,000 southeastern Michigan students paid a cumulative \$10 million in fees to play sports this school year—activities that once were considered vital to public school education, provided, if at all, free. The pay-to-play format was a logical outcome for school districts seeking to maintain their academic mission while expenses climbed and revenues ebbed. However, critics say thousands of middle and high school students are victims of a system that shifts costs from schools to families. (source: Detroit News)

INTEL HOSTS OSCAR-STYLE AWARDS EVENT FOR EDUCATORS

Educators from the six schools honored by Intel for their exceptional math and science programs emerged from their limousines in tuxedos and taffeta and walked along a red carpet to a black-tie reception. "We want them to feel like stars, because they are," said Craig R. Barrett, chairman of the board for Intel Corp. (source: eschoolnews)

SNOOZE OR LOOSE

Using newly developed technological and statistical tools, sleep scientists have recently been able to isolate and measure the impact on adolescents of a single lost hour of sleep. Because children's brains are a work-in-progress until the age of 21, and because much of that work is done while a child is asleep, this lost hour appears to have an exponential impact on children that it simply doesn't have on adults. New York Magazine, 10/15/07

MARYLAND WILL OFFER ALTERNATIVES TO HS EXIT EXAM

Maryland will continue with its plan to require exit exams for all students, including special-education and ELL students, starting with the Class of 2009, but will offer two alternatives for teens who struggle to pass all four subject-area exams. Students who achieve a high enough combined score will be allowed to graduate despite failing to pass one of the tests, and those who do not will instead be able to complete a state-designated project to make up the difference.

BOSTON HS REQUIRES COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE FOR GRADUATION

An innovative Boston public school is offering inner-city students the same opportunities affluent students receive at top private schools. The 216-student school, called Another Course to College, offers college-like seminars and requires its students to be accepted into college before they can earn a high school diploma. (source: National Public Radio)

MIAMI-DADE SCHOOLS TO TRY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AS ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTIONS, SUSPENSIONS

The Miami-Dade school board approved a plan to allow schools to experiment with restorative justice, a Native American method in which victims and offenders meet to discuss the emotional impact of a crime and how to right the wrong. "It's always the same kids being suspended and expelled," said board member Ana Rivas Logan. "We need to have our educational system work on the front end." http://www.miamiherald.com/news/miami_dade/story/275375.html

WITH WORLD GROWING SMALLER, IB GETS BIG

In a large black-and-white photograph hanging in Jane Stassen's office, 1930s-era construction workers perch on a thin steel beam some 70 stories above New York City, precarious but undaunted as they read newspapers and eat lunch on a break. It's no accident that Ms. Stassen, the director of curriculum and instruction for the 3,200-student South St. Paul school district, keeps this image on view above her desk. She sees a parallel to the cash-poor district's plan to become what would apparently be the first public school system in the nation to offer the demanding International Baccalaureate program to all its students by next fall. "We're going confidently out on a limb," Ms. Stassen explained.

As to why a small community best known for its long-gone meat-packing plants would choose to put itself in the vanguard of education reform, district officials say the driving force was pretty cut and dried: the need to prepare students to compete for 21st-century jobs. "What we want is for all our kids to pursue postsecondary [education]," Ms.

Stassen said. “In order to prepare them for that, we need to offer them rigorous, challenging academic experiences, and that’s basically what [IB] is all about.” The perception that the Geneva, Switzerland-based International Baccalaureate Organization's academic programs offer just what American students need in today’s more globally competitive environment seems to be catching on.

After decades of obscurity and slow expansion, the pace of growth in IB—including courses of study for the primary and middle school years as well as the better-known high-school-level programs—has quickened considerably. Favorable word of mouth among educators—along with an endorsement from President Bush and glowing accounts in national magazines—has helped catapult IB into U.S. classrooms. More than 225 American schools so far this year have started offering at least one IB program, bringing the U.S. total to 800. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/31/10Ib.h27.html>

STATES TURN TO SENIORS FOR HELP IN CLASSROOMS

After a 41-year career in Maryland state government, Dorothy Johns is a volunteer teacher’s aide in Baltimore. Students’ grades have gone up and teacher turnover has gone down since Johns and others started helping out in classrooms. The kids say they like reading with Johns, and studies show their grades have improved. They are all beneficiaries of in an inner-city volunteer program designed to pair retired elders with schools in need of extra help. As baby boomers reach retirement age and begin to leave the public schools’ teaching ranks in droves, states are launching programs like Baltimore’s to fill mounting classroom vacancies. Maryland, California, Virginia and other states are recruiting retirees to work in public schools as volunteers and salaried employees, offering boomers what they say they want — meaningful second careers.

In Maryland, first-term Gov. Martin O’Malley (D) plans to take the successful Baltimore program statewide. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) this summer launched a statewide program that partners with high-tech companies to recruit, train and place retiring employees in the state’s public schools. Virginia and other states use federal

money to train retirees for volunteer work in classrooms and with students who need extra help. (source: stateline.org)

STUDY: SMALLER CLASS SIZES IMPROVE STUDENT HEALTH

A study of nearly 12,000 Tennessee children found that those randomly assigned to classes of 13 to 17 students gained, on average, 1.7 quality-adjusted life-years. According to one doctor familiar with the study, the findings suggest that in cost-benefit terms, class size may be more beneficial than money spent on antibiotics, hospital buildings or vaccines.

PAPER: GRUBB & OAKES ARGUE AGAINST OVEREMPHASIS ON STANDARDS AND TESTING, SUGGEST BROADER DEFINITION OF RIGOR

In a new paper arguing that the ongoing national push to dramatically improve American high schools has gotten off course, two University of California education professors take aim at what they see as an overemphasis on states' adoption of higher standards for graduation and more-rigorous tests. "The push to enhance rigor and standards behind the high school diploma is seriously flawed," write W. Norton Grubb, an education professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Jeannie Oakes, an education professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, in the paper. "Any gains come at the expense of other goals for high school reform, including equity, curricular relevance, and student interest." The paper argues that discussions of "rigor" too often use a narrow definition that neglects higher-order-thinking skills, applications of learning in unfamiliar settings, and academic depth in favor of breadth.

To download the executive summary or full report of "Restoring Value to the High School Diploma: The Rhetoric and Practice of Higher Standards" see: <http://epicpolicy.org/node/526>

STUDY: HIGH SCHOOLS FOR EQUITY: POLICY SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

At a time when the achievement gap in California is large and appears unchanging, some high schools are beating the odds. How these schools are accomplishing this and

how their approaches can inform state policy so that more schools can realize the same success is the focus of a study being released by the School Redesign Network at Stanford University (SRN) and Justice Matters in San Francisco.

The study — High Schools for Equity: Policy Supports for Student Learning in Communities of Color — focuses on five urban, public high schools from across the state that have no selective admissions requirements, serve primarily students of color and low-income students, graduate students at higher rates than the state average, and send more than 80% of them to college. These five are not the only high schools succeeding against the odds, but they represent the types of educational approaches required to close California's educational achievement gap and to enable all students to move on to successful career and college pathways. (For abstract and/or full report, see <http://www.srnleads.org/press/news/hsfe.html>)

PRACTICE: COLLEGE GOING CULTURE - from the field

A College Going Culture practice from Riverview High School in Sarasota, Florida: Teacher Debra Davis takes a picture of each ninth grader in a graduation cap-and-gown and covers the back of her room with those freshmen photos.

PRACTICE: COLLEGE STUDENTS AS MENTORS - from the field

Boston's MATCH Charter Public High School employs 45 recent college graduates who become members of its MATCH Tutor Corps. They live on campus and work 12-hour days, tutoring small groups of students. They are paid an average of \$600/month during their one-year service. Each tutor works with very small groups – one-on-one or one-on-two, working with only four or five students a year. Each day, the tutor spends at least two hours with his or her students.

With three times more tutors at the school than teachers, the tutors take on building partnerships with their students' families – making phone calls and home visits. Because the tutors all live together on the third floor of the school, they have plenty of opportunity to discuss their students and the work they're doing. One student told ABC

News, “We’ll go out and talk about how our kids are doing. We’ll even be like – we need to stop talking about school for a little while. But it’s what we’re always thinking about.” Students attending MATCH Charter graduate from high school and go on to college – with some graduates attending Duke, Georgetown, Dartmouth, Brown, and Boston College..... MATCH Charter pays for the program with funds through AmeriCorps. The first group of tutors moved into its dormitories in 2004. <http://abcnews.go.com/WN/Spotlight/Story?id=3699801&page=1>

NINTH GRADE CONTINUES TO REMAIN KEY IN GRADUATION PIPELINE

In 2007, an estimated 1.2 million students failed to earn high school diplomas with their graduating class. Given that high school graduates, on average, enjoy higher earnings and require fewer government services than non-graduates, the costs of dropping out are high for both individuals and the nation as a whole. Education Week's annual Diplomas Count report analyzes the high school graduation process as a series of grade-to-grade promotions in the high school pipeline. Nationally, the 9th grade is the leading source of student loss. This finding suggests that programs to increase graduation rates may need to help 9th graders get off to a good start in high school.

ED ADVOCACY: ED IN 08: STRONG AMERICAN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

The Strong American Schools’ ED in 08 campaign is working to raise education an important issue in the national political campaigns and especially in the presidential debates and platforms. The campaign thus far has garnered the support of celebrities, local and national leaders and thousands of people in education and out. They have produced a number of public service announcements about the need for education reform with actors from The Creative Coalition, an entertainment industry social and political advocacy group. The ED in ’08 website serves as a source of education policy information and dialog, has become a launch pad for mobilizing the grassroots around the education crisis. <http://www.EDino8.com>

EDUTOPIA PUBLISHES GO-GREEN ISSUE <http://www.edutopia.org/go-green-2007>

ACT CURRICULUM SURVEY RESULTS

While the majority of high school teachers believe that meeting state standards prepares students for college-level work, most postsecondary instructors disagree, according to the ACT National Curriculum Survey Results 2005-2006. Among the findings: 74% of high school teachers said that meeting state standards prepare students for college-level work. 65% of postsecondary instructors said that state standards prepared students poorly or very poorly for college-level work.

Here are the findings broken down by subject:

In English, 76% of high school teachers said that meeting state standards prepare students for college-level work, while 33% of postsecondary instructors thought the same. In reading, 72% of high school teachers said that meeting state standards prepare students for college-level work. Only 36% of postsecondary instructors agreed.

In math, 79% of high school teachers said that meeting state standards prepare students for college-level work, while 42% of postsecondary instructors believed this to be true. In science, the percentages were 67% of high school teachers and 32% of postsecondary instructors. 95% of high school teachers and 59% of postsecondary instructors said they are familiar with their state's standards. 32% of high school teachers said that students today are better prepared for college-level work, while 13% of postsecondary instructors agreed.

Although high school teachers tend to have a more positive view of state standards, the majority of both groups (68% of high school teachers and 86% of postsecondary instructors) think that student preparation today for college-level work is the same or worse than student preparation five to 10 years ago. Adding more state standards to prepare students for college-level work is not the answer, according to ACT, the not-for-profit education organization that published the survey. Instead, high school educators should consider incorporating fewer and more targeted state standards focused on the essential knowledge and skills in each content area instead of many standards covering

a broad array of topics and skills. This could bring state standards more in line with what postsecondary schools require of entering freshmen. Source: Aligning Postsecondary Expectations and High School Practice: The Gap Defined, 2007

VERIZON OFFERS FREE ON LINE ADOLESCENT LITERACY ASSESSMENT TOOL

<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/Best-Practices>

SOME WEBSITES FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS

College On-Line Navigator

The U.S. Department of Education has a new tool available that will help students and families learn more about colleges and universities The College Online Navigator replaces the College Opportunities Online (COOL) Web site. The Navigator includes information about nearly 7000 postsecondary institutions, such as programs offered, retention and graduation rates, prices, aid available, degrees awarded, campus safety, and accreditation. Users may search by programs offered, degrees offered, institution type, price, selectivity, distance from home, school size, and more. <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

Hippocampus

Find multimedia content and lessons ready to go, and customizable by your preferences on this incredible, free, online learning site from the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education. Whether you need a comprehensive curriculum for selected high school courses, a way to differentiate instruction, or materials to reinforce challenging topics, this site has it. The current subjects include Algebra, American Government, Biology, Calculus, Environmental Science, Physics, Religion, and U.S. History. The subjects extend through high school and into AP and college level material. Open a course and browse the topics, especially the multimedia offerings.

A free instructor account allows you to select the modules you want your students to see and share them via a unique URL for assignments or at-home review. Since the content

is offered collaboratively from multiple sources, the courses each have their own "look." Many courses include some audio-- a real plus for ESL/ELL or low level readers. Requires Flash and Quicktime. <http://www.hippocampus.org>

Language Resource Centers

This site is a gateway to 15 centers that support foreign language instruction. Led by nationally and internationally recognized language professionals, the centers create language-learning materials, offer professional development workshops, and conduct research. Some centers concentrate on specific language areas; others focus on foreign languages in general. (Department of Education) http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1966

Literary Devices

This site may work for as a reference site or even as a review for students. The best part is discovering (or rediscovering) the names for those devices that are used less often, but students often ask about. This list would also work as an addition to AP literary terms that many English teachers give their AP students. Consider having your students create an ongoing class glossary wiki of literary devices with examples from your own literature study during the year. Require them to contribute or give extra credit for their additions and any clever examples or illustrations they may add. <http://www.spellingpolice.com/higherhome.html>

Teacher Leaders Network (TLN)

The Teacher Leaders Network (TLN), founded by John Norton, relies on Internet technology and old-fashioned conferencing to build a professional community of highly skilled teachers who share a desire to apply what they know and can do in leadership settings. The website includes an up-to-date, comprehensive, and annotated list of articles, reports, presentations, and resources related to using the latest web technologies in the classroom. The biweekly newsletter, "Of Particular Interest," is filled with information, tools, and stories. TLN is a program of the Center for Teaching Quality. http://www.teacherleaders.org/old_site/Resources/technology.html

The Common Craft Show

The Common Craft Show includes a series of short explanatory videos about Web 2.0. Its creators seek “to fight complexity with simple tools and plain language” and they do it admirably. They call their format "paperworks" and publish a new video about once a month. Must-see videos: Social Bookmarking in Plain English, Social Networking in Plain English, Wikis in Plain English, RSS in Plain English, What Are the Differences between Message Boards and Weblogs? <http://www.commoncraft.com/show>

Seven Things You Should Know About Series

The EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) 7 Things You Should Know About ... series provides concise information on emerging learning technologies and related practices. Each brief focuses on a single technology or practice and describes: what it is, how it works, where it is going, and why it matters to teaching and learning. <http://www.educause.edu/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutSeries/7495>

A Glossary of Some Classroom 2.0 Terms

Working Toward Excellence, the Journal of the Alabama Best Practices Center, works to identify and advocate for promising education practices, especially in the area of technology. This Web 2.0 glossary includes simple definitions of terms like “asynchronous” or “social software” and examples of classroom applications. <http://www.abpc21.org/glossary.html>

Research 2.0: Bringing the research to you

This Wiki, created by educator Eric Hoefler, provides an exhaustive but succinct inventory of Web 2.0 tools, with links to each one. <http://research20.wikispaces.com/Bringing+the+Research+to+you>

Pew Internet and American Life Project

The Pew Internet and American Life Project produces reports that explore the impact of the Internet on families, communities, work and home, daily life, education, health care,

and civic and political life. The project aims to be an authoritative source on the evolution of the Internet through collection of data and analysis of real-world developments as they affect the virtual world. <http://www.pewinternet.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

SLC National Conference 2008: From Structure to Instruction: Sharing Best Practices and Lessons Learned Las Vegas June 23-25, 2008

Link to additional Info/registration form available at <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sslc/events.php>

California Partnership Academies Conference

San Diego March 24-26, 2008

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/cpaconference.asp>

SOME FUNDING, AWARD, & CONTEST OPPORTUNITIES

Corning Foundation

The Corning Foundation educational grants support community service programs for students, curriculum enrichment, student scholarships, facility improvement, and instructional technology projects for the classroom. The Foundation directs resources primarily toward initiatives that improve the quality of life near Corning Incorporated locations. Each year, the Foundation fulfills approximately 225 grants totaling some \$2,250,000. Support goes to institutions that are tax-exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are public charities as defined in Sectionlar

Verizon Foundation Grants Program: Listen to a Life Essay Contest

The Listen to a Life Essay Contest, sponsored by the Legacy Project of Generations United, asks students to interview a grandparent or grand-friend 50 years or older about the older person's hopes and goals through their life, how they achieved their goals and overcame obstacles or how dreams may have changed along the way. The student then writes a 300-word essay based on the interview. Maximum Award: a Lenovo ThinkCentre computer, \$800 in Orchard software, and an iPod Classic with video and

\$25,000 worth of software for the student's school. Eligibility: students ages 8-18.
Deadline: March 31, 2008.

Oracle Education Foundation: ThinkQuest International 2008

Oracle Education Foundation recently announced the opening of ThinkQuest International 2008 and is inviting students and teachers from around the globe to take part in the international project learning competition. ThinkQuest is open to students between the ages of 9 and 19 and their teacher-coaches worldwide. Students are encouraged to team with peers in other regions to develop Web sites on educational topics. The program is designed to help participants develop important skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, self-direction, problem solving, and technology skills.

In addition, students become published Web-authors in the popular ThinkQuest Library, sharing their work with thirty million Web learners each year. Qualifying entries are published in the ThinkQuest Library. Winners receive prizes from the Oracle Education Foundation, including laptops and \$1,000 school grants for the top five teams in each age division, travel to the annual ThinkQuest Live event for the top three teams in each division, and digital cameras for the team that receives the Global Perspectives Award. Interested students and educators should visit the ThinkQuest Web site. Deadline: April 2, 2008 <http://www.thinkquest.org/>

FOR CALIFORNIA CASN NEWSites: CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP

ACADEMIES Funding source: CA Dept of Education Eligible Applicants: local educational agencies Required Eligibility Criteria: Funds available for new programs: Only school districts with comprehensive high schools are eligible to apply. Only applicants that have fully operational career-focused programs, grades 10-12, currently unfunded and using the CPA model will be considered for new funding. They must follow the specifications of California *Education Code* sections 54690-54697.

Funding Description:

This is annual funding for the currently operating California Partnership Academies (CPA) programs included in the State Budget. The CPAs are effective school/district/business partnerships, providing integrated academic and career technical instruction to students, including those who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are not motivated by traditional curricula. The CPA model, a school-within-a-school, for students in the tenth through twelfth grades, establishes viable partnerships with either the business community or the public sector or both. Emphasis is placed on student achievement, attendance, and program accountability. View at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=1095>

FEDERAL FUNDING: NEW (and likely final) SLC FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Source:

U.S Dept. of Education

Program:

Smaller Learning Communities Program

Eligibility:

1. Eligible Applicants: Local educational agencies (LEAs), including educational service agencies and BIE schools, applying on behalf of one or more large high schools.

An LEA may apply only on behalf of a school or schools that is not included in an SLC implementation grant that has a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year (September 30, 2008).

To be considered for funding, LEAs must identify in their applications the name or names of the eligible large high school or schools and the number of students enrolled in each school. A large high school is defined as one having grades 11 and 12, with 1,000 or more students enrolled in grades 9 and above. Enrollment figures must be based upon data from the current school year.

Note: In prior years' competitions, we have also accepted enrollment data from the most recently completed school year, since applications were due after some schools had already completed the school year. This was done in an effort to give applicants the necessary flexibility required by the timing of the competition.

However, applications for awards under this competition will be due during the school year and, thus, schools can easily determine enrollment data for the current school year. Further, allowing applicants to use data from the previous school year in these circumstances could result in inaccurate eligibility determinations. Consequently, in an effort to ensure consistent application of the eligibility requirements, applicants must submit data from the

current school year to demonstrate that each school included in the application meets the definition of large high school.

We will not accept applications from LEAs applying on behalf of schools that are being constructed and do not have an active student enrollment at the time of application.

LEAs may apply on behalf of no more than eight schools.

In an effort to encourage systemic, district-level reform efforts, we permit an individual LEA to submit only one grant application in a competition, specifying in each application which high schools the LEA intends to fund.

In addition, we require that an LEA applying for a grant under this competition apply only on behalf of a high school or high schools for which it has governing authority, unless the LEA is an educational service agency that includes in its application evidence that the entity that has governing authority over the eligible high school supports the application. An LEA, however, may form a consortium with another LEA and submit a joint application for funds. The consortium must follow the procedures for group applications described in 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129 in EDGAR.

An LEA is eligible for only one grant whether the LEA applies independently or as part of a consortium.

Purpose:

The Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program awards discretionary grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support the implementation of SLCs and activities to improve student academic achievement in large public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students. SLCs include structures such as freshman academies, multi-grade academies organized around career interests or other themes, "houses" in which small groups of students remain together throughout high school, and autonomous schools-within-a-school, as well as personalization strategies, such as student advisories, family advocate systems, and mentoring programs.

More Information:

Angela Hernandez-Marshall, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W236, Washington, DC 20202-6200.

Telephone: (202) 205-1909 or by e-mail:

smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov.

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: January 10, 2008. We will be able to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications if we have a better understanding of the number of entities that intend to apply for funding.

Therefore, we strongly encourage each potential applicant to send a notification of its intent to apply for funding to smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov by January 10, 2008. The notification of intent to apply for funding is optional. Applicants that do not supply this e-mail notification may still apply for funding.

Award Information:

Deadline:

February 25, 2008

Maximum Award:

\$1,250,000-\$14,000,000

Number Of Awards:

40

Period:

Up to 60 months.