

CCASN News September 2013

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

To learn more about CCASN and for free, down-loadable resources; videos about academy practices; a curriculum database; 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>

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States May Move Closer to Uniform Way of Identifying ELLs

The widespread adoption of the common-core standards and the imminent rollout of shared content assessments is pushing states to find common ground in yet another dimension of schooling: how best to serve the growing population of English-language learners.

With a just-released set of recommendations from the Council of Chief State School Officers to help guide them, most states are now set to embark on an effort to bring more uniformity to identifying who English-learners are and when those students no longer need language instruction. The goal is to move all states to a more consistent playing field over the next four or five years.

Ohio District Opens Center to Provide Students After-School Help

The Hillard school district in Ohio is keeping a resource center open on weekends and as late as 9 p.m. on weeknights to allow students to use computers, get help from teachers and talk to counselors after regular school hours. The McVey Innovative Learning Center also offers 3D printers, meeting rooms for students to work together and a cafe as part of its extended-day services.

Alabama Credits Public - Private Partnership for AP Success

Students in Alabama for five years have led the country in the percentage increase in the number of students passing Advanced Placement exams in math, science and English, officials have announced. The gains are being attributed, in part, to a public-private program called the Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program, which focuses on study sessions, teacher training, support from master teachers and other methods.

Iowa District Puts Twist on Four-Day Week

As more districts adopt four-day weeks to cope with budget crunches, one rural Iowa district says it is embracing the practice for a different reason: to squeeze more time out of the school calendar for student enrichment and teachers' professional development.

Starting this school year, students in the 550-student WACO community school district are attending school Monday through Thursday, spending an hour longer in class each day so that no classes will need to be held on Fridays. Students in the district—which serves the communities of Wayland, Crawfordsville, and Olds—have the option of attending remedial or enrichment classes every other Friday or to enroll in college-level classes.

This new plan for the school year follows the June 2013 passage of Iowa's House File 215, which officially defines the state's school year length requirements in both days and hours. Under the new law, a full school year is defined as having at least 1,080 hours, or an equivalent 180 days, of instruction, but it's up to districts to inform the state of which metric they will use to measure their school year—in hours or days.

2013 SAT Test Scores Show No Change

SAT scores remained flat for students in the class of 2013, with just 43 percent performing well enough to be considered college-ready—the same proportion as last year, according to new results issued Thursday.

Yet, African-American and Latino students in this year's graduating class saw slight gains. Also, a record share of students taking the college-entrance exam (46 percent) were minorities.

Overall, 15.6 percent of African-Americans in the class of 2013 who took the exam met or exceeded the College Board's college-ready benchmark, compared with 14.8 percent in 2012. Among Latinos, 23.5 percent reached that level, up from 22.8 percent the previous year.

The New York City-based College Board, which administers the SAT, released the results for 1.7 million test-takers on Sept. 26. This total represented a drop of about 4,400 in the number of students taking the exam from the class of 2012. Participation had grown every year since 1990, except for a slight dip between 2005 and 2006.

Educational Researcher Awarded MacArthur 'Genius' Grant

Educational research psychologist and former teacher Angela Duckworth has devoted her career to understanding traits beyond IQ or test-taking abilities that predict a student's success— including grit and self-control. It is perhaps her own possession of these traits that helped lead the MacArthur Foundation to name Ms. Duckworth as one of this year's 24 MacArthur Fellows.

Duckworth and her colleagues have worked to develop ways to empirically measure grit and self-control. According to Duckworth, "even when controlling for cognitive ability, the presence of these traits are important predictors of success. Unlike simple measures of IQ or natural intelligence, these are traits that can be taught."

"For so long, we've focused on a very narrow set of student competencies— whatever we could measure with a test," Duckworth added. "The whole child is so much bigger than that. I want to open the conversation to include aspects of student confidence and well-being far broader than those currently being used by policymakers."

Her goal, Duckworth said, is to identify ways to change K-12 educational practice in a way that encourages the cultivation of grit and self-control in students. She hopes to identify a more adaptive set of strategies and beliefs than children currently have that would incline them to work harder.

"I hope my research is used primarily as a starting point to this conversation, as opposed to an end point," she said. (sources: multiple, including Education Week, New York Times)

Survey: Teachers Feel Unprepared for the Common Core

Even as the Common Core State Standards are being put into practice across most of the country, nearly half of teachers feel unprepared to teach them, especially to disadvantaged students, according to a new survey.

The study by the EPE Research Center, an arm of Editorial Projects in Education, found deep wells of concern among teachers about their readiness to meet the challenges posed by the common core in English/language arts and mathematics.

"Teachers are under tremendous pressure," said Lisa Dickinson, an assistant director of educational issues for the American Federation of Teachers, which conducts several common-core training programs in school districts each month. "The new standards do require a major shift in instruction."

U.S. Education Department Issues Guidance on Double-Testing

In new guidance, the U.S. Department of Education offered states the chance to suspend their current tests this spring, as long as they administer field tests being designed by the two common-assessment consortia in math and English/language arts. States that use that option will not have to report the results of the field tests, according to the federal guidance on statewide testing.

In a letter to state schools superintendents, Deborah S. Delisle, the assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education, explained the options for states as they transition their testing regimens to reflect the Common Core State Standards.

The guidance is intended to help states facing potential "double testing" of their students in 2013-2014 by giving their own tests as well as field tests of the assessments being designed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC. It aims to provide more detail on the testing flexibility that U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan offered initially in June.

In her letter, Delisle said states can give either their own tests, or a consortium field test, as long as each student takes a complete test in both math and English/language arts. States that use the field tests will not be required to report results, she wrote.

Article: "Shaping the Culture of Your School: Four Tools for Leaders"

- Barbara R. Blackburn and Ron Williamson

<http://gazette.teachers.net/gazette/wordpress/barbara-blackburn-ron-williamson/shaping-the-culture-of-your-school-four-tools-for-leaders/>

Case Study: Fred J. Page High School, Franklin, Tennessee, SREB High Schools That Work http://www.publications.sreb.org/2013/13V14w_CaseStudy_Page_HS.pdf

Opinion: What the Anti-Homework Advocates Should Consider:

"Many parents of kids at top schools lament the extensive homework their children are given, and for these predominantly affluent students, educational opportunities and life chances would probably be undiminished if teachers limited homework to 30 or 60 minutes a night," writes Robert Pondiscio in *The Atlantic Monthly*. Gifted-and-talented schools could ban homework altogether with little to no ill effect, in his view. His concern, however, is what happens to low-income children of color if this drive by higher-income parents to curtail homework prevails. In education, those who are rich in language and knowledge get richer; those who are poor fall further behind. Pondiscio feels this better frames the current situation in public education than an "achievement gap," which implies that low-income kids merely have some catching up to do. Whereas better-off children as a rule have cognitively rich out-of-school environments, low-income kids are school-dependent learners: If they don't get richness from school, they don't get it at all. Pondiscio recommends that rather than quantity, anti-homework types should focus on quality: Using homework to cover material for which there was no time in class is less helpful, for example, than reinforcing and reviewing essential skills and knowledge that teachers want students to perfect or retain long term, and independent reading is paramount.

Resources for Students and Teachers

Artifacts and Analysis - from the Smithsonian

Includes a Teacher's Guide for Interpreting Objects and Writing History, artifacts and documents, writing assignments, and essays.

<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/index.htm>

Study Habits and College Readiness - from the Teaching Channel (video) features an AVID lesson from Alief Early College High School in Houston, Texas
7 minute video

[https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/advancement-via-individual-determination?
utm_campaign=digest&utm_medium=email&utm_source=digest](https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/advancement-via-individual-determination?utm_campaign=digest&utm_medium=email&utm_source=digest)

Chemistry Behind the Magic: Chemical Demonstrations for the Classroom - MIT Open Courseware - High School Highlights

<http://ocw.mit.edu/high-school/chemistry/demonstrations/>

Azendoo

Azendoo is an online tool for organizing and collaborating on group projects. It works with other applications such as Evernote, Google Drive, and Dropbox to access and edit group documents. Create to-do lists, work collaboratively, and stay organized. After signing up, you can delegate responsibilities, tag projects, or forward emails to Azendoo to turn into shareable tasks. Use the privacy options to set tasks to private or shared. Free mobile app versions are also available for iOS and Android.

NOTE: This site includes advertising.

tag(s): brainstorming, DAT device agnostic tool, organizational skills

<https://en.azendoo.com>

Funding and Award Opportunities for Students and Teachers

Knowles Science Teaching Foundation: Fellowships

The Knowles Science Teaching Foundation awards fellowships in the areas of biological sciences, mathematics, and physical sciences to support high school math and science teachers from the onset of the credentialing process through the early years of their careers. Maximum award: professional workshops, materials grants, and access to a teacher-to-teacher mentoring network, valued at \$150,000. Eligibility: individuals who have earned at least a bachelor's degree in an area relevant to the subjects they plan to teach before the fellowship begins in June. Candidates for Physical Science, Mathematics, or Biological Science Teaching Fellowships must enroll in a secondary teacher credential program before the fellowship is awarded. Individuals who have completed the fourth year of a five-year combined bachelor's and credential program by the start of the fellowship are also eligible to apply, as well as those currently enrolled in a teacher education program who will be first-year teachers in the fall of 2014. Deadline: October 15, 2013. <http://www.kstf.org/>

Toshiba/NSTA: ExploraVision Awards

All inventions and innovations result from creative thinking and problem-solving. The Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association ExploraVision Awards Program encourages kids to create and explore a vision of future technology by combining their imaginations with the tools of science. Maximum award: \$10,000 bond per student on winning team. Eligibility: Students K-12. Deadline: January 30, 2014. <http://www.exploravision.org/>

StudentCam - C-SPAN video documentary competition

StudentCam is C-SPAN's annual national video documentary competition that encourages students to think critically about issues that affect our communities and our nation. StudentCam's theme for 2014 is: "A Message to the U.S. Congress: What's the most important issue the U.S. Congress should consider in 2014?" Maximum award: \$5,000, plus \$750 to spend on digital video equipment for his/her school. Eligibility: students grades 6-12, individually or in teams. Deadline: January 20, 2014. <http://www.studentcam.org>

NCTM Connecting Mathematics to Other Subject Areas Grants for Grades 9-12 Teachers

The purpose of this grant is to create senior high classroom materials or lessons connecting mathematics to other fields. For 2014–2015, grants with a maximum of \$4,000 each will be awarded to persons currently teaching mathematics in grades 9–12. Materials may be in the form of books, visual displays, computer programs or displays, slide shows, videotapes, or other appropriate medium. The deadline is November 8, 2013. <http://www.nctm.org/resources/content.aspx?id=1328>

ING Unsung Heroes Program Invites K-12 Educators to Apply for 2014 Class Project Awards

The ING Unsung Heroes awards program annually recognizes K-12 educators in the United States for their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and ability to positively influence the children they teach.

Educators are invited to submit grant applications describing class projects they have initiated or would like to pursue.

Each year, one hundred educators are selected to receive awards of \$2,000 each to help fund their projects. At least one award will be granted in each of the fifty United States, provided one or more qualified applications are received from each state. Of the hundred finalists, three will be selected for additional financial

awards. First place will receive \$25,000; second place will receive \$10,000; and the third-place winner will receive \$5,000. All awards must be used to further the projects within the school or school system.

All K-12 education professionals are eligible to apply. Applicants must be employed by an accredited K-12 public or private school located in the U.S. and be a full-time educator, teacher, principal, paraprofessional, or classified staff member working on a project with demonstrated effectiveness in improving student learning. Previous recipients of ING Unsung Heroes awards are not eligible to apply for another award.

Complete program guidelines, the application form, and information on previously funded projects are available at the ING Web site. <http://www.ing.us/about-ing/responsibility/childrens-education/ing-unsung-heroes>

Starbucks Foundation: Youth Leadership Grants

The Starbucks Foundation is interested in supporting organizations that equip young people in three areas: business savvy --having the ability to leverage opportunities with integrity and innovation and to make good decisions and achieve results; social conscience -- valuing the impact an individual and enterprise can have on the community; collaborative communication -- engaging others in an inclusive manner across teams, functions and cultures and the ability to leverage new and creative ways of communication. Maximum award: \$30,000. Eligibility: youth ages 15 to 25 years old. Deadline: December 15, 2013. <http://www.starbucks.com/responsibility/community/youth-action/grant>

NSTA: Shell Science Teaching Award

The Shell Science Teaching Award recognizes one outstanding classroom science teacher (K-12) who has had a positive impact on his or her students, school, and community through exemplary classroom science teaching. Maximum award: \$10,000. Eligibility: K-12 classroom science teachers. Deadline: November 8, 2013.

<http://www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx>

Upcoming Conferences

National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) 17th Annual Conference

Changing Lives -- Every Day/Every Child

October 24 - 27, 2013 Phoenix, Arizona

<http://www.ncacinc.com/conference.html>

Fall Forum 2013 - Coalition of Essential Schools

Making the Invisible Visible: Stories and Counterstories for Educational Quality

November 8 - 10, 2013 San Francisco, California

Mission High School, 3750 - 18th Street, San Francisco

<http://www.essentialschools.org/events/12>

Educating for Careers/California Partnership Academies Conference

March 2-4, 2014 Sacramento Convention Center - Sacramento, CA

<https://www.2014educatingforcareers.org>