Heads Up on Education Issues

August 2010

Heads Up comes to you as a complimentary service from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Sometimes you'll find that we produced a document, but we've also reviewed many other recent reports for you and selected these as relevant and reflective of information you can trust.

If there’s something you’d like to suggest for the next issue, please let us know.

We strongly encourage you to let us know about any reports of interim committees, task forces, etc. in your state. Such reports are extremely valuable to your counterparts in other states. Here at ECS we often see the reports coming from Florida's OPPAGA. Their reports are included in this monthly compilation and placed in their appropriate spots on the ECS web site. Please help us in acknowledging your hard work.

Budget

This Indiana State Board of Education report provides a summary of the findings for the 2008-09 school year of consolidated purchasing agreements and shared service arrangements used by school corporations with other school corporations or through the education service centers. They also report on the efforts of school corporations to explore continuation and expansion of such activities.

Bullying

Hot off the press!! New NCES report of the REL Northwest study of 51 characteristics associated with bullying incidents, bullying victims, and victims' schools recorded in a national crime victimization survey and found 11 tied to increased reporting.

College Readiness

SREB and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education released a report addressing the state policy dimensions of college readiness. The report provides state policymakers with specific steps they need to take to close the readiness gaps in their states.

Equity

The Education Trust recently released two reports on the gaps in success rates of our postsecondary institutions in graduating Hispanic students and African-American students.

You might also be interested in a new Educational Testing Service report on America’s history in closing The Black-White Achievement Gap.

An interesting new report out of the UK reports on efforts they are making to give disadvantaged children a fairer deal in school admissions. This might have some implications for larger urban schools.
Finance--ARRA

CEP released the results of a survey they conducted this spring of school districts’ perspectives on the economic stimulus package which saved jobs in 2010 but presents looming teacher layoffs for 2011.

Open Enrollment

Stacey Preis, Missouri legislative staff, has shared a report released in December 2009 on open enrollment policies and practices in the states. Congratulations to Stacey on being the first to share state work through this vehicle!!

Pensions

Education Sector released a report examining teacher pensions and detailing the problems facing current state pension programs — both the fiscal problems, which are severe, and the educational consequences of these retirement plans. Policy recommendations are included.

Rural Schools

Rural School Funding News released an interesting report of the characteristics of strong rural school finance systems.

Success

McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning) released a report of best practices, Changing the Odds for Student Success: What Matters Most

Teacher Education

The Center for American Progress reports on the need for stronger accountability of teacher education programs.

Teacher Evaluation

The Economic Policy Institute released, just yesterday, a report on the problems associated with the use of student test scores for teacher evaluation. The scholars taking part in the report include Paul Barton, Linda Darling-Hammond, Diane Ravitch and Lorrie Shepard.

Urban Schools

The Fordham Institute released a report on the cities with the greatest success in attracting Entrepreneurs and Change Agents to assist in improving low-performing schools.

You may have already seen these recent ECS publications:

Research review in our Research Studies Database on What Impacts Student Success in College Persistence and Completion?


Progress of Education Reform: Investing in College Completion

NCSL included many articles on education in this month’s State Legislatures. Check out the articles on the common core and educator effectiveness.

Major new report coming out of NCSL is Technical Report: State Approaches to School Readiness Assessment. Included is detailed information on the 25 states that perform assessments.
If you have questions or comments about “Heads Up on Education Issues” please contact Melodye Bush at ECS.

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