Heads Up on Education Issues

May 2011

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. State reports often cover topics which would be of great interest to other states. Feel free to send information about such reports for inclusion in an upcoming issue.

Closing the Achievement Gap
A new research study summary looks at the effects of an initiative to close the achievement gap by implementing a plan to improve student attendance and engagement. (Click on individual study title for full summary.)

College Completion
Boosting College Completion for a New Economy— an ECS project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—has released the maiden issue of its newsletter. Check it out here.

ESEA
A new Education Sector report points to a number of specific challenges which should be confronted and opportunities to take in remaking ESEA to accommodate and promote growth models.

Finance
Research coming out of RAND Corporation reports on how ten districts in California responded to fiscal flexibility.

A resource document developed jointly by the American Institutes for Research and Mathematica Policy Research serves as a guide for states in evaluating ARRA programs and other educational reforms.

The latest Progress of Education Reform examines inequities in how Title I funds are distributed, and proposes changes that address three key factors.

International Comparisons
National Center on Education and the Economy’s Marc Tucker has released a new paper asking what education policy might look like in the United States if it was based on the experience of our most successful competitors.

Minority Issues
The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics released a report looking at ways the administration wants to improve educational outcomes for the Latino community.
Proprietary Education
In their series on trends in higher education, this new report from the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center looks at for-profit postsecondary education enrollment, price, student aid and outcomes.

Postsecondary Completion
The American Association of State Colleges and Universities looks at the implications of K-12 education reform, such as ESEA reauthorization and common core standards, on public colleges and universities in this policy brief.

School Safety
Here are the 2009-10 findings from the School Survey on Crime and Safety, released by NCES.

School Calendar
Making use of national and local spending data, this ECS StateNote looks at savings districts might realistically expect by moving to a four-day school week.

Service Learning
The newest addition to ECS newsletters, Network News, highlights the importance of measuring service-learning’s impact on the community being served and ways to effectively measure that impact.

Value of an Education
Based on two surveys-- one of American adults and the other of college and university presidents-- this report by the Pew Research Center looks at attitudes on the cost, value, quality mission and payoff of a college education.

When Looking for Research
You may want to check these links to ECS’ Research Studies Database. Remember to click on the individual study title for the full summary of research.

Accountability: Do high stakes systems raise student achievement?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000004rDzIAAU

Achievement Gaps: How do state standards, assessments, curriculum influence achievement?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000009ARPSAA4

Advanced Placement: Do state policies matter?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000003JEn9AAG

Assessment: Are assessments that rely heavily on teacher judgment reliable?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000006eCD1AAM

College Access: What helps to promote student access to college?

College Persistence and Completion: What impacts student success?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000005PCtdAAG

Counseling: Does it really impact student decisionmaking?

Dev. Studies/Remedial Ed: What is the impact of policy and practice?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000003JEI1AAW
Teaching Quality: What metrics best measure teacher effectiveness?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a0870000009ARRsAAO

Teaching Quality: What preparation and practices matter?

Using Data: How can long-term outcomes inform instructional programming?

Value of an Education: What educational & student factors impact later earnings?
http://www.ecs.org/rs/SearchEngine/SearchResults.aspx?faq_id=a087000000AIwVtAAL

If you have questions or comments about “Heads Up on Education Issues” please contact Melodye Bush at ECS.

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Sara Shelton, NCSL LESN Staff Coordinator, will be on maternity leave until the first of August. If you have any questions regarding LESN, please don’t hesitate to contact Melodye Bush at 303-299-3631 or mbush@ecs.org.