October 2011

What’s Happening in the States

Massachusetts is developing plans to assess students when they enter kindergarten to gauge how prepared they are for school. Teachers would measure students’ early knowledge of literacy and math by carefully observing and questioning them during classroom activities. They also will take note of students’ social, cognitive, emotional and physical development.

Talk of the Town

The update of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has been stalled. In the past month, legislators — both Republican and Democratic — put forward bills designed to be part of a redesigned ESEA, known to most as No Child Left Behind. This link will take you to an issue of Early Ed Watch from the New America Foundation giving detail about some of the more interesting of these bills.

As the Pew Center on the States concludes its 10-year initiative to advance pre-kindergarten for all 3- and 4-year-olds, it has released a report strongly advocating that policymakers transform public education by moving away from our current K-12 system to P-20.

Good Reads


The Institute for Education Sciences at the U.S. Office of Education has released a report on participation in the first four years of Tennessee’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Program.

NIEER’s Preschool Matters has released a piece on the problems of absenteeism in the early grades. The piece points out that chronic absenteeism in kindergarten and 1st grade is connected with a decline in test scores and can impact success in the first grade. Read another recent report on the issue.

The Education Commission of the States just released a Research Review on five studies of Pre-K to 3rd grade reading and literacy. Policy recommendations on practices that matter are included for each of the five studies.

Et Cetera

Cornelia Grumman, Executive Director of the First Five Years Fund, was featured during the airing of NBC’s Education Nation. She appeared on the Today Show telling Al Roker what parents should look for in a quality early learning program. Watch the video clip.