

January 2012

## What's Happening in the States

**Early Literacy – Wisconsin's** Read to Lead Task Force released their [recommendations](#) for improving 3rd-grade reading proficiency. Recommendations include testing incoming kindergarteners' reading proficiency, providing teachers with more training opportunities and holding teachers to higher standards.

**P-3 Focus – The Connecticut** Association of Public School Superintendents proposed a package of [reforms](#) that would create a “student-centered” educational program, make preschool available to all 3 and 4-year olds, and align preschool with the K-12 system.

**3rd-Grade Retention –** Governors in both **Iowa** and **New Mexico** have [proposed](#) establishing a basic skill level for 3rd-grade reading that students must attain before advancing to 4th-grade. New Mexico's [Early Reading Initiative](#) will offer screenings and provide reading coaches to students who are struggling to read, as well as increase funding for pre-K programs. Iowa's [Education Blueprint](#) outlines numerous strategies for ensuring 3rd-grade literacy including establishing the Iowa Center for Literacy Education and implementing research-based reading programs in all districts.

**P-20 COUNCIL - ARIZONA** Governor Jan Brewer issued an [Executive Order](#) establishing the Arizona Ready Education Council. [Goals](#) of the council include: increasing the number of 3rd graders reading at or near grade level; increasing the high school graduation rate; and doubling the number of baccalaureate degrees issued by Arizona institutions of higher education.

## Talk of the Town

**RTT –** The White House [announced](#) that nine states (California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Washington) will receive grant awards from the \$500 million Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge fund.

## Good Reads

**Pre-K-12 LITERACY –** The current issue of ECS' [The Progress of Education Reform](#) examines: 1) low Pre-K-12 literacy levels nationally, especially for low-income and diverse student populations; 2) trends in U.S. students' reading proficiency since the 1970s; 3) the negative impacts correlated with low reading levels; and 4) policy recommendations for improving literacy instruction and achievement, particularly in the early grades.

**P-3 Policies –** NAEYC released a [compilation](#) of state early care and education public policy developments that impact early childhood education for Fiscal Year 2012.

**Head Start –** Researchers from the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) [found](#) that Head Start causes a substantial increase in parents' involvement with their children, such as time spent reading to children, math activities, or days spent with children by fathers who do not live with their children.

**Infrastructure –** Strategies for Children highlighted this [video](#) outlining how one early education program upgraded its indoor and outdoor space and, in the process, improved the learning environment for the children it serves.

