Heads Up on Current Education Issues
December 2012

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) and is a monthly compilation of recommended research and reading on critical public education issues.

New from ECS!

Teacher Expectations of Students - This issue of The Progress of Education Reform provides a review of the research on the relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement. It also explores how policy can be used to improve how schools are evaluating for, monitoring, and providing training to teachers on the potential negative effects of fixed teacher expectations.

To see all policies enacted in 2012 by topic or state, visit ECS’s policy tracking database.

New from NCSL!

Private School Choice - This NCSL LegisBrief on private school choice gives a snapshot of the current state of school choice programs across the United States.

Year Round Learning/ Expanded Learning Opportunities - Year round learning initiatives allow students to have access to quality expanded learning opportunities that support and reinforce regular school-day and school-year learning. These programs also engage families and youths in learning, allow educational partners to share resources, help prevent summer learning loss, and create coordinated data tracking systems. NCSL collaborated with Harvard Family Research Project on a new brief on the year round learning approach to ELOs.
In this issue:

- Charter Schools: Charter School Performance in Indiana
- Common Core State Standards: Meet the Promise of Content Standards: The Principal
- Economic Development: Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity
- English Language Learners - Teacher Preparation: Who will Teach our Children? Building a Qualified Early Childhood Workforce to Teach English-Language Learners
- Finance – State Spending – Assessments: Strength in Numbers: State Spending on K-12 Assessment Systems
- Health: 2012 Shape of the Nation
- P-3: Mathematics: Math in a Child’s World: Policy and Practical Challenges for Preschool Mathematics
- P-3 - Teacher Preparation:
  - Crossing the Boundaries: The Need to Integrate School Leadership and Early Childhood Education
  - Beyond the ABCs and 1-2-3: The Intersection of K-12 and Early Childhood Education Teacher Preparation Policies
- Postsecondary – Merit Aid Programs: Higher Education, Merit-Based Scholarships and Post-Baccalaureate Migration
- Postsecondary Completion: Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates
- Rural Schools: Broadband for Rural America: Economic Impacts and Economic Opportunities
- State Longitudinal Data Systems:
  - Limited Out-of-State Data Needed to Produce Robust Indicators
  - Meeting Policymakers’ Education Responsibilities Requires Cross-State Data Collaboration, Sharing, and Comparability
- Student Mobility: Student Nomads: Mobility in Ohio’s Schools
- Teacher Issues – Teacher Absence: Teacher Absence as a Leading Indicator of Student Achievement: New National Data Offer Opportunity to Examine Cost of Teacher Absence Relative to Learning Loss
- Teacher and Principal Preparation:
  - Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession
  - Working Paper: Is School Value-Added Indicative of Principal Quality
- Charter Schools -

**Charter School Performance in Indiana** – This report found that students in Indiana charter schools outperformed their traditional public school peers in both math and reading. The study also found that students in charter schools in Indianapolis had even greater gains than the overall charter school population in the state.
Source: Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes

- Common Core State Standards -

**Meet the Promise of Content Standards: The Principal** - This report identifies the principal's critical leadership role and influence in communicating and nurturing a vision for student academic success that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
Source: Learning Forward

- Economic Development -

**Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity** - In this KIDS COUNT policy report, the authors find that nearly 6.5 million U.S. teens and young adults are neither in school nor in the workforce. With employment among young people at its lowest levels since the 1950s, these youth are veering toward chronic unemployment as adults and failing to gain the skills employers need in the 21st century. In addition to new national and state data on the issue, the report offers recommendations to support youth in gaining a stronger foothold in the economy.
Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

- English Language Learners – Teacher Preparation -

**Who will Teach our Children? Building a Qualified Early Childhood Workforce to Teach English-Language Learners** - In an attempt to understand how the early childhood workforce in Illinois is responding to the growing diversity of its student population, the authors of this report surveyed preschool programs across the state. Key findings include that less than 6% of the early childhood workforce has training to work with Illinois’ growing count of English-Language Learners; for programs in Latino communities, the ratio of young ELL students to teachers with bilingual training is 50:1; and administrators report that fewer than 25% of teachers are interested in pursuing qualifications for working with diverse language communities.
Source: New Journalism on Latino Children, From Berkley’s Institute of Urban Development

- Finance – State Spending – Assessments -

**Strength in Numbers: State Spending on K-12 Assessment Systems** - This report provides the most current, comprehensive evidence on state-level costs of assessment systems, based on new data gathered from state contracts with testing vendors. The author estimates that states nationwide spend upwards of roughly $1.7 billion, which is only one-quarter of one percent of annual K-12 education spending.
Source: Brookings Institution
- Health -

2012 Shape of the Nation – This report finds that while 74.5% of states require physical education in elementary through high school, most don’t mandate a specific amount of instruction and nearly half allow waivers and substitutions. Read the full report, executive summary, or quick facts. Source: The American Heart Association and National Association for Sport and Physical Education

- P-3 - Mathematics -

Math in a Child’s World: Policy and Practical Challenges for Preschool Mathematics – This report highlights policy and practical challenges for preschool mathematics, as research has found that mastery of early math concepts is a better predictor of later academic outcomes than literacy. The authors argue that "the key to a successful math curriculum at a preschool level is not a formal math program, but integrating math concepts into daily interactions and activities of children themselves." Source: EdSource

- P-3 – Teacher/Principal Preparation -

Crossing the Boundaries: The Need to Integrate School Leadership and Early Childhood Education - Recent Illinois legislation requires school principals in the state to be qualified to provide school leadership for children from preschool to grade twelve instead of kindergarten to grade twelve. The authors argue that while the inclusion of this requirement is a welcome one, the legislation leaves open how such leadership should be conducted or how it should be developed in principal preparation programs. They suggest the legislation should be strengthened—in law, in practice, or both—by drawing on three principles of high-quality early childhood education that emerge from educational research: (1) Early education influences later success in life and should be integrated into the school setting with such consequences in mind, (2) Early education should involve a developmental approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and (3) Educational practice should account for children’s psychological and sociocultural contexts. Source: UIC College of Education

Beyond the ABCs and 1-2-3: The Intersection of K-12 and Early Childhood Education Teacher Preparation Policies - The authors of this report argue that in order to meet the learning and developmental needs of children in ECE programs and sustain early learning gains, policymakers should coordinate ECE and K-12 policies governing teacher preparation in a manner that reflects an understanding of the salient differences between the two areas and the important lessons that can be drawn across them. They argue that policies governing ECE teacher preparation should ensure that ECE teachers are prepared in academic subject matter and child development in a way that particularly supports the education of young children but strategically combines practices and principles from both K-12 and ECE systems. Source: UIC College of Education

- Postsecondary – Merit Aid Programs -

Higher Education, Merit-Based Scholarships and Post-Baccalaureate Migration – New from the ECS research studies database: This study found that merit aid programs do not significantly affect students' educational or migration decisions. Merit aid recipients do choose more often to attend four-year
institutions, however, even if they are underprepared. This might explain why freshman retention rates are generally low for merit aid programs.

Source: UIC College of Education

- Postsecondary Completion -

**Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates** - This report measures college success outcomes by the rates of first completion which encompass postsecondary credentials of all levels and types at any institution in any state, whether it is the first, second, third, or more, attended college attended. This report draws near-census national coverage of enrollments and awarded degrees to explore the six-year outcomes of a cohort of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center and Project on Academic Success, Indiana University

- Rural Schools -

**Broadband for Rural America: Economic Impacts and Economic Opportunities** – This paper outlines the economic impacts and opportunities inherent in improving broadband access for rural students. The authors estimate the opportunity costs of the lack of access in rural areas as well as the lack of availability of faster service between urban and rural America.

Source: Hudson Institute

- State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) -

**Limited Out-of-State Data Needed to Produce Robust Indicators**: This report examines the impact of out-of-state mobility and lack of out-of-state student-level data on the ability of policymakers to provide actionable information to stakeholders in their states. The authors highlight the impact of state-by-state mobility data on the following policy priorities: high school graduation rates, postsecondary success, and educator preparation.

Source: Data Quality Campaign (DQC)

**Meeting Policymakers’ Education Responsibilities Requires Cross-State Data Collaboration, Sharing, and Comparability**: This report asserts that meeting policymakers' education responsibilities requires cross-state data collaboration, sharing, and comparability. The authors contend that it is critical for state policymakers to understand states' interdependent data challenges and work with other state policymakers to standardize education data, support student record exchanges, share limited and appropriate data across state lines, and define and use common metrics.

Source: Data Quality Campaign (DQC)

- Student Mobility -

**Student Nomads: Mobility in Ohio’s Schools** - A new report investigates the phenomenon of student mobility in Ohio. Researchers analyzed six million student records from all of Ohio's 3,500-plus public district and charter school buildings and e-schools. They found that student mobility verges on the epidemic in inner-city schools, but is also common in suburbs and rural schools.

Source: Thomas B. Fordham Institute
- Teacher Issues - Teacher Absence -

**Teacher Absence as a Leading Indicator of Student Achievement: New National Data Offer Opportunity to Examine Cost of Teacher Absence Relative to Learning Loss** - This report takes a look at teacher absence and raises the question of equity. Students in schools serving a high proportion of African American or Latino students suffer a higher rate of teacher absence as do students whose schools serve predominantly low-income families. In addition to concerns about equity, the author asserts that teacher absence costs at least $4 billion a year.

Source: Center for American Progress

- Teacher and Principal Preparation -

**Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession** - This report focuses on the state policy levers chiefs can activate in order to improve teacher and principal preparation by implementing a new vision of teaching students and leading schools that will require teachers and principals to obtain and master new knowledge and skills to improve student achievement and growth. The recommendations contained in this report focus on the levers for change that are the responsibility of state education agencies (SEAs) and, where applicable, their partner professional standards boards: licensure; program approval; and data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

**Working Paper: Is School Value-Added Indicative of Principal Quality** - This paper examines the extent to which school value-added reflects elements of principals’ effectiveness that persist over time and impact multiple grades by using longitudinal data on fourth through eighth grade Pennsylvania students and their math and reading outcomes. The authors find that the general leadership skills of principals who are in their first three years at their current position explain at most 14 percent of the variation in school value-added. We conclude that school value-added data do not provide substantial information useful for evaluating these principals.

Source: Mathematica Policy Research

---

**What is YOUR State Doing?**

Send along any information or state analyses you consider useful for your fellow legislative staffers, and we will see that it is included in the next issue of Heads Up.

Please send information to Emily Workman at eworkman@ecs.org.

---

Contacts:
Emily Workman  
Associate Policy Analyst  
LESN Coordinator  
Education Commission of the States  
Ph. (303) 299-3631  
eworkman@ecs.org

Sara V. Shelton  
Policy Specialist, Education Program/LESN Coordinator  
Education Commission of the States  
Ph. (303) 856-1647  
sara.shelton@ncsl.org