Heads Up on Education Issues

March 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.

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Career and Technical Education

The Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy released a new report on realizing the potential of career and technical education in the California community colleges.

Charter Schools

A new ECS StateNote provides information on seven key areas of charter school policy.

NCSL released a report which provides information about charter schools and state policy topics, including finance, authorizing, limits to expansion, teaching, facilities and student achievement.

Completion

A new brief from NCSL looks at strategies to improve college completion for Latino students.

Cyberbullying

The Cyberbullying Research Center provides us with a brief review of state cyberbullying laws and policies.

Finance

Schools in Crisis: Making Ends Meet from the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) has released a report on better ways districts can remedy salary inequities across schools beyond teacher reassignments.

Finance—Prepaid College Savings Plans

Education Sector’s Chad Aldeman has released a new Charts You Can Trust “Why 529 College Savings Plans Favor the Fortunate.”
Governance

Latest ECS report summarizes recent state action giving governors a greater role in education policymaking, and provides a discussion on the political and education policy impacts such changes may have.

Gubernatorial Proposals

SREB’s latest Legislative Report covers governors’ legislative and budget proposals in the SREB states.

Improving Low-Performing Schools

A National Governors Association report analyzes the most common challenges schools face while working to improve the schools which have been designated as low-performing under federal law.

International Benchmarking

New report edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and Robert Rothman looks at teacher and leader effectiveness in what are recognized as the high-performing education systems in the world.

In addition, a new policy paper from McGraw-Hill Research Foundation, co-authored by Andreas Schleicher from OECD and McGraw-Hill’s Steven Paine, looks at what the U.S. can learn from the world’s most successful education reform efforts.

Online Education

The Sloan Consortium has published a quality scorecard intended to serve as a standardized measure for comparing any type of fully online college program, regardless of discipline.

Postsecondary Completion

MDRC launched the Opening Doors Demonstration in 2003. The report provides some of the first rigorous evidence that a range of interventions can improve educational outcomes for community college students.

Reading/Literacy

In 2010, Strategies for Children committed themselves to 10 years of work to improve the performance of Massachusetts students in reading proficiency by the end of third grade. This report includes recommendations on programs, assessments, professional development, curriculum and family engagement.

English language learners in Utah became the focal point of state education officials when they heard reports of the ELL students performing better on the state’s content assessments than on its language proficiency assessment. Read the summary of the findings.

STEM

The latest issue of ECS’ The Progress of Education Reform identifies promising and research-based approaches for enhancing student interest and achievement in STEM disciplines, including approaches that come with a smaller state-budget price tag.
Teacher Certification

CPRE just released a report on what the state of Washington gets for its investment in bonuses for board certified teachers.

Teacher Evaluation/Effectiveness

New Teacher Project released a policy brief in March 2010 which may be of interest. The brief, A Smarter Teacher Layoff System, looks at ways quality-based layoffs can help schools keep great teachers in tough economic times.

Truancy

This ECS StateNote examines state truancy policy to determine: (1) when "absence" becomes "truancy"; (2) distinctions in how truancy is handled in the early grades versus upper grades; (3) consequences for parents and students; (4) how schools are being held accountable; and (5) how schools are trying to end truancy.

Tuition and Fees

The State Higher Education Executive Officers has released an updated survey of state tuition, fees and financial assistance policies.

Undocumented College Students

As the nation engages in heated debate about the costs of immigration versus the rights and needs of immigrants, the future of undocumented students hangs in the balance. Here is a look at the policies that matter.

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

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