Heads Up comes to us as a complimentary service from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Some pieces we’ve produced. 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 recommend for the next issue, please let us know.

**Accountability**
SREB has published a blueprint for raising high school achievement and graduation rates that could lead to a new generation of accountability.

**Adolescent Literacy**
This recently released issue brief from the Association for Career and Technical Education explores the key role career and technical education plays in adolescent literacy.

**Assessments**
A National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment report--More Than You Think, Less Than We Need: Learning Outcomes Assessment in American Higher Education—examines how colleges are using assessments that measure what undergraduates learn. For example, baccalaureate institutions were more likely to use results to inform faculty promotion and tenure.

**At-Risk**
National Center for Education Statistics recently released a report indicating that low income kids drop out at ten times the rate of high-income students.

**Class Size**
A September 2009 StateNote from ECS focuses on state policies on class size reduction.

**College- or Career-Ready**
Success At Every Step - A new compendium from the American Youth Policy Forum describes programs that have proven to help young people successfully complete high school and be prepared for success in postsecondary education and careers.

College and Career Preparedness – This ACT report reveals career interests and achievement results for 2009 ACT-tested high school graduates in every state. One of the questions addressed by the states asks whether students are interested in and prepared for the projected high-growth jobs in their state.

**Data Systems**
The October issue of Heads Up included information on Data Quality Campaign’s roadmap for states on the federal funding which could be used for data-related activities. This link takes you to the live version of the roadmap.
http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/arra_programs
Early Learning
Zero to Three and the Ounce of Prevention Fund have released a policy brief that highlights the work of four states—Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma—that have developed innovative financing structures to support services for at-risk infants and toddlers.

English Language Learners
A new report from the Council of Great City Schools details some best urban school practices for serving English language learners.

Expanded Learning Time
New NCSL briefing paper on Learning Beyond the School Day covers federal and state actions which would assure effective programs.

International Comparisons

Fordham prepared a comparative review of new common core standards, NAEP, PISA and TIMSS called Stars By Which to Navigate.

Online Learning
The Center for Digital Education has released Online Learning Policy Survey: A Survey of the States.

Postsecondary
Educational Policy Institute report enables Midwestern states to make comparisons regionally and nationally in the areas of preparation for college, participation, affordability, completion and benefits. The report provides policymakers with non-partisan information about state progress in higher education. The report was funded by the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education.

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment examines how colleges are using assessments to measure what undergraduates learn.

New ECS publication on alignment between K-12 education and postsecondary sets forth four policy levers necessary for true reform to take place and evaluate state progress to data in each of the four areas. Progress and Gaps in College Preparation Policy was authored by Stanford University’s Michael Kirst.

Another new ECS Progress of Education Reform reveals what the research says on transfer and articulation.

Rural Education
Why Rural Matters 2009 analyzes the contexts and conditions of rural education in each of the 50 states and calls attention to the need for policymakers to address rural education issues in their respective states.

Student Achievement
New National Center for Education Statistics study analyzes outcomes for beginning community college students according to how “directed” they are toward completing a program of study. Levels of direction are based on factors associated with student persistence and degree attainment. The outcomes examined included student persistence, institutional retention, 4-year transfer rates and first-year attrition.

Postsecondary education for the student’s eyes: 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement.
Teaching Quality

New report from the Strategic Management of Human Capital, a project of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, has 20 policy recommendations for state and district policymakers on how to recruit, prepare, evaluate and compensate teachers. Some of the recommendations are also geared toward improving the effectiveness of principals.

The Alliance for Excellent Education has released a report calling on colleges of education to step up their training for high school instructors to build college- and career-readiness skills in all students. The programs must do better at producing teachers who have both deep knowledge of content and mastery of the best teaching methods.

You might also want to check out the ECS Research Studies Database. Scroll through the FAQs for the topic that is of interest to you and look at the findings/results and the policy implications/recommendations from leading researchers. The following links will take you directly to a collection of research studies addressing the question. As new research studies are released on the topic, the study is immediately added to the link:

Accountability: Do high-stakes systems raise student achievement?
Advanced Placement: Do State Policies Matter?
Are assessments that rely heavily on teacher judgment reliable?
College Access: What helps to promote student access to college?
College Persistence and Completion: What impacts student success?
Counseling: Does it really impact student decisionmaking?
Dev. Studies/Remedial Ed.: What is the impact of policy and practice?
Dev. Studies/Remedial Ed.: What role does and can it play in college completion?
Dropouts: Why do students drop out of school and what might help them to stay?
English Language Learners: Which approaches best impact achievement?
Exit Exams: What impact do they have on student outcomes?
High School Curriculum: How important is rigor?
Leadership: What policies and/or practices matter most?
Mathematics: What practices impact student achievement?
Ninth Grade: Is it a make-or-break time for a successful high school career?
Parent Involvement: What most impacts student success?
PreK-Grade 3: What features define high-quality learning environments?
Preschool: How prepared do teachers need to be?
Preschool: How ready is ready for school?
Reading/Literacy: Which practices matter most?
School Improvement: What works in improving low-performing schools/districts?
Teaching Quality: How prevalent are research-based practices in the classroom?
Teaching Quality: What helps recruit and retain good teachers?
Teaching Quality: What preparation and practices matter?

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

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