Heads Up on Current Education Issues
November 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!**

**NCLC Schools of Success Network Shows that Service-Learning Quality Matters** – The authors report the findings from a three-year project that examined how the elements of service-learning in schools can enhance student performance on key outcomes. Findings indicate that high-quality service-learning has a statistically significant and positive relationship with students’ academic engagement, educational aspirations, acquisition of 21st century skills, and community engagement. The authors recommend that teachers, administrators, and policymakers should pay close attention to the *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice* when creating and implementing service-learning programs.

**2012 Gubernatorial Elections: Outcomes and Education Priorities** - This report outlines the results from the 11 states and two territories that held gubernatorial elections this year. The report presents selected education initiatives and legislation passed by incumbent governors, as well as highlights from newly elected governors’ education policy platforms.

**Education-Related Ballot Measures: 2012** - This report provides the results from the 35 ballot initiatives in the November 2012 election that have either a direct effect on education policy in those states or could have an effect down the road. The initiatives listed include enacted legislation being presented to the public for approval and initiatives placed on the ballot through the petition process.

Use ECS’s policy tracking database to check out recent state policy activity on [postsecondary developmental (remedial) education](#).

**New from NCSL!**

NCSL’s online Education [Bill Tracking Database](#) is a user-friendly tool that catalogues enacted bills on a multitude of education issues dating back to 2008. Click here to search enacted bills in all 50-states and territories.
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- Dual Enrollment: Taking College Courses in High School: A Strategy for College Readiness: The College Outcomes of Dual Enrollment in Texas
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  - SY2010-11 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (Provisional Data)
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- Proficiency-Based Pathways: Making Mastery Work: A Close-Up View of Competency Education
- School Leadership: School Leaders Matter
- Teacher Retention: Keeping Irreplaceables in DC Public Schools: Lessons in Smart Teacher Retention
Learning from NCLB: School Responses to Accountability Pressure and Student Subgroup Performance - This policy brief examines how school leaders-administrators and teachers- respond to the results of state assessment systems and the pressure of performance-based accountability. The authors further analyze how these responses translate to achievement outcomes for students.
Source: Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)

What Impact Will NCLB Waivers Have on the Consistency, Complexity and Transparency of State Accountability Systems? - This report examines issues related to the accountability systems in states granted NCLB waivers. The report focuses on the complexity, transparency, and consistency across states of new accountability systems in the waiver states, both on their own terms and in comparison with the NCLB statutory requirements.
Source: Center on Education Policy (CEP)

A Growing Movement: America’s Largest Charter School Communities (Seventh Addition) - This report identifies school districts that have the highest percentage and highest number of public school students enrolled in public charter schools. The numbers illustrate that demand for options within the public school system remains strong. And with more than 610,000 additional students across the country on waiting lists to attend charter schools, these numbers are likely to rise in the future.
Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

High Standards Help Struggling Students: New Evidence - In the analysis, the authors use state-by-state NAEP data to examine the effect of high standards on student achievement. They find there is no evidence that high standards have hurt low-achieving students. In fact, they found that higher standards have probably helped. Equally significant, the authors challenge the notion that a state’s economic health contributes to the achievement gap. Controlling for these economic conditions, they found no evidence that below basic students do better in rich states than in poor states, regardless of standards. In other words, all students benefit from the implementation of higher academic standards.
Source: Education Sector

The Role of Language and Literacy in College- and Career-Ready Standards: Rethinking Policy and Practice in Support of English Language Learners - This policy brief describes the implementation of new college- and career-ready standards, with a focus on the implications for ELLs; discusses the challenges of language acquisition; and addresses the importance of connecting language proficiency and rigorous content standards for learners. It highlights a number of initiatives already under way to analyze the language demands embodied in the new standards, and outlines the substantive changes needed at the secondary school level. Finally, the report offers recommendations for state and local policymakers.
Source: Alliance for Excellent Education

The Common Core State Standards: Caution and Opportunity for Early Childhood Education – This paper helps early-childhood educators walk the tightrope between the common standards’ emphasis on raising academic rigor with research results that show that play, the arts, social skills, and integrated instruction are crucial to young children’s healthy development.
- Dual Enrollment -

**Taking College Courses in High School: A Strategy for College Readiness: The College Outcomes of Dual Enrollment in Texas** – This report examines the impacts of dual enrollment on college readiness and success. The authors analyzed longitudinal data for a group of students in Texas who participated in dual enrollment and a similar group who did not. They found that students who completed college courses through dual enrollment were significantly more likely to attend college, persist in college, and complete an Associate's degree or higher within six years.

Source: Jobs For The Future

- Finance -

**Smart School Budgeting: Resources for Districts** - This report presents a user-friendly toolkit of strategies for resource allocation, discussion of available budget models, research on resource reallocation, tools for budget analysis, and cost-saving strategies.

Source: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

- Graduation Requirements/Rates -

**The Ineffectiveness of High School Graduation Requirement Reforms: A Story of Implementation and Enforcement?** - New from the ECS research studies database: This study explores why increasing graduation requirements has not necessarily increased high school student achievement.

**SY2010-11 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (Provisional Data)** – This chart provides state reported data on graduation rates for student cohorts in each state.

Source: US Department of Education

- Health – Physical Education -

**The 2012 Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the USA** - This report provides a current picture of physical education in the American education system. The 2012 survey finds areas of both improvement and decline since the 2010_shape_of_the_nation_report. Thirty-eight states, 74.5%, mandate physical education in elementary, middle/high, and high school, but most do not require a specific amount of instructional time and more than half allow exemptions, waivers, and/or substitutions. Source: National Association for Sport and Physical Education

Online and Blended Learning

**2012 Keeping Pace with K-12 Online & Blended Learning: An Annual Review of Policy and Practice** - This report provides updated state profiles, enrollment data, trends, and analysis of K-12 online and blended learning. You can view graphics, explore state and district data, or keep up with policy and practice through the Keeping Pace blog.

Source: Evergreen Education Group
- Proficiency-Based Pathways -

**Making Mastery Work: A Close-Up View of Competency Education** – This report looks at the lessons learned by eleven schools in New England that have taken part in the Proficiency-Based Pathways Project. Under the project, students move from grade to grade based not on how much time they've spent absorbing academic material, but on how much of the material they've actually absorbed.
Source: Nellie Mae Education Foundation

- School Leadership -

**School Leaders Matter** - The authors of this study estimate the effects of school leaders on growth in student achievement. The authors found that highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount.
Source: Education Next

- Teacher Evaluations -

**The State of Teacher Evaluation Reform State Education Agency Capacity and the Implementation of New Teacher-Evaluation Systems** - This paper offers an assessment of how early adopter states’ departments of education have undertaken the preparation and implementation of new evaluation systems. It also identifies challenges and lessons that can be used to guide future reform efforts in this area. This assessment of the activities of state departments of education is based on comparative case studies of six states: Colorado, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.
Source: Center for American Progress

- Teacher Retention -

**Keeping Irreplaceables in DC Public Schools: Lessons in Smart Teacher Retention** - This study provides a deeper look at retention strategies discussed in *The Irreplaceables* and how they're playing out in District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). The paper explains how DCPS has moved toward smarter teacher retention, mainly by raising expectations and removing consistently low-performing teachers. The report also shows that DPCS is missing some opportunities to make even more progress. The report recommends that DPCS continue its current policy reforms—especially its higher expectations for teachers—while monitoring the distribution of top teachers across the district and doing more to help school leaders retain their best teachers.
Source: The New Teacher Project (TNTP)

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**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.