Heads Up on Education Issues

October 2010

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.

Competitiveness
This is more a wake-up call than simply a report. It provides a look at how far we’ve moved since the 2005 “Rising Above the Gathering Storm” report and the consequences inaction may have in our future competitiveness.

This McKinsey & Company report looks at the experiences of the top-performing systems in the world which recruit, develop and retain the leading academic talent as one of their central education strategies.

Curriculum
These reports from What Works Clearinghouse (IES) are geared more to practitioners but may be of interest to you. One is on teaching reading and the other on fractions.

District Consolidation
The Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) provides a concise summary of the research on school and school district consolidation and examples of legislation.

Dual Credit Programs
The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships has released a report on state strategies for overseeing dual enrollment programs. The report was prepared for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.

Partnerships
This issue brief on partnerships between community colleges and high schools was prepared for a White House Summit on Community Colleges. The Community College Research Center prepared the brief.

Postsecondary Attendance
Although we don’t normally include blogs, we thought this blog from Kati Haycock on the importance of creating a college-going culture for high needs students may be helpful to you.

Postsecondary Completion
A new report from the American Council on Education investigates the complexities of measuring graduation rates and provides policymakers with recommendations for better assessing institutional success.
Standards
A recent report from the American Institutes for Research points to a problem those tracking progress on education standards will face -- the variation in the state performance standards.

State Reports
We strongly encourage you to let us know about any reports of interim committees, task forces, etc. in your state. Such reports are extremely valuable to your counterparts in other states. Here at ECS we often see the reports coming from Florida's OPPAGA. Their reports are included in this monthly compilation and placed in their appropriate spots on the ECS web site. Please help us in acknowledging your hard work.

This recently released report on the performance of INDIANA'S public colleges and universities provides a nice framework for looking at productivity..

STEM
Here is the summary for a new report from the National Academy of Sciences on the feasibility of a national set of standards for K-12 engineering education.

Teacher Evaluation
The New Teacher Project proposes six design standards that any rigorous and fair teacher evaluation system should meet. It offers a blueprint for better evaluations that can help every teacher and every student succeed.

Teacher Preparation
In order to transform education at the most fundamental level, the Alliance for Excellent Education feels policy leaders and educators must focus on crafting integrated systems for defining and developing teacher effectiveness to prepare high school students for college and careers.

Value of an Education
This new report from the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center details the personal, financial and lifetime benefits of students obtaining a higher education degree. They look at the benefits to the community as well as the student.

You may have already seen these recent ECS publications:
A two-page compilation of resources aimed at helping state leaders better serve Latino students.
A report on the states modifying some aspect of tenure/continuing contract laws in 2010.
This report gives you a 50-state perspective on what is used to calculate AYP besides reading and math.
We have updated our compilation of state citizenship education policies.
We have also just released an update to our state charter schools policy database.
A new entry to our Research Study Database investigates the prevalence of "late-emerging" reading difficulties among ELLs and native English speakers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. A second new entry seeks to determine whether community colleges expand enrollment or divert students from attaining a bachelor's degree.
If you have questions or comments about “Heads Up on Education Issues” please contact Melodye Bush at ECS.

Contacts:

Melodye Bush
Researcher/LESN Coordinator
Education Commission of the States
700 Broadway, Suite 810
Denver, CO  80203
Ph. (303) 299-3631
mbush@ecs.org

Sara V. Shelton
Policy Specialist, Education Program
National Conference of State Legislatures
7700 E. First Place
Denver, CO 80230
Ph. (303) 856-1647
sara.shelton@ncsl.org