**Heads Up on Education Issues**

*September 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.

**Affordability**

The [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](http://www.indianahighered.com/) has issued 19 recommendations designed to maximize the effectiveness of state resources devoted to helping students pay for college.

**College Completion**

The [College Board](http://www.collegeboard.org/) and NCSL joined forces in producing this report on [college completion](http://www.collegeboard.org/). In 2008, the median earnings for a bachelor's degree recipient were $55,700—close to $22,000 higher than the median earnings of a high school graduate, according to a new College Board report.

And then, there is this [Lumina report](http://www.lumina.org/).

**Early Childhood**

This recent NCSL report looks at Maryland's [early childhood](http://www.education.com/) data system. In addition, a new Early Childhood Data Cooperative report looks at the importance of [Building and Using Coordinated State Early Care and Education Data Systems](http://www.edcdata.org/).

**Education Data**

You might want to familiarize yourself with the U.S. Department of Education’s [Ed Data Express](http://www.ed.gov/), designed to improve the public's ability to access and explore high-value state-level education data collected by the U.S. Department of Education. The site is designed to be interactive and to present the data in a clear, easy-to-use manner, with options to download information into Excel or manipulate the data within the Web site.

**Leadership**

Reported to be the largest in-depth study of school leadership to date, this Wallace Foundation report find that the highest performing schools operate by a "[collective leadership](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/)" that involves many interested players in decision-making.

A New Leaders for New Schools report on [principal effectiveness](http://www.nlns.org/) examines lessons learned from school leaders making breakthrough gains in student achievement and teacher effectiveness.
Minority/Diversity Issues
New NCES report looks at the status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic minorities, providing good statistics on minority students and the teachers assigned to them.

School Calendar/School Year
In lieu of President Obama’s comments about increasing the length of the school year, here are some ECS products which might be useful.

- **The estimated costs** of extending the school year in the states. (We urge caution when using these estimates.)
- **State policies** on length of the school year.
- **International policies** on length of the school year.
- What **cannot** be counted toward official instructional time.
- ECS Issue Site on school calendars and scheduling.
- ECS Issue Site on extended day initiatives.

School Improvement
Mass Insight’s latest publication details ways of creating a comprehensive support structure to turn around struggling schools.

School Transportation
NCSL has released a report on school bus safety which provides an overview of information regarding school bus safety and analyzes state action on a variety of different issues from the use of seatbelts and the use of cell phones.

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 report from Kentucky has an interesting section on cost containment strategies and best practices.

Teacher Compensation
The National Center on Performance Incentives has released a report indicating a nationally watched bonus-pay system had no overall impact on student achievement.

Work-Ready
Georgia’s governor has announced a new initiative to help employers find and employ the right people. Work ready certificates verify the skills of potential employees. You might find the approach interesting.

You may have already seen these recent ECS publications:

**CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION** - Access ECS’ National Center for Learning and Citizenship’s newly updated database of state policies supporting citizenship education for K-12 students.
Another study in ECS’ Research Studies Database examines how principals develop and use subjective evaluations of teachers, and how these processes are affected by the presence of objective performance data.

WHAT GOVERNORS NEED TO KNOW - You might not be running for governor, but why not get the same type of briefing on state education policies?

TEACHER EVALUATIONS - A study in ECS’ Research Studies Database examines how principals develop and use subjective evaluations of teachers, and how these processes are affected by the presence of objective performance data.

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

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