Heads Up on Education Issues

July 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.

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.

Charter Schools
Here is state-by-state data on the number of charter schools, magnet schools, etc. from NCES.

A new report from the National Center on School Choice examines teacher turnover in charter schools.

Child Welfare
Two sobering new reports on child poverty have been released, one from the Southern Education Foundation and the other from the Urban Institute. The Southern Education Foundation also has a four-page summary.

College- and Career-Ready Standards
Are state readiness efforts directed at the causes of readiness problems? See what the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has to say.

College Completion
The United States has fallen from first to 12th in the share of adults between the ages 25 to 34 with postsecondary degrees, according to a report from the College Board. The report indicates that 40.4% of young adults hold postsecondary credentials. Notice some familiar names in the “Acknowledgments”. If you wonder how your state is doing, check here.

Economic/Workforce Development
This brief from the Joyce Foundation describes a process by which state workforce agencies can link education and workforce data to monitor how well their education and workforce development investments are meeting labor market needs.

Read about how Shifting Gears states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin) are supporting innovative educational models and addressing barriers to completion for lower-skilled adults.
If your state is planning to submit a proposal to the Department of Labor Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant program, this guidance will help you build provisions into the proposal that not only strengthen workforce longitudinal data systems, but actually use the data collected.

**Federal Programs**

A new ECS Alert examines H.R. 4899, which recently passed the U.S. House of Representatives. Commonly referred to as EduJobs, it would provide $10 billion to states to create or save education positions in K-12 public schools.

This ECS Briefing Memo looks at the potential impact on states of proposed cuts in Race to the Top Funding.

Following the announcement of the states making the cut for Round II of the Race to the Top funding, ECS sent out an alert listing the finalists.

**Leadership**

The Wallace Foundation recently released an in-depth study of how school leadership impacts student achievement. This link takes you to the study brief.

The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University reports on the use of strategically focused leadership teams.

NCSL recently released Strong Leaders Strong Schools.

**Literacy**

This new IES report is a positive evaluation of the effectiveness of reading apprenticeship programs.

**Postsecondary**

Check this out for an overview of fiscal conditions and higher education issues shaping the state policy landscape at what marks the beginning of the new fiscal year for 46 states (from AASCU).

Delta Cost Project report shows where individual colleges get revenue and where that revenue goes. TCL Online is a web-based application from the Delta Cost Project database.

**School Improvement—Promising Practices**

The Vermont Department of Education studied what it takes for schools and, therefore, students to succeed. They identified eight characteristics which form the foundation for school effectiveness and are essential to ensuring that all children reach their full potential.

**Standards**

Do you wonder how your state stacks up against the Core standards? Check here.

**State Data Systems**

New Data Quality Campaign report outlines some of the most critical challenges facing states and districts as they develop and implement policies based on the teacher/student data link and provides guidance on the emerging best practices for effective implementation.

**Student Aid**

The 40th Annual Survey Report on State-Sponsored Student Financial Aid for the 2008-2009 Academic Year was recently released by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs. Please note row and column data in tables may not add to row and column table totals throughout the report due to rounding.

**Student Engagement**

This recent addition to the ECS Research Studies Database looks at the relationship between student attendance and student achievement.
**Teacher—Performance Pay**

ECS dug into all 36 Race to the Top applications for Round II searching for performance pay provisions. Here is what was found.

**Teaching Quality**

New entry into ECS’ Research Studies Database examines what classroom practices differentiate teachers with high impact on student achievement in middle school English Language Arts from those with lower impact.

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