Heads Up on Education Issues

May 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 recommend for the next issue, please let us know.

Charter Schools

The Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau has released an evaluation of virtual charter schools. This report examines enrollment trends, opportunities for social development, provision of special education, assessments, teacher licensure, revenue and expenditures.

Community Colleges
On first blush, community college transfer and articulation policies look different than they do if you look beneath the surface—at least according to this new report from the Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Early Learning
Through 3rd grade, children are learning to read. After that they are reading to learn. This new report from the Ann E. Casey Foundation looks at the importance of children attaining reading skills by the end of the 3rd grade.

Economic/Workforce Development
The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute reports that, in states across America, a new paradigm is emerging for economic development programs--one that puts higher education at the center of states’ efforts to succeed in the knowledge economy.

Health
Staff at the National Conference of State Legislatures has released a very relevant new report, Promoting Health Communities and Preventing Childhood Obesity: Trends in Recent Legislation.

You might also want to look at a report from the National Center for Children in Poverty on children’s mental health.

High School
This ECS Policy Brief, Helping Students Get a Head Start on the “Real World”: State Strategies for Early High School Graduation, considers several policy approaches to facilitate (or incentivize) early graduation and provides caveats and essential policy components for the various approaches.
**Finance**
The National Association of State Directors of Special Education has released a report on state funding formulas for financing special education.

**International**
Michigan State University’s Center for Research in Math and Science Education has released this new report, *Breaking the Cycle: An International Comparison of U.S. Mathematics Teacher Preparation*.

**Leadership**
This report from the Wallace Foundation summarizes main results from a national study of how leaders in urban school district central offices fundamentally transform their work and relationships with schools to support districtwide teaching and learning improvement.

Wallace Foundation also released *Education Leadership: An Agenda for School Improvement* from their October 2009 national conference.

**Postsecondary Accountability**
The goal of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education’s Vision Project is to show that public higher education can act in a unified and focused way to ensure the future well-being of the state and that the higher education officials in the state are ready to hold themselves accountable to the people for results.

**School Safety**
In its 1975 ruling on *Goss v. Lopez*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that students had a right to due process protections under the U.S. Constitution for out-of-school suspensions that were less than 10 days. A new ECS Highlights document summarizes a recent study that examined state laws in the wake of the *Goss* decision.

**College- and Career-Ready Standards**
In 2009 the Common Core State Standards Initiative was launched under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. This Alliance for Excellent Education web site provides state-specific data relevant to the need for improved standards and assessments in the U.S. and the potential benefits of educating all students to meet the common core standards.

**State Education Expenditures**
NCES has released the Revenue and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education for 2008.

**State Policies**
"What Governors Need to Know: is an updated compilation of select state policies and characteristics includes states’ number of operating districts, exit exams, full-day kindergarten, P-16 councils, average students per district, per-student spending, free or reduced-price lunch eligible students, percent of K-12 revenue from state sources, state and local school revenue, full-day kindergarten requirements, compulsory school ages and more.

**Teacher Effectiveness**
Two new additions to the ECS Research Studies database look at teacher effectiveness: Teachers’ Mathematical Knowledge, Cognitive Activation in the Classroom and Student Progress and Do Principals Fire the Worse Teachers

The Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) recently released What Makes for a Good Teacher and Who Can Tell?
You might also like to take a look at state teacher policies across the country. This interactive site is made available by the National Council on Teacher Quality.

**Teacher Salaries**

This *ECS StateNote* examines National Center for Education Statistics figures on salary and benefits for the 50 states and the District of Columbia from 2003 to 2008.

Click [here](#) for state policies that have been added so far in 2010 to the ECS state policy database.

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

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