“Heads Up” is a monthly release of publications from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) and major research organizations. ECS and NCSL jointly sponsor the Legislative Education Staff Network (LESN), a network of legislative staff from across the nation involved in education issues in their respective states.

Adolescent Literacy
Adolescent Literacy – A new report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York on the importance of adolescent literacy.

Assessments
New report from GAO discussed how the U.S. Department of Education could improve assessments under NCLB through the way the tests are reviewed.

State Comparisons – New data tool from NAEP.

At-Risk
Children of Immigrants - Accounting for 24% of children under age 5, the share of the school-age population who are children of immigrants will increase in the coming years. A brief from the Urban Institute describes the national and state characteristics of this subset of the U.S. population.

Career-Technical
Noteworthy State Legislation for Improving Career and Technical Education---States have been working to increase the rigor and effectiveness of career and technical education to both meet the needs of their students and to address the workforce needs of the state and the nation. This StateNote, while not exhaustive, highlights efforts in the states that appear to be “ahead of the curve” in state policy approaches.

Exemplary State Online Resources for Students, Career Explorers and Adult Learners -- This ECS StateNote takes a look at several exemplary state online resources for students, career explorers and adult learners.

Data Systems
Leveraging Federal Funds for Longitudinal Data Systems - A newly released roadmap from the Data Quality Campaign provides a starting point for state plans by identifying federal funding sources that can be used for data-related activities. The dollar amounts included in this document reflect new ARRA funding, which is in addition to regular FY 2009 appropriations and separate from FY 2010 budget requests.

Early Warning Data Systems - In case you missed it, the Data Quality Campaign's August webinar on early warning data systems and its related material have been posted online. This Webinar highlights two states that have developed and are deploying early warning data systems: South Carolina's Student Potential Performance Snapshot and Louisiana's Dropout Early Warning System.
Although fewer than half of the states have such systems, among the ten essential elements of an effective longitudinal data system identified by the Data Quality Campaign is creating a statewide teacher identifier with a teacher-student match.

**Early Learning**

- **Class-Size Reduction** – A new ECS StateNote provides a detailed look at class-size reduction policies in 23 states, including information about funding and legislative provisions.

- **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment** – NCSL Technical Report: State Approaches to School Readiness Assessment. This paper focuses on how states currently assess school readiness and how readiness information is used within the states.

**Economic/Workforce Development**

- **Workforce Development** – A free pdf workshop summary of future skill demands.

**High School**

- **Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate** – A brief from the Southern Regional Education Board takes a look at AP and IB participation in the SREB states. The brief reports that SREB states maintained their lead in the nation in student participation in AP and IB programs in 2008.

- **Student Transitions to Postsecondary** – Here is a great set of recommendations and tools from the What Works Clearinghouse to help students navigate the path to college.

**International**

- **International Comparisons** – A new brief from the National Center for Education Statistics examines one particular aspect of reading instruction within the participating PIRLS 2006 jurisdictions: It attempts to describe international patterns and variation in the strategies reported by teachers to help 4th-grade students having difficulty in reading. This report uses data collected from the PIRLS 2006 teacher background questionnaire.

**Leadership**

- **School Leaders**: A new report from The Wallace Foundation describes the elements of a new direction in leader assessment and introduces several newly-developed processes being tested.

**Middle Grades**

- **The Progress of Education Reform – Middle Grades** – By state and national measures, student achievement gains realized in the elementary grades all too often diminish by grade 8. This report highlights key findings from recent research and publications on improving student success in the middle grades - and identifies actions states can take to translate these findings into sound policy.

**Postsecondary**

- **The Progress of Education Reform – Transfer and Articulation** – This issue of The Progress of Education Reform looks at recent research on transfer and articulation in light
of the movement to increase degree attainment by addressing these three questions: 1) Do articulation agreements ease the transfer process and lead to degree attainment; 2) what are the factors that facilitate or impede transfer; and 3) how can four-year baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions ensure that transfer students succeed?

School Calendar

Learning Beyond the School Day. As state lawmakers look to way to improve student achievement, they are increasingly considering expanding learning opportunities. For expanded learning opportunities to improve student achievement, programs must be of high quality.

School Improvement


A September 2009 Wallace Foundation synthesis of evidence-based policies and practices critical to the success of educational reforms at the local, district and state levels. This will be useful for policymakers developing comprehensive approaches to achieving the Race to the Top reform objectives and other federal strategies to improve public education.

The Next Version of No Child Left Behind is Not Going to Happen Without State Lawmakers Demanding a Bigger Say.

Article on ESEA reauthorization included in the September 2009 issue of NCSL’s State Legislatures.

Student Achievement

New Center on Education Policy report, Are Achievement Gaps Closing and is Achievement Rising for All? Connected to the reports are state profile pages

Closing the achievement gap: Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation

Teachers

Teaching Quality – Research Into Why Teachers Leave the Profession Is Helping Lawmakers Craft Better Policies to Hold Onto Them. Article included in the September 2009 issue of NCSL’s State Legislatures

Textbooks

Electronic Textbooks - A growing number of states are using legislation as a means of enabling the use of electronic or open-source textbooks. A new ECS StateNote examines the differences between e-textbooks and open-source textbooks and takes a look at related action in several states.

You might also want to check out the ECS Research Studies Database. Scroll through the FAQs for the topic that is of interest to you and look at the findings/results and policy implications/recommendations from leading researchers.

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