



COUNCIL *Quarterly*

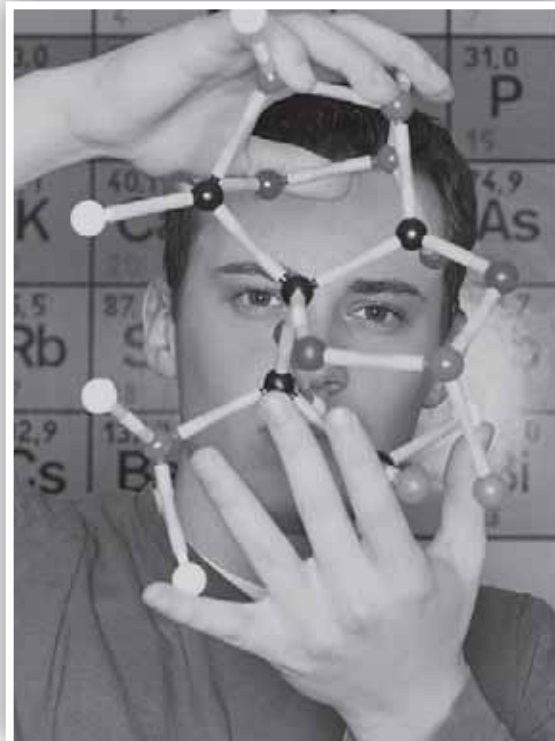
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

National Education Policy Priorities for the 21st Century

BY LOIS ADAMS-RODGERS, AYEOLA FORTUNE, NAJEAN LEE, EVAN OMERSO, & KATHLEEN PALIOKAS

In his first address as executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Gene Wilhoit shared his vision for the Council. Facing a very different world with a global economy and an ever-changing demography of our children, educators today have the tremendous challenge of facilitating high-quality teaching and learning so that all students are prepared for what they will encounter in the world and for what kind of global society they will inhabit and create. Not only do educational academic gaps exist, but we have international gaps to contend with as well. The work we face as a result of these issues should be viewed as a once in a lifetime opportunity for chiefs to influence and change the national education agenda to more readily focus on the promise of educating all children at high levels.

The Council conducts its Annual Policy Forum and Business Meeting each year with the intent of facilitating an exploration of real solutions around national and state education policy issues. This year in Little Rock, Arkansas, the forum had the privilege of welcoming new Executive Director Gene Wilhoit and inaugurating incoming Council President Elizabeth Burmaster (WI), as well as providing a host of opportunities for learning and sharing among education colleagues. The primary objectives of CCSSO's 2006 Annual Policy Forum (APF) were to explore the role of chief leadership given the global imperative for education change and ways in which to begin the transformational changes needed in public education. In conjunction with these objectives, members sought to identify priorities for using state policy and the power of collective action at the national level to improve educational opportunity and student achievement. Just as the APF builds on the work of the Summer



Institute, the work of the policy forum begins to identify advocacy issues for the coming year.

Three areas given significant attention at this year's APF include leading state-level teacher policy, supporting school and district improvement, and updating standards. Council members came to discuss these issues through breakout sessions.

LEADING THE CHARGE ON STATE-LEVEL TEACHER POLICY

The key focus of the discussion during this breakout session was how state education agencies can work collectively to advance teacher policy, particularly around the issues of teacher effectiveness and the needs of 21st century learners.

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WELCOME TO COUNCIL *Quarterly*

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) publishes Council Quarterly four times a year to inform the public about important education issues and their impact on state education agencies' improvement efforts. Council Quarterly also publicizes the work of CCSSO on a broad range of projects aimed at improving the education of America's students.

CCSSO is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions.

THE COUNCIL'S VISION

As America's chief state school officers, we envision a system of schooling in each state that ensures high standards of performance for every one of our children and prepares each child to succeed as a productive member of a democratic society.

THE COUNCIL'S MISSION

Through leadership, advocacy, and service, the Council assists chief state school officers and their organizations in achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life.

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PRESIDENT, Elizabeth Burmaster, Wisconsin
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PAST PRESIDENT, Valerie Woodruff, Delaware
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CCSSO's *National Conference on Large-Scale Assessment*

June 17–20, 2007 • Nashville, TN
Contact Madeline Morrison at
madelinem@ccsso.org or 202-336-7039

PRESIDENTIAL *Thoughts*

BY ELIZABETH BURMASTER, CCSSO PRESIDENT

When I appeared before the Annual Policy Forum in Little Rock, Arkansas, this November, I stated that CCSSO is well prepared for all that is ahead, and—as education leaders—we are ready. Nearly three months later, I remain steadfast in my conviction that although it has been a long, continuous struggle in the reform movement of public education, I do believe that working in partnership, we can create a public education system that brings relevance to cognitive, social, and emotional learning so every child graduates prepared to succeed in the interconnected world of the 21st century.

I would like to acknowledge my immediate predecessor, Valerie Woodruff (DE), with whom I have had the great pleasure of working side-by-side this past year. I believe that Val's leadership, determination, and vigilant attention to detail throughout the year have positioned CCSSO well for this moment and the future. I know we will continue to work together this year, and, along with President-elect Rick Melmer (SD) and the entire Board of Directors; we all feel privileged to represent this organization.

Since well before the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), we have been working individually in our states to ensure a quality education for every child, dedicating our lives to the belief in public education as the foundation of American democracy. Our organization is the collective of years of experience, wisdom, and struggle by hundreds of individuals who have dedicated their lives to the children of this country and every child's civil right to equity and opportunity in education. We have been at the heart of the effort as educational improvement became a centerpiece of America's political agenda. From Johnson's War on Poverty to *A Nation at Risk* to NCLB, education leaders have been at the very core of our country's economic, political, and moral struggle to live up to the precepts of the American Dream.

As education leaders, the ongoing, sustained effort and belief over time that our public education system can continue to be transformed, reformed, redesigned, and continually improved are central to our spirit and success. As education leaders, we know that we must insist on a collaborative community agenda that invests more in the growing numbers of children living in poverty, reaches across racial divides, and builds a politic that is based on lifting up all the children of this generation—not dividing them against each other.

This is who we are as education leaders. We are strong individually. We are strong as an organization. And we have responded to the call for action.

In 2007, as we come together as a united Council and assert our leadership in the state-federal partnership, we can empower our local school districts in the ongoing work of raising student achievement; closing the achievement gap among economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and their peers; and move beyond NCLB to ensure that every child graduates prepared for the 21st century global society.

While we have made tremendous gains, and our children are showing considerable progress, we know that our real challenge is to go beyond the basics: go beyond adequate yearly progress (AYP) and the mandates of NCLB; go beyond where we have traditionally set the bar to a place that empowers all students with the creativity and skills necessary to thrive in the future. Our students will be competing—and more importantly collaborating—with students from around the world. How we educate this generation will determine our nation's economic security and define our national identity in the world of the 21st century.

As state chiefs and as a collective, it is our responsibility to lead this transformation in learning into our classrooms:

1. We must show high-profile leadership at the state and national levels to make the case for public education as the foundation of American democracy.

We need to educate leaders at all levels to the importance of 21st century skills for all our children—for the common good of our communities, our states, our nation, and our world. Leading the process of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization is a vital piece in this goal. Reauthorization must create urgency for innovation in teaching and learning, research and development in best practices, and professional development. It will take each of us, working with our state federal liaisons, congressional delegations, and the CCSSO advocacy team to tell the story and build consensus.

2. We must develop a broad national consensus and shared vision for the future of education.

We need to collaborate with many national education groups to ensure that the skills of global



» Elizabeth Burmaster, CCSSO President

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

When my son Jason was just a baby learning to speak, upon being startled by sounds he would bend, cup his hands over his ears, and shout, "Loud!" Well, over the last three months, I have been overwhelmed with lots of noises, but some of them are louder than others.

In my first "Directly Speaking," I want to address one of these important sounds and ask that you comment to me about what it means to you as chiefs who are leading innovation in education.

The issue of conversation is national standards. It appears to be prompted by the disparity between what some state proficiency results are reporting and the contrasting national (primarily National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP]) and international reports. Fueled by concerns over the need to ensure the next generation will be competitive in this global marketplace, the call for comparable, rigorous standards is gaining steam.

My impression is that the states will be called upon to both raise their standards to national and international benchmarks and to provide justification for any differences that may exist between student performance on state tests and national benchmarks. The issue will arise again in May or June 2007 when the U.S. Department of Education (ED) releases its comparison of NAEP proficiency levels to state proficiency reports. I was pleased that during our 2006 APF we were able to have some preliminary discussions on this issue and that members were given the opportunity to provide direction. My hope is we continue to have these discussions because with or without external stimuli, all of us should be and are concerned that our state standards and assessments are world class. In an effort to address the issue, 30 states have joined the American Diploma Project effort with Achieve, Inc., and a few states are engaged in an effort to develop and administer a common Algebra II exam.

While we have been moving toward greater commonality, others are calling for a very different method to achieve national standards, by way of a national body setting the learning goals for all states. I can understand their reasoning, for this holds promise of a timely product, the standards could be based on national standards already in place and the process could carry the weight of prestigious personalities and organizations.

However, this approach has major flaws. It would be done without the benefit of those who will be charged with implementation, it could circumvent the

constitutional authority held by states over education, and it ignores the context of each state. We stand united as states that we oppose such development, especially if this process is federally driven.

But, in my opinion, the time is past to ignore the issue. It is incumbent on we who fear and oppose centralized top-down standards to lead a bottom-up effort to develop shared voluntary national standards, beginning with the areas of math and English language arts.

I maintain the groundwork is laid through the aforementioned state work with Achieve. We should commit ourselves to a very public and aggressive campaign. Using this beginning, it is possible to define commonalities among the standards in three fourths of the states and we can benchmark against 21st century, rigorous standards set by the business and higher education communities. We will need to expand our benchmarking to NAEP and international standards and the work produced by national organizations like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recently released *Curriculum Focal Points*. Of course we will need to validate them with our teachers and administrators.

But such an effort to establish standards that are worthy and beyond the reach of students today must be free from negative forces like federal consequences. If tied to adequate yearly progress (AYP), states will have a disincentive to adopt rigorous standards. It is possible to set a course for higher standards in the future while holding states accountable for educating all children to proficiency standards today.

I do believe the product of this labor will be worth the effort all of us put into it and this work can be done in a timely way. Proposals like the one presented by Senator Kennedy (D-MA) to provide resources and incentives to states for establishing national standards can be invaluable stimuli for such an effort. We will need help from many partners.

I solicit your views on this "loud" cry emanating from diverse individuals and organizations within our country. I say we take it on immediately, but CCSSO will do so only if it is the consensus of the chiefs. Let's decide. ▀

Sincerely,



► Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director

CCSSO's Accountability Summit

BY KATE DANDO, HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP (CCSSO CONSULTANT)

The subject of accountability has received a great deal of attention over the past several years and will likely remain on the forefront of education policy discussions in the future. Given this focus, the Council hosted an accountability summit as part of its Annual Policy Forum. The Accountability Summit provided a forum for state chiefs, deputies, accountability directors, and other education experts from across the country to discuss and explore lessons learned and best practices for building educationally sound state accountability systems.

CCSSO Executive Director Gene Wilhoit opened the summit by discussing the important role that accountability plays in education today. Wilhoit referenced CCSSO's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization policy statement, which calls for a retained focus on accountability with increased support and greater freedom for innovation in state and local implementation of the foundations of standards-based reform. Finally, Wilhoit called for a new state-federal partnership and affirmed that states are prepared to lead the charge to ensure every child is prepared to succeed in the 21st century's global economy.

The summit included two panel discussions, followed by breakout sessions. The first panel discussion, moderated by Chief Rick Melmer (SD), focused on the lessons learned with regard to building valid, reliable, educationally sound accountability systems and how best to move forward with respect to public policy. Panelist Brian Gong, executive director of the Center for Assessment, concentrated on what should be done to strengthen the validity and reliability of adequate yearly progress (AYP) and accountability judgments, while Andy Calkins, executive director of Mass Insight, addressed what is needed to build and enhance state capacity. Finally, panelist Andy Rotherham, co-director of Education Sector, discussed the education landscape and goals for accountability.

The second panel discussion, facilitated by Chief Peter McWalters (RI), focused on innovative state

accountability models and what can be learned from those efforts to inform national policy discussions. Chief Linda McCulloch (MT) spoke about Montana's "small schools review process," which uses AYP and additional confirmatory data as part of a process to reach accountability determinations. Chief Lana Seivers (TN) discussed her state's growth model that seeks to follow the progress of individual students over time. Further, Chief Ken James (AR) addressed Arkansas' efforts to align high school standards with college and work expectations and its use of individual student learning and remediation plans. Mitch Chester, senior associate superintendent in Ohio,

addressed his state's efforts to integrate federal and state accountability requirements. Pat Burke, chief policy officer in Oregon, spoke about Oregon's efforts to use embedded, adaptive, web-based assessments for individual learning and accountability.

Following the panel discussions, the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), which was launched one year ago at the 2005 Annual Policy Forum, honored Delaware Secretary of Education Valerie Woodruff with their 2006 Leadership Award. DQC selected Woodruff because of her efforts to secure Delaware as a national leader in the development of a longitudinal data system.

Finally, during three breakout sessions, subject matter experts provided participants with the latest

information and concrete road maps for how best to move forward in key areas on the forefront of accountability today: the calculation of graduation rates, data systems, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Additionally, on December 8, 2006, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) hosted its own accountability summit in Nashville, TN. The department convened panels to discuss accountability and discrete issues of NCLB. Panelists included department staff, state chiefs, and other education experts. Gene Wilhoit served on the opening panel and provided an overview of lessons learned from CCSSO's Accountability Summit. ▶



THE SUBJECT OF ACCOUNTABILITY HAS RECEIVED A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS AND WILL LIKELY REMAIN ON THE FOREFRONT OF EDUCATION POLICY DISCUSSIONS IN THE FUTURE.

Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century

BY SCOTT MONTGOMERY

Over the past several years all of us have become familiar with the resounding call to increase student skills to match the demands of business in the 21st century. Often the problem is that we do not view this need as urgent, but rather see increased skills as necessary to the workforce of some indeterminate future. The stark reality, however, is that the demand for “21st-century skills” is falling with increasing pressure upon our graduating students. If we do not begin a serious conversation regarding the skills students need to live, work, and excel today and in the immediate future, we will barely catch up before “22nd-century skills” are called for. CCSSO intends to prevent our students from falling behind in this manner.

At November’s Annual Policy Forum in Little Rock, AR, CCSSO President Elizabeth Burmaster challenged chiefs to “ensure that each of our students is prepared to meet the demands of the growing knowledge economy” and called for a task force to review CCSSO’s programmatic efforts and how they align with the challenge of preparing each and every one of our students for success in the 21st century. She also asked that we begin to think about where the leverage points for change are in the system and how CCSSO can best use those levers to transform our system of education so that each child is prepared to graduate and contribute to our growing global society.

At the same meeting, Executive Director Gene Wilhoit laid out a plan that places the ensuring of high-quality learning for each of our students in the 21st century at the heart of CCSSO’s programmatic efforts. He outlined eight elements that the CCSSO staff has identified as essential if we are to change the learning outcomes of students in the future. Those elements include

- creating and supporting a continuum of development for all educators
- developing an agreed-upon set of shared standards that creates a “high floor” for all students
- ensuring a balanced and coherent system of assessment and accountability
- building a system of support for student learning
- engaging students, families, and the community in a new vision for education
- using resources (technological, human, and fiscal) in the most effective and efficient manner possible

- building robust and comprehensive state-level student data systems
- collaborating with any and all partners to build a system of education in America that ensures student success in the future

On the surface, none of these eight elements seems like a new and radical departure from the work of standards-based reform in which we have been so actively engaged over the past 15 years, but in this new system of learning for the 21st century each of those elements takes on greater significance and a much different role. In the end, ensuring that each of the eight elements is not only aligned to enhanced student learning but connected to each other will be the challenge CCSSO takes on and the agenda that the organization advances in coming years. As West Virginia Commissioner of Education Steve Paine said in his remarks at the Annual Policy Forum, “Even if every child meets the mandates of proficiency under No Child Left Behind, do we really believe they will have the skills needed to compete and collaborate with their peers around the globe? We must ensure that each of our children has both the content and the skills necessary to meet this challenge.” Clearly we must not only transform the system of education, but breathe new life into the skills our students will use in work, life, and college.

Commissioner Paine’s remarks and the urgency expressed by President Burmaster and Executive Director Wilhoit seem to be upheld by a recent workforce readiness report co-sponsored by the Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Society for Human Resource Management, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The report titled, *Are They Really Ready to Work?* surveyed some 400 employers around the country and bears out the fact that employers are increasingly disturbed by high school and college job entrants’ lack of basic content and skills knowledge. In the report, only 1% of respondents rated those with a high school diploma as “excellent” in the area of critical thinking and problem solving (while 69% rated them as “deficient” in the same area); the rating wasn’t much better for written communications (1.4% “excellent,” 80.9% “deficient”); or leadership (1% “excellent,” 72%

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“deficient”). The report clearly shows that the skills we associate with business and post-graduate success—teamwork and collaboration, creativity, lifelong and self-directed learning, professionalism and work ethic, leadership, and written and oral communications—are lacking in our high school graduates. College graduates fare a little better but still only 27% of employers rate college graduates as “excellent” in the area of critical thinking and problem solving; only 15% rate them as “excellent” in leadership; and only 26% give an “excellent” rating in self direction and life long learning. Clearly we have a ways to go in providing our graduates with the skills that will satisfy the business world.

In response to the kind of surveys mentioned above, CCSSO has recently formed SCASS.21, a state collaborative to begin addressing how states deal with this issue. The members of SCASS.21 will be examining the 21st century skills and determining how best to develop tools to assist educators, policy makers, and the community at large in knowing that our students are well prepared for the future. The group is currently exploring a range of assessment

models of the skills and beginning discussions on developing professional development tools to better prepare teachers to infuse these skills into their current classroom practices.

In the end, it is CCSSO’s goal to transform teaching and learning in the 21st century. To do so requires that we find collaborators willing to partner with us on any or all of the elements identified by Executive Director Wilhoit. The imperative is clear: as stated by CCSSO President Elizabeth Burmaster (WI), we can no longer educate our children in an 19th century agrarian system, using a 20th century industrial curriculum, and tell them to go out and influence a 21st century digital world—the disconnect is too huge and the stakes are too high. Also as President Burmaster noted in her acceptance speech—now is the time to answer the clarion call for change in the system. This is our collective challenge and we believe CCSSO and states are prepared to respond in a way that will transform teaching and learning for the future and give each and every one of children the skills they need to excel. ▶

PRESIDENTIAL *Thoughts* *Continued from page 3*

awareness; financial and economic literacy; and innovative and critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity are as important as reading and math in our schools. ESEA reauthorization must encourage and support state and local efforts to implement the next generation of standards-based reform.

I commend the work of the CCSSO Mathematics and Science Education Task Force, which seeks an integrated approach. We must continue their important work and seize opportunities to partner with major businesses around science, technology, engineering, & mathematics (STEM) initiatives. Also, I ask for your involvement in advocating our collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution on a pilot program to train educators in the latest museum-based methods to enrich student learning and instruction.

3. We must get down to the hard work of implementation—including content, assessment, and professional development.

Calling upon the breadth and depth of wisdom and experience among chiefs, deputies, federal liaisons, and the CCSSO executive director and staff,

we must face controversial issues such as national standards, formative assessments, and other new assessment models that focus on critical thinking, problem solving, and literacy skills. It will not be easy to lead and shape the discussion on tough issues, but if we do not lead, we will have no one to blame but ourselves when decisions are made without our input.

We are strong as an organization because of our membership. That is why I announced in November the formation of a task force that will give voice to chiefs, deputies, content experts, and partners to lead the organization on our 21st century learning agenda. Its work will ensure that there is alignment among state, community, and business interests.

4. We must engage all stakeholders to galvanize support for public education in 21st century America.

We have to seek out and showcase promising models of success already flourishing in our states and build on the achievements of these examples. We are the strong, united voice that can tell the story of why public education must be the best choice for all

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National Education Priorities – *Continued from page 1*

A few of the questions, issues, and suggestions that state participants raised during the discussion included the following:

- Identify key outputs of high-quality teaching before we can measure them
- Discuss how to recreate the teaching profession in a way that it is linked to student outcomes. Growth models would be an important part of this system and more exploration of these models is needed.
- Define teacher effectiveness in a way that captures the multiple variables involved and design an assessment system that includes multiple measures
- Move from a system of universal access for all students to one of universal success for each student. How do we change the teacher quality system to reflect this new mission?
- Develop a professional learning community of teachers that is linked to the different roles and responsibilities across the system and the continuum of a teacher's career
- Identify effective professional development for teachers and administrators
- Strengthen the state partnership with teacher preparation programs and the connection between higher education and K-12 schools

From a policy standpoint, states need flexibility to find their way to success on these issues. Federal policy should identify a desired outcome and let states figure out how best to reach it.

Participants agreed that CCSSO could assist states by creating taskforce discussions on these topics and by circulating the best thinking as well as best practices and what works so states can leverage their knowledge.

STATE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT

The issue of school and district improvement and the role of the SEA is clearly on everyone's mind. This was evidenced by the attendance of 34 members, presenters, guests, and CCSSO staff at a breakout

session focused on this topic.

SEAs understand their role is to intervene in turning around low-performing schools, and they also understand that the local education agencies (LEAs) must be a key part of that work. To achieve any sustainable change the LEAs must have the capacity to serve and improve their schools. This becomes much more complex when the district is also considered low performing.



State participants agreed that their role is critical, but they too must have the capacity to lead the necessary changes and provide supports through their intervention strategies. Participants agreed that having access to the following information would help them in their improvement efforts:

- Identify and disseminate policy and practice strategies that are effective on this topic across the states
- Identify and disseminate SEA organizational structures that facilitate and support capacity to make changes at the LEA level
- Identify key state policies that enable SEA intervention for the greatest results at the LEA and school levels
- Identify models of various levels of assistance (universal, targeted, intensive) and the resources needed for success
- Identify and disseminate the mapping of resources available from the national level (comprehensive centers, regional and local technical assistance centers, regional educational labs, etc) in order to provide options for assistance
- Identify ways in which funding (state, local, and federal) can be leveraged for the best education support of needed changes by removing “silos” to create collaborative solutions
- Identify the key message from SEA to state boards of education to legislatures to governors regarding their critical function in improving the educational levels within states — change at all levels of the system requires resources, supports, and clear messages and goals

Participants indicated that the needs are great across all states, and that CCSSO plays a key role in

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assisting them in meeting these needs. In addition to identifying ways in which the suggestions noted above can be addressed, the participants want to see this area addressed in Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization, as well as through collaborative work with other national organizations, such as the National Governors Association (NGA), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). They also believe that convening states around this common issue will continue to result in better solutions.

DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL/ SHARED STANDARDS

A starting point for this breakout session discussion was whether the creation of national standards would better position our education system to effectively prepare students to meet the demands of a 21st century global economy. Most participants agreed that the conversation was timely but also added that there needs to be a balanced approach that focuses the national agenda on what is right for all children, yet frees states to do the hard work that will truly impact student achievement. Other chiefs noted that the creation of shared standards might help state education agencies move forward, as the current energy and resources being expended to develop and/or revise state specific standards could be redeployed and refocused on building the capacity and professional development needed to help students meet them. The following key points emerged from the discussion:

- *Shared expectations for all children should be the starting point in developing standards.* Before developing standards, a starting point should be a national conversation focused on articulating national expectations for all children. These broad expectations for the next generation should then undergird and explicitly inform discrete collaborative efforts focused on the development of standards.
- *Incorporate the international context.* Any shared standards developed need to embody the broader global context. This includes understanding the implications of global trends on our system of education; how educational systems in countries with higher student achievement levels compare to ours (including strengths and weaknesses); and

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the infrastructures developed in other countries to support standards implementation.

- *Standards need to be explicit, relevant, and goal-oriented.* Creating standards will be an exercise in futility if they are not driven by explicit goals, including ensuring a seamless transition to higher education and/or the workplace.
- *Standards should not be mandated by federal statute.* Voluntary standards are more likely to be politically feasible, especially if they are coupled with affording states flexibility in implementation given diverse state structures, access to resources, and political environments.
- *Collaboration is essential.* The process of developing shared standards must effectively engage all relevant stakeholders, including institutions of higher education, the business community, parents, and all the constituency groups whose buy-in and support will be needed in order to make them meaningful. A P-16 or P-20 agenda is what will bring key stakeholders like higher education and business to the table; this is essential to ensuring the development of relevant standards that are sufficiently focused on postsecondary success. In addition, it is only through partnering and collaboration that the best minds and ideas can inform this work.

- *Focus on equity.* Any type of standards developed will not be successful if significant resources are not also devoted to ensuring that there are equitable state systems in place focused on implementation and delivery—this includes a strong system of support and professional development for classroom teachers, an effective communications strategy, and a commitment from institutions of higher education. We will need to

ensure equity throughout the educational system, not just in terms of shared expectations (standards), but also in resources and quality.

This conversation was the first opportunity for chiefs to come together to discuss the feasibility of creating shared standards, the rationale for doing so, and the potential leadership role of CCSSO in this process. Chiefs clearly agreed that CCSSO is well positioned to capitalize on the current momentum and drive the national agenda related to standards development. Despite an emerging consensus, some

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Highlights from the 2006 Annual Policy Forum



Chief Judy Jeffrey (IA) & Brenda Welburn
(Executive Director, NASBE)



Brian Gong (Executive Director,
Center for Assessment)



Gene Wilhoit (CCSSO), Chief Valerie Woodruff (DE), Chief Elizabeth Burmaster (WI), & Chief Peter McWalters (RI)



Chief Ken James (AR) & Chief Lana Seivers (TN)



Patricia Wright (Deputy, VA), Chief Billy Cannaday (VA), and Aimee Guidera (Director, Data Quality Campaign)



Chief Sue Gendron (ME) & Ray Simon
(Deputy Secretary of Education, ED)



Gene Wilhoit (Executive Director,
CCSSO)



Chief Sandy Garrett (OK), Chief Rick Melmer (SD), Chief Linda McCulloch (MT), & Chief Tom Horne (AZ)



Chief Valerie Woodruff (DE) & Chief Libby Burmaster (WI)



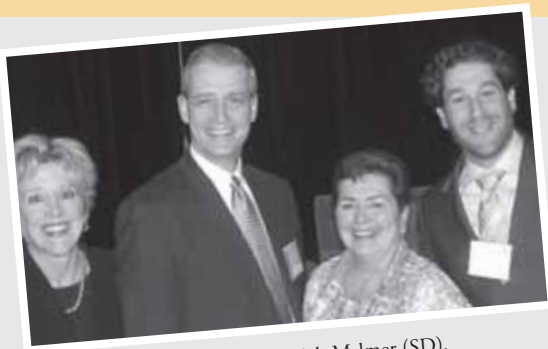
Chief Rick Melmer (SD), Chief Kent King (MO), & Gene Wilhoit (Executive Director, CCSSO)



Chief Ken James (AR), Gene Wilhoit (Executive Director, CCSSO), & Ray Simon (Deputy Secretary, US Department of Education)



Chief Lana Seivers (TN), Chief Sue Gendron (ME), & Chief Shirley Neeley (TX)



Stefani Sanford (Gates), Chief Rick Melmer (SD), Lois Adams Rodgers (CCSSO), & Scott Palmer (CCSSO Consultant)



Chief Peter McWalters (RI) & Chief Steve Paine (WV)



Chief Libby Burmaster (WI) & Chief Susan Castillo (OR)



Chief Valerie Woodruff (DE) & Nancy Wilson (Deputy, DE)



Chief Susan Castillo (OR), Chief Rick Melmer (SD), & Chief Sue Gendron (ME)



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Jeremy Marks (FL, OH), Tamara Ridout (PIO, OH), & Shawn Hime (FL, OK)



Tony Evers (Deputy, WI) & Chief Libby Burmaster (WI)



Chris Lohse (FL, MT), Dave Deschryver (FL, CA), & Patrick Burk (Deputy, OR)



Tony Evers (Deputy, WI) & Jessica Clark Justman (FL, WI)



Mitch Chester (Deputy, OH)



Gene Wilhoit (CCSSO) & Charity Smith (Assessment Director, AR)



Chief Billy Cannaday (VA)

States Collaborate to Integrate NCLB & IDEA and Expand Access to the General Education Curriculum

BY TOLANI ADEBOYE

State education agency (SEA) staff are transforming approaches to special education by collaborating across SEA divisions and with national organizations, technical assistance providers, parent groups, and districts to raise achievement for all students. The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) galvanized existing state efforts to re-envision special education as a set of services as opposed to a place, and NCLB underscored the need to focus on the academic achievement of identified students. States have responded by continuing to expand access to the general education curriculum and align strategies for increasing student achievement with school improvement plans.

There are long-standing, strong relationships among state special education administrators, parent groups, and staff at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) funded technical assistance centers. But the work of fundamentally transforming special education has required special education administrators to reach out to colleagues in other SEAs, who work on Title I and school improvement, and in vested national organizations. The Council is supporting this collaborative work by serving as co-lead for two communities of practice. The NCLB-IDEA Collaboration Community is a project of the IDEA Partnership, at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and the Access Center's State-to-State Information Sharing Community, at the American Institutes for Research. The IDEA Partnership and the Access Center are funded by ED.

The NCLB-IDEA Collaboration Community brings together teams from SEAs, representatives from national organizations, and a broad array of technical assistance providers to develop strategies to increase family engagement, define adequate yearly progress among population subgroups, and close achievement gaps. This community of practice began in 2004 and grew from a state-to-state community that focused

on Title I and IDEA collaboration, which dates back to 1999. State teams are generally composed of the special education director, Title I director, school improvement coordinator, and either a district representative or a representative from a parent group. Building a team that cuts across SEA divisions strengthens communication channels and signals a state's commitment to innovative solutions to persistent achievement gaps.

The State-to-State Information Sharing Community focuses on expanding identified students' access to the general education curriculum by sharing best practices on issues such as progress monitoring, improving teacher quality, and providing technical

assistance to schools. States that participate in the Information Sharing Community, which is in its fifth year, also form teams of individuals whose roles cut across SEA divisions.

The essential aspect of both these projects is the commitment to a community of practice approach.

Communities of practice demand much more than attendance at an annual meeting. They require active participation in ongoing learning and dialogue, a willingness to share both strengths and challenges, and openness to new ways of doing business. The states that participate in these two communities have reaped significant gains from collaboration.

In December, the NCLB-IDEA Collaboration Community convened its annual meeting to set priorities for the year, provide state teams with dedicated planning time, and strengthen relationships with national organizations and technical assistance providers. Twelve states—Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming—and the District of Columbia sent teams and were joined by representatives from over 20 partner organizations and several technical

NCLB UNDERScoreD THE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF IDENTIFIED STUDENTS.

Continued next page

assistance providers, including the Comprehensive Centers, Regional Resource Centers, and universities. Highlights of the meeting included a panel featuring ED's Alexa Posny, director of the Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, and Zollie Stevenson, Jr., deputy director of the Office of Student Achievement and School Accountability; presentations on response to intervention and early intervening services; and roundtable discussions that focused on moving policy to practice.

In October, the State-to-State Information Sharing Community held its annual meeting, during which participants learned of the latest research and policies and had ample time to present best practices. This year Alabama, California, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania sent teams. There were presentations on developing a framework for system and school improvement, integrating NCLB and IDEA, and multi-tiered intervention models.

For the upcoming project year, both communities have identified issue areas for further learning, dialogue, and action. These include realizing the promise of response to instruction/intervention as a general education strategy that can increase achievement for all students; developing early intervening services strategies and programs that address behavioral as well as academic challenges, and that hopefully will reduce disproportionality; and increasing stakeholder ability to access and use data to inform decision-making. Between annual meetings, the work of the communities is conducted through webinars, conference calls, regional meetings, a web-based shared workspace, and the publication and use of guides and tools.

For more information, please contact Tolani Adeboye at tolania@ccsso.org or 202-312-6869. ▶

National Education Priorities – *Continued from page 9*

education officials expressed doubts that the creation of shared or common standards would lead to greater educational equity and were skeptical that states with strong adherence to the notion of states rights would adopt them. In addition to addressing these specific concerns, future discussions will need to consider:

- *Breadth v. depth* – How do we calibrate this relationship appropriately in the development of content-based standards?
- *Timing and rollout* – Is it best to start with reading and math and work from there? How do we build on what has already been developed in these content areas?
- *Connecting standards to a broader children's agenda* – What is CCSSO's role in promulgating a national conversation focused on shared expectations?
- *Partnering* – What is the process for ensuring sufficient partnerships are in place and buy-in exists for developing common standards?

- *The appropriate role of the federal government* – Is there a role for federal policy to ensure that the right balance is obtained between developing shared standards and allowing for local flexibility?
- *Fiscal considerations* – What resources are needed to develop and effectively implement shared standards? Where will these resources come from? How can incentives be utilized to support state adoption?

We are hopeful that these three breakout session summaries illustrate the intense and focused work of the 2006 Annual Policy Forum in allowing critical time for meeting participants to discuss critical issues. The APF was designed to give our members the opportunity and forum to both be heard and observe the stage being set for transformations around the axis of the global imperative for education change. For conference readings, please visit the following webpage: www.ccsso.org/projects/Membership_Meetings/Annual_Policy_Forum_and_Business_Meeting/. ▶

2006 Distinguished Service Award Recipient

BY EVAN OMERSO

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is proud to announce the 2006 recipient of its most prestigious award. The Council's Distinguished Service Award, given annually to a person or persons outside its membership who have shown leadership and/or contributed to the advancement of education, was presented to Senator Lamar Alexander at CCSSO's Annual Policy Forum and Business Meeting taking place in Little Rock, Arkansas.

"In accepting this award, I am humbled to join a long list of other individuals that have devoted much of their careers to public education," said Alexander. "States and chief state school officers are a critical component to ensuring our students' and country's success, particularly as we work together in moving to the next stages of standards-based reform in the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

"I look forward to working with you," Alexander continued, "to make sure the necessary changes to the No Child Left Behind Act make the law less complex and more responsive to the needs of states, of communities, of classroom teachers, and of students."

During his tenure as governor of Tennessee, Alexander became chairman of the National Governors Association (NGA) and led a multi-year education initiative designed to encourage states to use data and results as guides in improving schools; he inspired NGA's keystone 50-state survey for the initiative, Time for Results. While he was the U.S. secretary of education, Alexander helped create higher national academic standards among other initiatives.

Senator Alexander recently introduced a bipartisan bill on global competitiveness designed to improve math and science abilities among American students. The legislation would create a new teachers' institute and scholarship programs to encourage more students to go into math and science teaching.

CCSSO Executive Director Gene Wilhoit said, "We are delighted to honor Lamar Alexander with the Distinguished Service Award. For years he has proven to be a staunch advocate for American students and a leading innovator in public education reform. With an eye to the future, Alexander continues to set a strong example in pushing for increased opportunities for our children and higher expectations for students to obtain the skills they will need in the 21st century global economy."

Alexander was previously the 45th governor of Tennessee and U.S. secretary of education under President George H.W. Bush. He has also served as president of the University of Tennessee and was Goodman professor at Harvard's School of Government. Alexander received a Bachelor of Arts from Vanderbilt University and a J.D. from New York University Law School.

For 47 years, the Council has presented its Distinguished Service Award to outstanding Americans. Previous recipients include Virginia Governor Mark Warner; President Bill Clinton; The Milken Family Foundation; Bill and Melinda Gates; U.S. Senators Edward

M. Kennedy (MA) and James Jeffords (VT); former North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt; former U.S. Representative William F. Goodling; former American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker; and former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. ▶



THE DEMANDS OF THE GLOBAL
ECONOMY AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF
NCLB PROVIDE IMPORTANT CATALYSTS
TO TRANSFORM THE TRADITIONAL
SCHOOL DAY

PRESIDENTIAL *Thoughts* Continued from page 7

of America's children. As an organization of state education leaders, we must collectively articulate the message of the moral and economic imperative of quality public education in the United States.

We can no longer tolerate students being educated in a system designed for a 19th century agrarian lifestyle, using 20th century curricula, and then turning

them loose in a 21st century digital world. The misalignment is too great, and the stakes are too high. At this moment in time, together as chief state school officers with Gene Wilhoit as our executive director, we are poised like no other group to change the education landscape of the future. The time is now.

2006–2007 Board of Directors

BY EVAN OMERSO

CCSSO's 2006–2007 Board of Directors was elected and confirmed at the Council's Annual Policy Forum and Business Meeting in Little Rock, AR, on November 20, 2006. All board members and officers are chief state school officers and continue their tenures in their respective states while serving on the Council's board.

"All of us associated with CCSSO are extremely pleased with our new board members and officers," remarked Gene Wilhoit, executive director of CCSSO. "This organization continues to prosper because of the outstanding leadership of our board." For any questions about CCSSO's board of directors, please contact Scott Montgomery at scottm@ccsso.org or 202-336-7000. ▶

2006–2007 Board of Directors		
Name	State	Position
Elizabeth Burmaster	WI	President
Rick Melmer	SD	President-Elect
Valerie Woodruff	DE	Past President
Susan Castillo	OR	Director
Kathy Cox	GA	Director
Susan Gendron	ME	Director
Kathy Cox	GA	Director
T. Kenneth James	AR	Director
D. Kent King	MO	Director
Wayne G. Sanstead	ND	Director

2007 DLC Executive Committee

BY EVAN OMERSO

2007 Deputies Leadership Commission		
Name	State	Position
Nancy Wilson	DE	President
Patricia Wright	VA	President-Elect
Tony Evers	WI	Vice President
Stuart Bennett	GA	Director
Gloria Dopf	NV	Director
Polly Feis	NE	Director
Gavin Payne	CA	Director
Pamela Pfitzenmaier	IA	Director
Ginger Reynolds	IL	Director

The Council's Annual Policy Forum also gave place to the election of the 2007 Deputies Leadership Commission (DLC) executive committee. The DLC is an action arm of the Council and serves as an integral component of the Council's services to its members by providing opportunities for ongoing professional development.

The executive committee listed to the left meets regularly to discuss issues before the DLC, including the planning of the DLC's spring academy. For more information about the activities of the DLC, please contact Lois Adams-Rodgers at loisar@ccsso.org or at 202-312-6435. ▶



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CALENDAR

*For more information about any CCSSO event, please contact the Council at 202-336-7000.
All meetings are invitation only unless stated otherwise.*

APRIL 2007

Secondary School Redesign National Conference

April 1–3
Austin, TX
Madeline Morrison
202-336-7039

Legislative Conference

April 21–24
Washington, DC
Michele Parks
202-326-8687

EIMAC

April 30–May 2
Arlington, VA
Nzinga Damali-Cathie
202-336-7045

MAY 2007

Building SEA Data Systems

May 13–15
Dallas, TX
Nzinga Damali-Cathie
202-336-7045

EDFacts Coordination Meeting

May 15–16
Dallas, TX
Nzinga Damali-Cathie
202-336-7045

DLC Spring Academy

May 19–22
San Diego, CA
Tracy Malcom
202-336-7030

SCASS ASES

May 22–24
Sranda Watkins
202-336-7020

JUNE 2007

SCASS Early Childhood Education Assessment (ECEA)

June 3–7
Kathy Rodgers
202-336-7018

Arts Education Partnership Forum

June 10–11
Oklahoma City, OK
Kathy Beachler
202-326-8683

Federal Liaison Network

June 11–12
Washington, DC
Carrie Heath
202-312-6433