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GAINING GROUND

Achieving Excellence in High Poverty Schools

Division of State Services and Technical Assistance

CCSSO's Initiative to Improve Achievement In High Poverty Schools Holds Conference

Michael DiMaggio

CCSSO's Initiative to Improve Achievement in High Poverty Schools held its twelfth national working conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on May 5-8, 2002. This year's conference entitled, *Implementing ESEA: States and Districts Sharing Best Practices*, centered on the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). This year's meeting provided examples of promising strategies, support, and guidance for state and local districts in the implementation of NCLB and its impact on Title I, state accountability, professional development, and students with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency. Nearly 100 state and district representatives from 22 states and territories attended the conference. The final day of the conference coincided with the first meeting of the State Support Team Network, (see related *Gaining Ground* article on page 2 of this issue), a collaborative of six states and the District of Columbia whose focus is to develop or strengthen their systems of school support to infuse research-based instructional practices in low-performing Title I schools.

Michael Davis, State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the New Mexico Department of Education, delivered welcoming remarks on May 5, 2002. Superintendent Davis provided a detailed background of New Mexico and its public schools. He highlighted examples of the strategies he intends to implement while addressing the challenges that will be faced in implementing NCLB.

Participants attended plenary and workshop sessions on a variety of topics pertaining to developing state and district systems of

support for low performing schools; using data to leverage change; enhancing teacher recruitment, retention, and professional development; cultivating interagency collaboration; and improving literacy development.

Monday's opening plenary session included a U.S. Department of Education panel featuring Jackie Jackson, Deputy Director of Compensatory Education Programs, and Cheri Pierson Yecke, Director of Quality and Public School Choice, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The panel addressed components of the NCLB Act, specifically focusing on Titles I and II.

The workshop sessions allowed state team members to receive information from expert consultants in a smaller group setting. Participants heard about research-based strategies for improving reading as well as particular state and district strategies for improving student achievement in high poverty schools. The plenary session introduced the main issues of a particular topic that were followed by a series of concurrent workshops designed to delve more deeply into those issues. For example, San Antonio Principal Joanne Cockrell and consultant Phyllis McClure spoke to attendees about resource reallocation. Ms. Cockrell provided resource alternatives for districts that are financially challenged while Ms. McClure identified the varying funding streams now accessible for states and districts under different Titles of the NCLB Act.

The conference also included visits to six schools in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) system--four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school--providing an opportunity to observe promising practices in action in high poverty schools. Participants observed schools demonstrating success through reform initiatives such as Success for All and the Baldrige Model combined with supplemental programs like Accelerated Reader, Early Start, Math Trailblazers, Join-A-School, and Academy Schools.

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State Support Team Network Holds First of Three Meetings

Burton Taylor

A collaborative of state teams that have agreed to work together in a series of three conferences to develop or strengthen their systems of school support to infuse research-based instructional practices in low-performing Title I schools held its first meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from May 8-10. The first day of this meeting was held jointly with the High Poverty Schools Initiative conference, which was concluding that day. (Please see related *Gaining Ground* article on page 1 of this issue.) The collaborative, known as the State Support Team Network (SSTN), consists of teams of state and local educators from Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Kansas, South Dakota, and West Virginia. These states responded to an invitation sent to all chief state school officers in December 2001.

The focus of the Network is on (1) the creation and operation of school support systems; (2) the use of data to examine root instructional issues influencing student achievement; and (3) how reading instruction can be changed to improve achievement in the elementary grades.

The state teams participated in a series of presentations, consultations, and individual team meetings. The presentations included Phyllis Hunter, who spoke to the entire group about *Research-Based Reading Programs and Practices: Screening for Quality and Implementing What Works*. The other presentations were offered in concurrent sessions that allowed members of each team to benefit from the experience of expert consultants in a small group setting. These consultants were selected to work with the teams throughout the series of three meetings. Each group of concurrent sessions focused on

one of the three core topics the Network is addressing: state and district support to low performing schools; using data to drive improvement; and instructional approaches in reading. (The first set of presentations on state and district support to low performing schools was augmented by representatives from the New Mexico State Department of Education and the Albuquerque Public Schools.)

The consultation sessions provided each team with the opportunity to present issues or challenges they want to address, and receive advice from and exchange views with their colleagues and expert consultants. These discussions shifted the focus from the best practices described in the presentations to the actual issues each state is confronting. Issues identified included:

- How to provide adequate support to low performing Title I schools in states with limited financial resources;
- How to align curricula with state standards;
- How to link data-determined needs to programmatic and instructional decisions;
- How to help districts collect, manage and use their data;
- The need for reading standards in grades K-2;
- The need for high quality professional development for teachers to enable them to use scientifically-based reading instruction programs effectively; and
- How to convince principals and teachers to switch from ineffective programs they have been using and are comfortable with to scientifically-based instructional programs.

The consultants and team members from other states provided advice to the presenting state team. However, it was recognized that in most instances the solutions to these issues would require attention over the next two meetings and beyond.

The individual team meetings provided members with an opportunity to think strategically about how they can apply the information shared at the conference to their own situations. They were intended to allow time for teams to reflect on the issues being discussed in the presentations and consultation sessions, and to decide how they want to pursue them. Teams also had the discretion to invite consultants to join them in these conversations and several did so.

During the final team meeting, teams were asked to assess how the conference met their needs and to provide advice about the content and structure of the remaining two conferences. They then convened in a plenary session and each team leader provided a report.

Major responses are summarized below:

- Address how states with limited resources are providing effective systems of support to low performing Title I schools (Many participants admired what states like Kentucky, North Carolina, and Texas are doing in this regard, but said they do not have the resources to emulate these programs);
- Provide more time for individual team meetings (Several participants felt these sessions were most valuable, e.g., "One of the best aspects of the meeting." "We never have time in our state to discuss these issues.");
- Provide information on assessment tools for reading at the K-3 level;
- Include educators who have been successful in turning failing schools around;
- Focus on how state agencies have organized to support school and district improvement and train effective school improvement teams;
- Address how states can increase their capacity to provide the professional development needed to have an expert reading teacher in every classroom;
- Provide additional guidance on how to identify and select scientifically-based reading instruction programs; and
- Include USED personnel in future meetings

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HPSI Conference

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A major purpose of this High Poverty Schools Initiative meeting was that on each day during the conference, state teams shared the results of their workshop discussions. Participants commented on the usefulness of these team meetings to enhance personal understanding of current state and district thinking on relevant issues. Teams also placed value on the opportunity to interact and exchange information and experiences with other state teams.

In the next few months, a proceedings document, along with materials from the conference workshops, will be posted on CCSSO's Web site at <http://www.ccsso.org/>. For further information about this initiative, please contact Michael DiMaggio at (202) 336-7024 or michaeld@ccsso.org.

SSTI Conference

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The second meeting of the SSTN will be held on July 15-17, 2002, in Washington, D.C. For further information about this initiative, please contact Burton Taylor at (202) 336-7034 or burtont@ccsso.org.

Council Convenes Second National Conference on New 21st Century Community Learning Centers Legislation

Mark H. Emery

The Council of Chief State School Officers recently sponsored a successful, two-day working conference, "Achieving the Vision," in Houston, Texas (April 10 - 11, 2002) for state education agency (SEA) officials associated with after-school initiatives and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program within each state. The Council, working closely with the U.S. Department of Education and others, and through the sponsorship of the C. S. Mott Foundation, developed an intensive two-day interactive meeting. This meeting was designed to help the SEA develop their state plan in line with the new regulations stemming from the *No Child Left Behind Act* and to build management and implementation capacity to ensure effective and sustainable after-school programs as the 21st CCLC program transitions from a federally-administered program to a state-administered one.

The conference was well attended with over a 90% participation rate. There were detailed discussions on the new legislation, non-regulatory guidance, the expanded role of community- and faith-based organizations, and state requirements led by Department of Education legal counsel. In addition, there were plenary sessions on building a statewide advisory committee and a panel discussion by four SEAs who discussed implementation challenges, policy issues, and progress to date. The six breakout sessions focused on the critical elements of the new legislation: collaborative partnerships, program quality, providing training and technical assistance, sustainability, evaluations, and access and equity. Peer learning interactive planning sessions were scheduled so SEAs had the opportunity to dialogue, problem solve, share knowledge with one another, and develop their state plan.

The survey responses from the conference attendees were very positive. The format and structure of this conference was developed from the suggestions and needs expressed by the SEA officials who attended the CCSSO-NCCE Tampa Conference in November. Of particular benefit were the individual and group state team planning sessions where state education agency officials were able to discuss specific issues and potential solutions to challenges stemming from the new legislation.

The conference agenda, list of attendees, and additional information on extended learning opportunities can be found on the Council's Extended Learning Opportunities Website <http://ccsso.org/elo/elo.html>. For further information please contact Mark H. Emery, Project Director (marke@ccsso.org or (202) 326-8690) or Ayeola Fortune, Project Associate (ayeolaf@ccsso.org or (202) 326-8680).

CCSSO's Draft List of Potential Supplemental Service Providers is Now Available On-Line

Ayeola Fortune

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requires that state education agencies compile a state approved list of supplemental service providers that can provide supplemental educational services for students attending schools designated as in need of improvement or currently in corrective action. To assist states in meeting this requirement, the Council's division of State Services and Technical Assistance has compiled a *draft* list of tutoring services and after-school program providers that could provide Supplemental Services under

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High Poverty Schools Initiative Investigates the delivery of Special Education Services

Elaine Bonner-Tompkins

The High Poverty Schools Initiative has investigated the delivery of special education services in five high achieving, high poverty elementary schools in Texas. Funded by a three-year grant from the federal Office of Special Education Programs and through subcontracts with the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the Initiative has studied the experiences of students with disabilities in these schools and the policy factors that have been a factor in these experiences.

In April 2002, a trio of documents resulting from this research were published. The first document, entitled *Expecting Success: A Study of Five High Performing, High Poverty Schools*, which was discussed in the March issue of *Gaining Ground*, identifies and describes practices that support the achievement of students enrolled in five high performing, high poverty elementary schools.

The second document, *Expecting Success: An Analysis of Education Policy in Texas*, examines the policy arena in which these schools operate. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education undertook the task of exploring the policy factors that were in existence at the time the five schools were studied. While the report makes no effort to connect policy to success, considerable attention was given to those policies that should have had an influence on special education service delivery. The broad emphasis of Texas education policy is a strong general education system that both precludes the need for special education whenever possible and assumes the responsibility for teaching all children in the general education classroom.

Furthermore, great emphasis is put on early intervention and reading so children do not fall behind before they even start school.

This document and the others in this series can be ordered online at www.ccsso.org. For further information about the project, please contact Elaine Bonner-Tompkins at (202)336-7035 or elainebt@ccsso.org.

Designing School Accountability Systems Towards a Framework and Process

Rolf Blank

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has released a new publication addressing the needs and interests of states in improving statewide systems of education accountability. The paper, *Designing School Accountability Systems*, was produced by CCSSO's state collaborative on Accountability Systems and Reporting (ASR) in association with Brian Gong, Associate Director of the Center for Assessment, Portsmouth, NH.

The document presents three different perspectives of accountability design to address states' needs. The first view proposes an elaborated framework, with questions, criteria, and comments, intended to provide a structure for helping states move through the process of designing a school accountability system. The second view presents a concise checklist of characteristics to help states evaluate the consistency and coherence of existing programs. The third view provides examples of actual state experience with design features that might be considered and why.

The ASR State Collaborative in Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) is one of several collaborative projects initiated by the Council. The ASR SCASS project is working to develop documents that will help state departments of education design, im-

prove, or review their state accountability and reporting systems. The ASR members began working together in 2000 to improve the state departments of education's knowledge of designs for accountability and reporting methods across the states and the effectiveness of the systems based on differing designs. The first priority established by the ASR group was to develop a document that would assist states in making decisions about designs for accountability systems. Further information about the collaborative can be found on the CCSSO website

http://www.ccsso.org/scass/p_asr/index.html

The publication is being provided to chief state school officers and senior staff in each state department of education. Copies can be obtained from CCSSO through the website: <http://publications.ccsso.org/> or by phone to Publications office (202) 336-7016. For further information about the ASR SCASS or the document, please contact CCSSO project coordinators, Rolf Blank, at (202)336-7044 or rolfb@ccsso.org or Jennifer Manise, at (202)336-7029 or jennm@ccsso.org.

32nd Annual Conference on Large Scale Assessment Slated

Carl Andrews

CCSSO's 2002 National Conference on Large-Scale Assessment will feature U.S. Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Susan Neuman as the opening luncheon speaker. The conference, with over 120 large and small group sessions, 2-hour symposia, and roundtable sessions, is June 23 - 26, 2002, in Palm Desert, California.

The 32nd annual conference will address critical issues of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), such as the assessment and evaluation of limited English proficient students and students with disabilities; test development; and issues related to the reporting of results. These sessions will also address a wide range of technical concerns related to developing new standards-based assessments, performance assessments, and portfolio assessments. Attendees will have

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32nd Annual Conference on Large Scale Assessment Slated

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an opportunity to discuss and examine relevant issues, to examine the current status of research and practice in assessment, and to explore future initiatives and endeavors in the field.

Additional information about CCSSO's 2002 National Conference on Large Scale Assessment can be found at <http://ccsso.org/conf.html>. For specific inquiries, please contact Carl Andrews, Senior Project Associate, at (202) 336-7053 or acarl@ccsso.org

CCSSO's Draft List of Potential Supplemental Service Providers is Now Available On-Line

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the new provisions of Title I. The list includes for-profit tutoring services, non-profit tutoring services, national and state-based afterschool program providers and curriculum developers.

The list is currently available in the "what's new" section of the Council's website, <http://www.ccsso.org>. For further information please contact Ayeola Fortune (ayeolaf@ccsso.org or 202-326-8680).

*** Please note that this is a tentative list, which is still being developed. It is not exhaustive nor does the list imply endorsement by the Council of Chief State School Officers. In addition, evidence of effectiveness is available for a few of the programs listed. However, we purposely did not specify which programs. Readers are encouraged to examine each program based on their needs and expectations.**

SSTA Division Staff News

Jana Martella will become the Director of Early Childhood and Family Education for the Division of State Services and Technical Assistance effective June 1, 2002. Jana assumes this position with twenty-five years of education experience -- as an elementary teacher and a administrator, school board member and policy analyst and advocate. For nine of those years she has worked for CCSSO or in close collaboration as a federal liaison representative (FLR) for the Washington state education agency.

Patricia Brennan-Gac joined the School Health Team as Senior Project Associate for the Packard funded Building Bridges Project. Trish brings to this project a background in education policy, legislation, communications, and organizing. Prior to attending law school at Pepperdine University and Georgetown University, she worked with the National School Safety Center in California and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice. She spent three years at the U.S. Department of Education, working with elected officials throughout the country in the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs and in the Office of the Secretary on budget and legislation as well as with various education groups on outreach projects.

Barbara Carolino, after working part-time for the past six months as a CCSSO research assistant, has accepted the position of Project Associate for the High School Immigrants and Secondary Schools Reform Project and LEP SCASS. She recently completed her M.Ed. in TESOL at the University of Maryland, College Park which complements her Bachelor's degree from Duke University in Public Policy.

Kathrin Breitt Brown, who has served as editor of *Gaining Ground* as well as worked on the Special Education Initiative of the HPSI, is leaving the Council to pursue full-time motherhood with her soon-to-be firstborn.

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American Cancer Society Announces Leadership Institute for Urban School Systems

The American Cancer Society is now accepting applications for its National Urban School Health Leadership Institute, a new initiative funded by the Division of Adolescent and School Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Institute is designed to help districts develop a systemic, coordinated approach to address many of the health and safety issues that interfere with student success. Six to ten urban districts will be selected to participate in intensive leadership training, team development, and technical assistance activities to help strengthen leadership skills and build capacity on promoting school health as part of the total school program. Teams from chosen districts must agree to meet the three-year commitment required for program participation. The American Cancer Society will pay all costs for travel, lodging, and meals required for team member participation.

To obtain an application or more information about the School Health Leadership Institute, please contact the American Cancer Society by telephone at (404) 982-3672 or via e-mail at ntolbert@cancer.org. Applications must be received prior to July 3, 2002, to be considered.

The CCSSO National Conference on Large-Scale Assessment

This annual conference brings together more than 800 people with a professional interest in student assessments developed in all areas of the curriculum and conducted on national, state, district and even classroom levels. Through the scheduled presentations, the conference offers up-to-date information on the state of student assessment in the nation. The conference addresses critical issues affecting all schools, such as the assessment and evaluation of limited English proficient students and students with disabilities, requirements for assessment for Title I purposes, and test development and issues related to reporting of results. The conference also examines a wide range of technical concerns related to developing new standards-based assessments, performance assessments and portfolio assessments.



The 2002 National Conference on Large-Scale Assessment will held at the [Marriott Desert Springs Hotel & Resort](#) in Palm Desert, CA, June 23-26, 2002.

[DRAFT - Final Program](#)
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Please continue to visit this page or call the conference hotline for updated information regarding the 2002 conference!

Hope to see you in California,
Carl Andrews, Conference Director
LaKisha Curtis, Conference Coordinator

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Final Program, 2001 Conference

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