



READINGS AND "THINK ABOUTS"

The following pre-readings and guiding questions will help you prepare for the Council's **2006 Annual Policy Forum and Business Meeting** This meeting, **November 17-19, in Little Rock, Arkansas**. provides a critical platform for developing strategies and ideas for exercising leadership.

The readings have been selected to help achieve the following goals of the Annual Policy Forum program:

- To explore chiefs' **leadership** around the global imperative for education change, building on the outcomes of the 2006 Summer Institute.
- To identify **priorities** for using state policy and the power of collective action at the national level to improve educational opportunity and student achievement.

Within this frame, the policy forum will address cutting-edge topics facing education:

- **updating standards for the 21st century** with an emphasis on the question of national standards
- **leading the charge on state level teacher policy** with a focus on measuring and promoting teacher effectiveness
- **state capacity to support school and district improvement** with a focus on the resources needed to ensure interventions take hold
- leadership on **federal policy**, including reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Abstracts of the selected readings follow.

Updating Standards for the 21st Century

The premise of standards-based reform is a common understanding of what schools should do to help prepare students for their future. States retain the authority and responsibility to set the standards for student knowledge and skills that drive teaching and learning in our schools. Are our current state standards sufficient to meet 21st needs and the demands of accountability? At the Annual Policy Forum, CCSSO members will deliberate the challenges of updating standards.

Framework for High Performing 21st Century High Schools: West Virginia Department of Education 21st Century Implementation Model, West Virginia Board of Education, July 10, 2006

This framework demonstrates how the West Virginia Department of Education has taken 21st century learning goals and incorporated them into a set of initiatives for action. The high school framework was selected to provide the continuity of conversation over the years within CCSSO; additional frameworks are available on their digital resource site.

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/21stcenturydigitalresource/21stCentLearn.html>.

To Dream the Impossible Dream: Four Approaches to National Standards and Tests for America's Schools, Executive Summary and Introduction, Chester E. Finn, Jr., Liam Julian, and Michael J. Petrilli, August 2006

National standards are again on the radar screen. In an effort to move the conversation around national standards forward, the Fordham Foundation asked a bipartisan group of experts to weigh in on what a system of national standards and tests might look like. In the Executive Summary and Introduction to this report, the authors describe the four models that emerged from the experts' review. The full report is available at

<http://www.edexcellence.net/doc/National%20Standards%20Final%20PDF.pdf>.

Leading the Charge on State-Level Teacher Policy

The key to effective learning is effective teaching. The past year has seen tremendous developments in our collective thinking about how we understand, measure, and encourage teacher effectiveness. Some of the levers for change in teacher quality reside at the state level. Others have traditionally resided at the local level, but states are increasingly being asked to weigh in with new policies around such issues as the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers and compensation schemes that connect teacher pay to student performance. These background readings describe the new context for state teacher policy.

Teacher Pay Reform Challenges States, Kavan Peterson, Stateline.org, March 04, 2006

This article from Stateline.org describes the trend across the country toward compensating teachers based on student performance as opposed to seniority or

educational attainment. The article describes initiatives in several states, as well as the opposition these initiatives have faced. The online version of this document contains several links to websites for more information.

<http://www.stateline.org/live/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=136&languageId=1&contentId=93346>

Teacher Incentive Fund Frequently Asked Questions, excerpts, U.S. Department of Education, August 15, 2006

The federal Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) is an example of how the current administration is shifting its programmatic emphasis away from promoting “highly qualified” teachers to promoting what they are calling “highly effective” teachers. The frequently asked questions portion of the USED TIF website offers insight into several priorities around performance-based compensation for teachers. The selected overview, questions, and answers demonstrate several of the most challenging issues related to changing teacher compensation schemes. The full FAQ page may be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherincentive/faq.html>.

Teacher-Pay Incentives Popular But Unproven, Linda Jacobson, *Ed Week*, September 27, 2006

Another key challenge in education policy today is finding teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and schools. This *Ed Week* article provides an overview of different types of pay incentives that states are offering to teachers in these subjects and schools despite limited evidence of their effectiveness.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/09/27/05incentive.h26.html>

Revising the Equitable Distribution Component in Your State’s Plan for Highly Qualified Teachers, Laura Goe, September 2006

While designed as a “how to” guide for revising state NCLB Title II plans, this publication by the National Comprehensive Center on Teacher Quality provides a thorough overview of state policy considerations related to the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers and whether or not the goal is compliance with NCLB.

<http://www.nctq.org/TeacherDistributionPlanningTool.pdf>

State Capacity to Support School and District Improvement

State Support to Schools in Need of Improvement, Consortium for School Improvement, Council of Chief State School Officers, September 2006

This policy brief by CCSSO describes how states are responding to the NCLB requirement that they provide assistance to schools that are labeled in need of improvement under NCLB. The brief provides specific examples from eight states as to how they have organized their service delivery to schools. The introduction

provided in these readings offers highlights of the findings. The full report provides detailed information on each state analyzed.

http://www.ccsso.org/projects/Consortium_for_School_Improvement/7363.cfm

Summary of State Strategies for Districts Identified for Improvement Under NCLB, American Institutes for Research, July 2006

This report, conducted for the California Comprehensive Center, looks at what states are doing to support *districts* labeled in need of improvement under NCLB. The authors reviewed 16 states that provide differing types of interventions and identified strategies and practices that might work well in other states. Also, links to tools, including tools for district planning, district plan rating, needs assessments, monitoring, and budgeting, are provided.

http://www.cacompcenter.org/pdf/cacc_strategies.pdf

School Improvement Under No Child Left Behind, Executive Summary, by Phyllis McClure, prepared for the Center for American Progress, March 2005

With a focus on how to fund school improvement strategies, this report describes how the School Improvement Fund authorized in NCLB may assist states in providing supports for school improvement. The report describes how “[s]ome states are straining for money to support many SINI [schools in need of improvement], while others have sizable funds available for school improvement and relatively few schools designated for improvement efforts.” The report recommends state practices that can lead to more effective implementation of school improvement provisions.

<http://www.americanprogress.org/kf/mcclure3-03-2005.pdf>

Leading Perspectives on Federal Policy in Education and ESEA Reauthorization

ESEA Reauthorization Policy Statement: CCSSO Policy Statement on the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Council of Chief State School Officers, October 2006

CCSSO is committed to ensuring that reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reinforces sound state and local education practices—promoting innovation and providing increased support, along with improved accountability for results—to best achieve our core education goals. This policy statement describes CCSSO’s goal for ESEA reauthorization, which is to move beyond *no child left behind* and toward *every child a graduate*—prepared for postsecondary education, work, and citizenship in the 21st century. The statement describes the new state-federal partnership that will be required to achieve this goal and how ESEA reauthorization can help.

http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/ESEA_Policy_Stmnt.pdf