



Support for School Improvement

The e-Newsletter of the CCSSO State Support Team Network

June 2004

Welcome to the Support for School Improvement e-newsletter, a monthly publication focusing on school improvement efforts at the state and district level. Our goal is to provide a forum around school improvement efforts through national, state and district perspectives.

Support to Low Performing Schools: Learning from One Another

The School Improvement and Planning Section of the **Louisiana** Department of Education has posted its Rubric for the Evaluation of School Improvement Plans. To assist reviewers, guidelines are included within the template. The Rubric is located at <http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/2823.doc>. To review the online template for the School Improvement Plan, go to <http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/4631.doc>.

[A Decade of Reform: A Summary of Research Findings on Classroom, School, and District Effectiveness in Washington State](#) (74 pages). This research report from the Washington School Research Center provides information and research on classroom instruction in a high standards environment, schoolwide and district practices in a high standards environment and lessons learned from the Gates Foundation.

One finding in the report relates to the importance of teacher attitude toward reform efforts. "In successful schools, teachers have recognized and accepted the direction of the state's reform efforts. This, apparently, is the fundamental characteristic, perhaps a prerequisite, of school and student success. To be successful, educators are adopting a new set of guiding principles for their schools, and this is leading to changes in school-wide functioning. Many lower achieving schools are attempting to implement these same practices, but without a mind-set change on the part of the teachers, they appear to have little effect on student achievement" (p. 43). To review the report, go to <http://www.spu.edu/wsrc/ADecadeofReformOctober192003v5.pdf>.

Closing the Achievement Gap

[The Performance of Historically Underachieving Groups of Students in South Carolina Elementary and Middle Schools: A Call to Action](#) (68 pages). This two-year study requested by the **South Carolina** Education Oversight Committee found a significant achievement gap exists between the state's black and white students. To provide further insight into the achievement gap, the team examined characteristics of identified schools that showed high levels of performance by one or more of the target groups in ELA, math,

or both. "Parents, teachers, and students in the gap-reducing schools tended to be much more satisfied with home-school relations than survey respondents from other South Carolina schools. This suggests that teachers, students, and parents perceive these schools to be welcoming and positive places with a strong focus on learning" (p.51). Recommendations to close the achievement gap are presented on page 52. This study can be reviewed at http://www.state.sc.us/eoc/PDF/achievement_Sun.pdf.

Examining Policies to Impact School Improvement

Out-of-Field Teaching and the Limits of Teacher Policy

<http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/LimitsPolicy-RI-09-2003.pdf>

This report focuses on the problem of underqualified teachers in the core academic fields at the 7-12th grade level using data from the nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey. The author provides a discussion around possible solutions to the problem of out-of-field teaching.

Publications and Sites of Interest

The Heart of the Matter: The Coaching Model in America's Choice Schools

<http://www.cpre.org/Publications/AC-06.pdf>

The concept of coaching fills a promising niche in the range of strategies to improve the capacity of teachers to provide high-quality instruction to their students. This document provides an in-depth look at the coaching model implemented in America's Choice Schools. Chapter topics address the coach's role, rollout of literacy workshops, in-class coaching and individual coaching, the influence of coaching on standards-based instruction and recommendations for implementing the coaching model.

About Support for School Improvement e-Newsletter and SSTN

Support for School Improvement, the e-newsletter of the CCSSO State Support Team Network, is a free monthly newsletter focusing on school improvement efforts at the state and district level. The purpose of the State Support Team Network (SSTN) is to assist states in developing their systems of support for turning around low-performing schools. SSTN is part of the High Poverty Schools Initiative housed at CCSSO.

To submit a news item relevant to school improvement efforts at the state or district level, provide feedback, or to subscribe/unsubscribe, send an e-mail to Susan Taylor at susant@ccsso.org. The PDF version of this newsletter is available at the following <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/SSINewsletterJune04.pdf>

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a bipartisan, 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. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

Our mission statement: The Council of Chief State School Officers, through Leadership, Advocacy, and Service, 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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