



Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

December 2003

Capital Conference SALT activities a success

OSBA's student achievement activities during Capital Conference were a success. Thanks to all who participated in the variety of activities, especially those who shared their outstanding programs and performed during the Student Achievement Fair.

Share what you learned

Plan to spend time during a school board meeting discussing the innovations and programs you learned about while at Capital Conference. This is a great opportunity to focus on improving your students' learning experience.

Student activities increase civic engagement

A Portuguese researcher says there's a relationship between student activities and civic engagement. **Isabel Menezes** of Porto University found that participation in extracurricular activities had a positive effect on student civic engagement. The more frequently students were involved in these activities, the higher the expectation that they would participate in future civic activities (such as voting). To read the study, visit www.ascd.org/publications/researchbrief/volume1/v1n23.html.

SALT Resource Kit enclosed

A resource kit to help schools improve their student achievement programs is enclosed in this month's mailing. It includes a variety of tips and ideas to help focus your district's efforts to improve student achievement.

Next year's student achievement liaison

Are you planning to continue serving as your district's student achievement liaison? Great, if you are! If not, plan to discuss the position and its importance at your next school board meeting. You may wish to identify an interested board member to take over in 2004. The student achievement liaison's job description is included in the enclosed resource kit.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members. Use it to generate discussion with the board and staff.

Fostering success in middle schools

The National Middle School Association (NMSA) recently released a position paper that offers some insight into successful middle schools. Twenty million American boys and girls attend middle schools. The maturity and developmental levels of these students between the ages of 10 and 15 vary greatly. Their needs are diverse.

In *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*, the association says its vision for successful middle schools is broken down into 14 characteristics. Eight have to do with the school's culture and the remainder deal with academic programs.

NMSA identifies successful schools for young adolescents as being characterized by a culture that includes:

- educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so;
- courageous, collaborative leadership;
- a shared vision that guides decisions;
- an inviting, supportive and safe environment;
- high expectations for every member of the learning community;
- students and teachers engaged in active learning;
- an adult advocate for every student;
- school-initiated family and community partnerships.

NMSA says successful schools for young adolescents provide:

- curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory;
- multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to their diversity;
- assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning;
- organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning;
- schoolwide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness and safety;
- multifaceted guidance and support services.

The National Middle School Association is located in Ohio at 4151 Executive Parkway, Suite 300 Westerville, 43081, and can be contacted by phone at (800) 528-NMSA (6672). This position paper can be downloaded at www.nmsa.org.

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Success is distributed only to student achievement liaisons, so please share with fellow board members and district staff.