



Success

Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

January 2006

Staff could be your best resource

Your professional staff may be the best resource for learning what works well to improve student achievement. Create a panel of outstanding administrators and teachers to make a presentation on learning research to the board. Also, such a panel could plan a community forum on student achievement. Remember, the Web-based SALT resource kit on understanding the district report cards can be used as a foundation for a community meeting. It can be found at: www.osba-ohio.org/ldr.htm.

Are we creating Baby Einsteins?

Christian Science Monitor reporter **Patrik Jonsson** writes that America's "near obsession with academic excellence is filtering down to the level of the jungle gym and nap-time rug. School districts are pushing students to new levels as a growing body of research indicates the importance of early learning and the demands of a competitive world close in on the American classroom." To read the entire story, visit: www.csmonitor.com/2005/1208/p20s01-legn.html.

Baby Einsteins part 2

The Alliance for Childhood questions the push to increase academics in kindergarten and preschool. The organization issued a statement that says, among other things, "We call for early education that emphasizes experiential, hands-on activities, open-ended creative play and caring human relationships." For the complete statement, visit: www.allianceforchildhood.org/pdf_files/call_action_education.pdf.

Plan now for the 2006 Student Achievement Fair

Share your success beyond your community. Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2006 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. The lineup for the Student Achievement Fair is now being assembled. Contact **Kathy LaSota**, OSBA deputy director of search services and board development, as soon as possible at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA to learn more about this wonderful opportunity to highlight your district's academic achievement. The application and supplemental information can be found at www.osba-ohio.org.

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.

What is education success?

In April 2003, **Thomas A. Hinton**, director of state relations at the Heritage Foundation, offered his “Four Essential Principles for Education Success” during the Third International Symposium on Innovations in Education in Mendoza, Argentina. Here is a brief summary of his points:

Our goal is success, not process — Success, student success, should not be defined too narrowly; that is to say, we are often tempted to make sure that someone is funneled to — and trained in — one skill in order to hold down a job and be a productive member of society. A job and productivity are worthwhile endeavors indeed, but success should be called such when people have a broad education, with as many tools as possible at their disposal, which they in turn can use to secure the maximum number of opportunities as adults.

Reform and education innovation must be addressed in the context of universal principles of human nature — The U.S. spends \$422 billion each year on elementary and secondary education. Yet the results of the most recent national assessment tests are deeply disappointing. Nearly six in 10 high school seniors do not have a basic knowledge of American history, and more than half of the nation’s low-income fourth-graders cannot read, even at the basic level. People want to be free, and they want to determine their own paths. Education innovation that recognizes that will more likely succeed.

Education does not equal salvation — Education is not the final answer to every question. Though it is critical and can make a huge difference. The story is bigger than that. Educators and policymakers must be open and encouraging of the cultural elements of church, family, community and other character development forces, without which all of our best efforts will not be ultimately successful. This is both a relief and a challenge. But it is also a caution that in raising the importance of education, we do not try to make it more than it was ever designed to do. At the very least, we should do nothing to hinder these other positive influences on our students.

We should always remember to whom we are accountable — Society? Yes, to some extent we answer to “society.” But how do you measure that with any accuracy in the short, correctable term? Students? In a sense, yes, in that they have to live with the blessings or consequences of what we do. But we cannot consider them an accountability receptor for the same reason most civilized cultures do not allow people who have yet to reach maturity to make certain choices.

Source: www.heritage.org/Research/Education/hl822.cfm

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