



# Success

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

January 2008

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## What issues do you face?

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) Web site offers a variety of resources to help school board members examine the issues facing public education. To read about research on early learning and K-12 issues, visit [www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issuesEL.asp](http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issuesEL.asp).

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## Get parents involved

The more parents are involved in their children's education, the better children will do in the classroom. Ask your superintendent to make a presentation to the board on what the district is doing to increase parental involvement. The Ohio Department of Education has tips for parents at [www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=245](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=245).

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## Post student art online

An inexpensive way to recognize your district's student artists is to post photographs of their work online. You can rotate the display among your buildings and invite several of the artists to attend a school board meeting.

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## How to be a student achievement liaison

Just what does a student achievement liaison do? If you are a new liaison and would like information on your responsibilities, please visit OSBA's Web site, [www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm). Besides dozens of resources, you will find a job description for the position and a video featuring Student Achievement Leadership Team member **William Spahr** explaining the role and responsibilities.

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## Helping kids climb higher

January is School Board Recognition Month in Ohio. It is a great opportunity to promote the board's role in raising student achievement in your district. This year's theme, "Helping kids climb higher," gives you a vehicle to share the steps your board has taken to help students improve their academic performance. Include your accomplishments and plans for the future. Point to increases in proficiency test scores and other measures of student performance.

## Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members.

### Do single-sex classrooms improve student achievement?

Many educators across the country have kept a close and interested eye on a study conducted at Woodward Avenue Elementary School in DeLand, Fla. In 2006, the U.S. Department of Education released new rules allowing public school districts to offer more single-sex education classes, as long as comparable numbers of co-ed choices remained. These rule changes have pushed the number of public schools offering same-sex classrooms to more than 300 from a mere handful 10 years ago. Although some groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union, caution that single-sex classrooms may potentially limit opportunities for both genders, many parents and educators are strong proponents of the concept.

Partnered with Stetson University researchers, Woodward Avenue Elementary participated in a study that attempted to better understand whether boys and girls in single-sex classrooms would master content standards at higher levels than their peers in co-ed classrooms within the same school building, during the same year and while using the same curriculum.

Dr. **Leonard Sax**, executive director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE), monitored the study. Sax is not alone in his belief that boys and girls are inherently different in the ways their brains develop, and that those differences lead to widely varying learning styles and preferences.

Stetson professors and Woodward teachers worked together closely in developing the single-gender classes begun four years ago as a way to improve lagging achievement among boys. Initial results showed a significant difference in the achievement of both boys and girls in co-ed versus single-sex classrooms.

In the first year of the Woodward Elementary study, results from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, or FCAT, showed that boys in Woodward's co-ed classes were 37% proficient, compared with 86% proficiency for boys in single-sex classes. For girls, 59% of those in co-ed classes were proficient, as compared with 75% in single-sex classes.

Teachers at Woodward have used these results to better understand the ways children learn best and to develop strategies for children in all classrooms to achieve at greater levels. Four years later, test scores are up schoolwide, although boys in single-gender classes continue to outperform their co-ed peers.

For more about NASSPE and other studies related to single-sex education, visit [www.nasspe.org](http://www.nasspe.org).

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