



Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

July 2005

Tight budget ahead

The state's biennium budget has been front-page news the few weeks. How will it affect your academic programs? Have your treasurer and curriculum director report to the board and community what the district needs to do to maintain a balanced budget while striving for increasing academic achievement.

OGT results are in

Parents of sophomores just received their child's Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) results. This makes it a good time for the board to discuss your district's successes on the OGT. What did you do that was particularly successful and what didn't work? What will you be doing for those students who did not pass the test?

Boosting staff morale, boosts student achievement

The June issue of *American School Board Journal* offers 10 ways to raise staff morale, which author Kathleen Vail reports will increase academic achievement. The cover story suggests schools: support new teachers; clue into climate; empower teachers and staff; recognize and reward teachers and staff; don't ignore administrator morale; deal with student discipline; treat teachers like professionals; ask employees what's going on; keep facilities tidy; and develop emotional IQ. For the entire story, visit www.asbj.com.

Lessons learned from across the pond

An article in *Policy Review*, published by the Hoover Institution, looks at England's public school reform. While you may not agree with what the British government is doing, you need to know what policymakers in Washington, D.C., are reading. Those ideas might find their way to our Statehouse. For the article, visit www.policyreview.org/jun05/hill.html.

Opening day activities

You never get a second chance at making a good first impression. So, what is your district doing to make the first day of school great? Setting the tone early will reap benefits down the road. Have your building principals report their plans to kick off the school year in style.

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.

Project-based learning versus problem-based learning

Project-based learning and *problem-based learning* both use various range of instructional strategies. Despite many similarities in the two approaches, there are some distinct differences. So, which is better in K-12 instruction?

Project-based learning is driven by the end product, and the knowledge base that a student acquires through each phase or different production schedules that are vital to the success of the end result. Projects can vary widely in time frame and the purpose of the technology used. One of the first steps is that students must define the purpose and vision to create the end product. The entire process is unique to the situation at hand and mirrors real-world production activities. Different skills are used all along the way to be molded to fit the end result.

Problem-based learning begins in a much different way than project-based learning in that the difficulty has to be examined from the start. This approach uses an inquiry model as the basis for learning: Students are presented a problem, they have to organize their thoughts on the subject, pose additional questions and then identify those areas that need more work. In this case, there may or may not be an end product, but necessary research and new knowledge will be gained throughout the process.

In practice, it is very likely that the line between project- and problem-based learning is frequently blurred and that the two can be used in combination to multiply learning experiences. “Why should we care what we call it? asked **Joe Oakey**, the founder of the Autodesk Foundation and referred to as the father of project-based learning in California. “Are the two the same? If we can develop a meaningful way for anyone, any age, to be challenged and to learn useful skills and knowledge as they answer the challenge, why should we care if it is called project-based, problem-based or circus-based?”

Source: the Center for Problem-Based Learning at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Web site: www.imsa.edu.

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