



Success

Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

May 2006

K-8 schools are making the grade

Cleveland Municipal Schools are seeing positive results since moving away from traditional middle schools, according to *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*. Test scores and behavior are both improving. Several urban districts have made this move, including **Cincinnati City**. To read the story, go to: www.cleveland.com/metro/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/cuyahoga/1144571892146370.xml&coll=2.

Look past yonder window?

School boards are forever looking ahead to next month, next year, next decade. What will the future of education be? **Kenneth Stevenson** of the University of South Carolina shares his dream of 2055 education in a paper on the National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities Web site. To read about the trends he identifies and his conclusions, visit: www.edfacilities.org/pubs/Ed_Facilities_in_21st_Century.pdf.

Dispelling the high school graduation myth

A new Economic Policy Institute (EPI) report says about 75% of black and Hispanic students receive diplomas nationally, contrary to what is reported. In *Rethinking High School Graduation Rates and Trends*, EPI president **Lawrence Mishel** and economist **Joydeep Roy** examine all possible data sources to present a more accurate graduation picture. One study shows an overall graduation rate of 82%, and rates for black and Hispanic students of 75%. The report can be found at: www.epi.org.

Share student success

May is traditionally filled with academic recognition events throughout public schools. Promote all your district events in school and community newsletters. Place signs inside buildings and on lawns near your driveways announcing recognition receptions and ceremonies. You can never say too many good things about your district's academic achievers.

Highlight your elementaries

Conduct a show-and-tell session for elementary school programs at a school board meeting. Invite principals to organize a brief presentation featuring creative activities that enhance learning.

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.

Is ninth grade the key to a student's performance?

The Talent Development High School Model was created by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR), based at The Johns Hopkins University. The Talent Development High School model is an education reform initiative that aims to improve the academic achievement of students in large, nonselective, comprehensive urban high schools. Currently in operation at 33 high schools in 12 states across the country, Talent Development seeks to transform the ninth grade and the choices being made by students. This formula produced substantial and pervasive educational gains for students in very low-performing schools in Philadelphia.

The model has five main features:

- small learning communities,
- curricula leading to advanced English and mathematics coursework,
- academic extra-help sessions,
- staff professional development strategies,
- parent- and community-involvement in activities that foster students' career and college development.

The centerpiece of Talent Development is the Success Academy, in which ninth-graders are taught by teams of teachers in "small learning communities." The students receive instruction using specialized curricula in extended classes — with double doses of English and math. Other features include a Twilight Academy, an after-hours program for ninth-graders having special difficulties, and Career Academies in the upper grades to extend the small learning communities concept and provide course choices built around career themes. Teachers also receive sustained professional development on site, as well as in-class coaching support.

"Ninth grade is the largest leak in the educational pipeline, where struggling students often fail to make the transition from middle school to high school," said **James J. Kemple**, director of MDRC's (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation) K-12 education policy area. "Talent Development eases the way for students during this 'make-or-break' year both, by strengthening instruction in math and English, and by changing the structure of school to make it feel smaller and more personalized."

Source: www.mdrc.org.

Success

May 2006

Success is published monthly for student achievement liaisons by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6482, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor, and Fred Pausch, director of legislative services, assistant editor. **Success** is distributed only to student achievement liaisons, so please share with fellow board members and district staff.