



Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

October 2005

Plan now for Capital Conference SALT activities

Be sure to attend the many Student Achievement Leadership Team (SALT) activities at Capital Conference. Enclosed in this mailing is a letter to student achievement liaisons and a flier promoting all the student achievement sessions and SALT programs. OSBA President **Catherine D. Ingram, Cincinnati City**, invites you to the Student Achievement Liaison Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 15. A continental breakfast will be provided.

Students need instructional and emotional support

A teacher who gives instructional and emotional support can improve academic outcomes for at-risk first-graders, according to a University of Virginia study. The September/October issue of *Child Development* reports the findings are significant because they are drawn from “naturally occurring variation in everyday classroom interactions” instead of a specific program designed to improve the classroom environment.

Student Achievement Fair

One hundred student achievement projects will be highlighted during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show on Tuesday, Nov. 15. If one of your programs will be showcased in the Student Achievement Fair, ask the staff member responsible for the display to preview it for the district administration and board during the October board meeting. Five musical groups also are going to perform that day in the fair. Check your *Conference Guide* for more details.

Achievement pins

Ever wish to recognize students for their classroom success? The Student Achievement Leadership Team has lapel pins that you can buy to give to those who deserve a pat on the back. Contact **Diana Hartings** (d_hartings@osba-ohio.org or (614) 540-4000 ext. 113) to order, or stop by the OSBA Bookstore during Capital Conference.

Conference Guide available

The complete, 186-page OSBA *Conference Guide* will be delivered to your district any day now. If you can't wait, an electronic version is posted on OSBA's Web site at: www.osba-ohio.org/CC2005.htm.

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.

School climate and student learning

Climate and the learning environment set the stage for teaching and learning. For a quality education, children and staff must have a safe and inviting place in which to learn and work. Schools and district office staff members play an important role in determining climate. Relationships built on trust and mutual respect among staff members — and between the staff and the board — help shape a workforce with a strong commitment to the district and its vision. A positive climate results from leadership that appreciates and publicly values the role that each person in the organization plays.

The way board members interact with the superintendent or other senior staff members sends a message about how the board values the staff. The way board members treat each other also influences the staff's perception and attitudes, with a consequent impact on workplace climate. Because that workplace is usually a school, relationship skills and behaviors ultimately have an influence on the classroom environment and student learning. Positive relationships do not happen without a substantial and continued investment in skill-building. Staff members need to understand the value of teamwork and mutual respect, develop the skills to practice them and have the time to put those skills into action.

To get a sense of where your district is in regard to a positive school climate, here are some questions the board should ask:

- How is climate assessed?
- What do students, teachers, parents and other community members think about the district's climate?
- Are data collected on student discipline incidents?
- Do school board policies hold staff and students to high behavioral standards? Are there clear and consistent consequences for those who violate policies?
- What is the district doing to create a safe, inviting and positive learning environment?
- Does the district regularly make student achievement a part of the board's agenda?
- How does the district promote understanding, commitment and accountability to others?
- Do the school board, administrators and staff model mutual respect, professional behavior and a commitment to continuous learning?
- Do teachers have the time and resources to achieve standards?
- How does the district recognize outstanding staff and student performance?
- What are the avenues for two-way communication and are they adequate?

For more information: *The Key Work of School Boards* or www.nsba.org/keywork.

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