



Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

September 2003

Beyond Islands of Excellence for you

This month's *Success* mailing is the Learning First Alliance's *Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts Can Do to Improve Instruction and Achievement in All Schools — A Leadership Brief* book. OSBA's Student Achievement Leadership Team distributes a thought-provoking publication to district student achievement liaisons quarterly. New for this quarterly mailing is a summarization of the publication we have enclosed. This new summary comes from a recommendation of the Student Achievement Leadership Team.

Another NCLB resource

In addition to the many resources listed in the recent OSBA *Adequate Yearly Progress Communication Toolkit* that was mailed last month, the Public Education Network has an 80-page guide, *How To Engage The Public*. This guide was created for community leaders, parents and educators to use the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to advocate for improved public education. To order or download the publication, visit: www.publiceducation.org/cgi-bin/nclborderform/orderform.asp.

Host a community forum

With the new Ohio school district report cards now including annual yearly progress (AYP) and performance indicators, seize the opportunity to invite community members to a forum to discuss the effects of NCLB. Explain how the new federal law changed the report cards and what your district's strengths and weaknesses are. Share what you are doing to improve student achievement, especially with special-needs students who are now included in accountability data.

Back-to-school nights

Prepare principals and teachers for the onslaught of questions concerning the new report cards, which will come up during the September back-to-school nights. This is the first time the Ohio local school district and building report cards were distributed before the opening of the school year (an NCLB requirement). The inclusion of special-needs students, who may have taken a proficiency test for the first time last school year, is altering building ratings, especially the federal AYP indicator.

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.

Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools asks about NCLB.

The 35th annual PDK/Gallup Poll of public schools continues its tradition of measuring the pulse of the American people towards public education. The poll's results are released in the *Phi Delta Kappan* magazine. The authors of this year's study of the poll feels the public supports the concept of improving public schools, but are not behind the strategies used in NCLB. They came up with the following general conclusions:

- the public has high regard for the public schools, wants needed improvement to come through those schools, and has little interest in seeking alternatives;
- the public sees itself as uninformed on the NCLB, with 69% saying they lack the information needed to say whether their impression of the act is favorable or unfavorable;
- responses to questions related to strategies associated with NCLB suggest that greater familiarity with the law is unlikely to lead to greater public support;
- the public is concerned about getting and keeping good teachers, thinks teacher salaries are too low, and is willing to see higher salaries paid to teachers teaching in more challenging situations;
- the public continues to believe that closing the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students is important, but blames the gap on factors unrelated to the quality of schooling;
- the public is not convinced that narrowing the achievement gap requires spending more money on low-achieving students;
- a majority of respondents are opposed to vouchers and would oppose having their state adopt them, despite the 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision stating that voucher plans do not violate the U.S. Constitution.

Source: The 35th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0309pol.htm

Success

September 2003

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.

Success is distributed only to student achievement liaisons, so please share with fellow board members and district staff.