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THE LINK

A PUBLICATION FOR EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS

School Improvement

Once Upon a Time: Telling the Story of Comprehensive School Reform Research

Since late 1997, when Congress created the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program (CSRD), educators, researchers, and members of the public have been looking for signs of its success. With most CSRD schools only one or two years into implementation, definitive answers to sustainable reform may be a few years away. Yet the program has drawn a great deal of attention and spawned a parallel comprehensive reform movement.

In June, education researchers met with representatives of professional education associations, the U.S. Department of Education, and regional educational laboratories at the Second Annual Symposium on Research and Evaluation Related to Comprehensive School Reform.

Goals were for researchers to share "an increased knowledge about current research, a sense of direction for sustaining a network of researchers, and a potential agenda for future

research." Discussions revealed recurring themes—the importance of school readiness, the need for better communication, the influence of political strongholds, and the importance of strong individual and structural leadership.

A brief summary of the discussions follows.

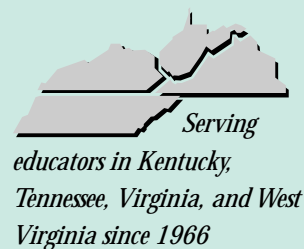
Time, energy, and money—large quantities of each are being poured into the comprehensive school reform movement. What do we have to show for these efforts, and how can research support successful, sustainable school reform?

More than 75 symposium participants convened in Washington, D.C. to address these questions from several perspectives.

Findings and Implications for Research

The classroom. Researchers need to focus more on how classroom activities affect

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The Link is free to educators in the AEL region. Readers are encouraged to reproduce its contents, giving proper credit. On request, AEL will provide camera-ready copy on white paper. Current and many back issues are available in PDF at <http://www.ael.org>.

Highlights of Recent Research

Researchers at the symposium responded with the following when asked about striking or significant findings from their work.

- Adoption of a model does not guarantee implementation.
- Decision makers rarely seek research-based information to guide their choices about comprehensive school reform.
- Schools do not know the right questions to ask to help them determine whether the reform model they choose fits with other school or district initiatives.
- Intensive in-school assistance, such as the use of master teachers, helps ensure changes at the classroom level.
- Reform planners in the 1990s seriously underestimated the political and technical problems of assessing the effects of standards—test scores mean everything in too many places.
- Teachers who embrace technology are more likely to implement reforms. Unfortunately, many reform efforts incorporate surprisingly little technology.
- Reform has often been a “two-way street”—reforming schools have

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Telling the Story of CSR Research

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reform. They could start by asking, What is the nature of the teaching/learning relationship across models? Research also needs to consider the socioeconomic impact of reform, look at gender equity issues, and determine whether students with disabilities and poor, minority, and English as a second language (ESL) students have equitable access to resources, including teachers.

Teaching quality. Research indicates that teaching quality is the primary factor influencing student achievement; therefore, preservice programs must take more responsibility in preparing teachers and principals for the new skills demanded by comprehensive school reform. Research about higher education’s role in preparing future educators for reform is needed.

School level. Although CSRD schools are required to conduct formative evaluations, many other reforming schools are not doing so. Researchers need to promote evaluation at the site level, where comprehensive school reform succeeds or fails.

Needs assessments can also be improved. Frequently, they are used once and discarded. Researchers need to isolate the most effective questions and create more concise needs-assessment instruments, which would be more useful to practitioners.

Political realities. Researchers need to learn more about the politics of reform and education. Schools currently have a certain amount of input into the selection of a reform model, but some researchers fear that schools in the future will be pressured into selecting a particular model merely because it has produced positive results elsewhere. This possibility raises an important question: Are locally selected models more or less successful than models mandated by state officials?

Accountability. While political reality makes student test scores the bottom line,

standardized tests should not be the only measure of whether comprehensive reform is succeeding. One participant pointed out that reform efforts do not produce immediate changes in student test scores, so researchers or others should develop common benchmarks to assess outcomes during the early implementation years.

Translating Research into Practice

Effectively communicating education research findings to practitioners remains an ongoing problem. The first step is to develop a good synthesis of research. Then, a “translator”—a consultant, perhaps—can apply the synthesis to real-world problems.

Researchers must develop closer ties with educators and policymakers to determine the kinds of information these groups are looking for. Researchers, teachers, and policymakers should collaborate more.

Researchers have a large body of evidence about the implementation and effects of comprehensive school reform, and their responsibility to the education community is to convey findings in a clear, objective, and timely manner.

Factors That Affect Success

School level. Before selecting a reform model, schools need to decide how much time and energy they are able and willing to commit to school improvement. Schools that are not functioning well (e.g., those that lack certified teachers or experience a high rate of student or staff absenteeism) may not be fully prepared to implement reforms. In schools that *are* ready to launch new efforts, the entire staff should be involved early in planning and decision-making. This is the best way to ensure staff buy-in of reform goals—a vital condition of success.

The principal must continually encourage and support faculty as they work together to make changes. One of the principal’s leadership responsibilities is to keep everyone focused on the purpose of the reforms. High staff turnover from year to

year, often associated with low-performing schools, can disrupt focus and affect buy in. The high turnover rate of principals nationally has prompted some schools to create partnerships among the school, district, board, and, if appropriate, local teachers' union, to keep reform efforts from being derailed. Additionally, the role of on-site facilitators in supporting and stabilizing comprehensive reform is now being studied.

District level. The entire school community creates the reform vision, however, the superintendent must ensure that the reform effort remains focused on student achievement and the initial goals.

The superintendent, probably more than any other individual in the school system, bears the brunt of political and economic pressure from the school board. This, in part, has led to a high turnover rate among superintendents (national average is two to three years) and leadership vacuums in many school districts.

Model developers. Model developers should help schools understand the underlying goals and rationales of their models, identify the resources needed to fully implement specific reforms, set realistic expectations for programs, and establish measurable goals. Developers and schools must understand that CSR is a whole-school effort and cannot omit components such as parent and community involvement.

Developers could further support implementation by assisting teachers directly and working more closely with colleges and universities to introduce preservice training that addresses the demands of specific models. They could also establish support networks for in-service teachers involved with a particular reform model.

Supporting Schools through Comprehensive Reform

On the second day, participants met in role-alike groups to determine how each might contribute more effectively to the CSR initiative.

Researchers. School districts must determine for themselves which model best suits their needs—looking beyond the “sales talk” to ascertain which components have the greatest potential to improve student performance in their schools. Researchers can engage districts in a critical inquiry process and assist them in building capacity. Specifically, researchers can help districts determine what *success* means to them, define how different components of a model fit into a comprehensive reform program, and establish data-driven formative evaluation processes to assist decision making.

Researchers need to communicate their findings more effectively. The group suggested that on issues supported by compelling research findings, researchers should move beyond objectivity to assume an advocacy role with schools, districts, state legislatures, Congress, and the federal government. This would require better communication and coordination among researchers. The group also identified effective communication within the school system as desirable support for reform efforts.

Professional education associations. The vast array of organizations represented at the symposium should direct their constituents to a set of common resources, agree upon messages, and collaborate to develop products that address these points. Again, it is important to tailor the messages and products to specific audiences. To develop more consistency and timeliness in the dissemination of research, the National Clearinghouse on Comprehensive School Reform offered its Web site for organizations to post research and information.

The group outlined several teacher training objectives that could help sustain reform: assist teachers in thinking about improving their schools as organizations, create celebrations for the successful elements of reform, and network the teachers who are working on common reform issues, regard-

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- reshaped their districts as much as districts have affected schools.
- Many reforms and systemic changes fail to increase enrollment in advanced math and science courses at the secondary level.
 - Forming a network of schools that fall at different stages of the reform implementation continuum can help schools at both the highest and lowest levels. Employing a state-level coordinator can assist the networking process.
 - Reforms *do* impact student achievement. One study of an inner-city district showed that schools implementing comprehensive reforms dramatically outgained schools not implementing reforms.

Guide to Working With Model Providers suggests ways schools can create and maintain effective working relationships with organizations providing reform assistance. Go to the U.S. Department of Education Web pages at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/model.pdf>.

Research Notes

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement funds research through regional educational laboratories, national centers, and field-initiated grant studies. Here are summaries of recent work in various areas.

"21st Century Literacy includes strong academic skills, thinking, reasoning, teamwork skills, and proficiency in using technology."

—21st Century Workforce Commission

Improving K-12 Writing Programs

In 1995, five years into implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), educators and parents recognized the Writing Portfolio Program as one of the reform's most successful components. Yet, while Kentucky students were writing more than in pre-KERA days and, overall, scores on the state assessment were improving, performance varied widely among schools. Kentucky asked AEL to help discover what school conditions and practices appeared to be linked most strongly to writing improvement and then use that information to help other schools improve student performance. The fact that Kentucky's writing program was based on the National Writing Project (a CSR model) means that the study results can have implications for writing programs everywhere.

The research team included AEL and Kentucky Department of Education Writing Program staff and regional writing consultants. They began by identifying K-12 schools with consistently improving and consistently declining writing portfolio scores. After selecting a representative sample from each group, team members developed processes and protocols for examining the schools' writing programs. The collaborative team visited 22 improving and 7 declining schools, interviewing more than 100 teachers, 200 students, and 50 administrators. They collected quantitative and qualitative data that helped them identify 36 features, or indicators, that are common to continuously improving schools. They then developed a rubric for scoring both improving and declining schools on the indicators.

The indicators reflect various areas of school practice. For example, this indicator reflects district support of the writing program: *the district demonstrates commitment by allocating resources to professional development or technical assistance, by assigning program oversight to qualified personnel and*

allocating sufficient time for effective oversight, by compensating cluster leaders through additional pay or release time, and in some districts by establishing policies requiring portfolio completion for promotion or graduation.

Instructional strategy indicators include (1) *students write frequently in all subjects, and the writing is integrated into instruction;* and (2) *teachers in most grades and content areas give writing assignments that have the potential of contributing to students' writing portfolios.*

To help satisfy Kentucky's need for a process by which schools could assess their own writing programs, the instruments and processes used in the research phase were developed into a writing program self-study. The *School Study of Writing Instruction* was piloted and field-tested and is now being used by schools across Kentucky, assisted by more than 200 trained facilitators. Plans are being made to adapt the guide for national use.

The indicators and information about the project are available on AEL's Web site at <http://www.ael.org/rel/state/ky/index.htm>.

Questions about the research may be addressed to Sandra Orletsky at AEL (orletsky@ael.org) and copies of executive summaries of the project's three reports may be requested through Shirley Keene by e-mail (keenes@ael.org) or phone (800-624-9120).

21st Century Literacy

The 21st Century Workforce Commission, an independent body appointed by the President and Congress, was charged with examining and reporting on the knowledge and skills that individuals must have, and the educational and workforce development opportunities that must be available, to allow the greatest number of Americans to participate in the information technology (IT) workforce.

The commission's final report, *A Nation of Opportunity: Strategies for Building America's 21st Century Workforce*, includes

recommendations for developing the nation's new high-tech workforce. Drawing from field hearings, site visits, and existing research, the commission identified nine keys to success that can be implemented by stakeholders at all levels.

Keys to Success

1. Building 21st century literacy
2. Exercising leadership through partnerships
3. Forming learning linkages for youth
4. Identifying pathways into IT jobs
5. Increasing acquisition of IT skills
6. Expanding continuous learning
7. Shaping a flexible immigration policy for skilled IT workers
8. Raising student achievement
9. Making technology access and Internet connectivity universal

The report and accompanying materials provide an analysis of how leadership in regional partnerships of education, business, and government can address shortages of skilled IT workers. All materials are available on-line at <http://www.workforce21.org>. The final report may be ordered in print by e-mail at info@workforce21.org or by phone at 202-289-2939.

Leading for Diversity

From 1996 to 1999, researchers from the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) documented “the approaches of school leaders who are proactive in addressing racial/ethnic tensions in schools and in encouraging positive interethnic relations.” The idea for the study emerged from a principals’ forum where participants felt a need to learn about strategies that would help them reduce violence and tensions in their schools.

Researchers conducted qualitative case studies of 21 schools from different levels and geographic areas. To be chosen, each had to have (1) at least three ethnic groups, (2) a tangible history of interethnic conflict, and (3) leadership that was implementing innovative approaches to prevent conflict and

improve relations. Data collected by the team included interviews with 1,009 individuals, observations of 441 classes and other school and community events, and relevant school documents and records.

Key findings from the study include:

- **School leaders have the power to influence race relations in a positive direction.** Proactive leadership resulted in such positive outcomes as increased academic achievement, improved student behavior indicators, increased staff collaboration, increased staff awareness about interethnic relations and diversity, and increased involvement of diverse parents.
- **Each incoming school leader steps into a different context that may hinder or support the development of positive race relations.** All schools in the study benefited from some contextual supports that made the development of positive intergroup relations more likely. Several schools had strong parent and community support, the small size of others made relationship building easier, and larger per pupil funding at some schools supported the development of programs in interethnic relations. District-level contexts ranged from diversity initiatives to drawing school boundaries that maintained diversity.
- **Proactive school leaders attend to underlying as well as overt conflicts.** The school leaders in this study tended to view overt conflicts, such as fights, as symptoms of tensions and root causes. They were able to develop activities and structures that built a stronger interethnic community.
- **Many other role groups besides the principal can lead efforts to improve interethnic relations.** Teachers, counselors, parents, students, community members, superintendents, and others contributed to achieving more equitable,

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“Although the study focused on race/ethnic relations, we assume there is an underlying commonality among all forms of intolerance and oppression, whether people are the subject of harassment because of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, or any other kind of ‘difference.’”

—Rosemary C. Henze

Announcements and Information

An Inside Look

Voices from the Field: Stories of Reform in the Words of Practitioners presents teachers' perspectives on and experiences with education reform (produced by the Northeast & Islands Regional Educational Laboratory). <http://www.lab.brown.edu/public/voices/index.html>

All Children Can Learn

National Conference on Kentucky's Education Reform: The First Ten Years

December 7-9, Lexington, Kentucky

Researchers and other experts who have been participating in the Kentucky reform experience will share lessons learned and suggestions for improving elementary and secondary education during this national conference sponsored by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research, with AEL and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education co-sponsoring.

Early registration, before November 5, is \$295, which includes three meals and a copy of the book *All Children Can Learn*. Educators, policymakers, and researchers are invited to attend. Register on-line at <http://www.uky.edu/AuxServ/conference.htm>, send e-mail to conference@uky.edu, or phone Kathy McKinley at 859-257-3929.

Improving America's Schools

7th Annual Regional Conferences

October 2-4, Louisville, Kentucky, Central region (includes Kentucky and Tennessee)

December 13-15, Washington, DC, Eastern region (includes Virginia and West Virginia)

State and local teams are encouraged to attend the U.S. Department of Education's most in-depth and comprehensive conference on education reform. Participants will learn

about coordinating federal programs, integrating federal programs with state and local efforts, accessing the technical assistance network, using resources to implement comprehensive school reform, and promoting equity and excellence in schools.

Registration costs \$250 per person, with a special group rate of \$210 per person for teams of four or more. To register or get more information, phone 800-203-5494 or go to <http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/iasconferences>.

AEL Offers Onward to Excellence Reform Model

For nearly 20 years, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) has been guiding schools on the path of continuously improved student achievement through Onward to Excellence (OTE), its research-based school change process. Recently, AEL became a partner—an OTE Regional Center—in the effort to make the program more widely available.

OTE II, a refined version of the original program, calls for shared leadership by involving students, parents, and community members in key decisions and uses research to enhance classroom practice. The program serves English language learners as well as Title I, rural, and urban students, and has already been implemented in more than

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Research Notes

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socially just, and respectful environments. By sharing leadership, efforts were not "owned" by any one group and had greater likelihood of being sustained.

- **Organizing themes such as personalization, non-violence, democracy, and community building serve as the "glue" that connects vision to concrete approaches.** Leaders of the study schools avoided the pitfall of having a "hodge-podge" of unrelated approaches. A

thematic cluster proved much more than the sum of its parts and could reflect a school's particular values.

Leading for Diversity: How School Leaders Achieve Racial and Ethnic Harmony (Research Brief #6) by Rosemary C. Henze is available by mail from CREDE, University of California, College Eight, #201, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064. Send e-mail to crede@cats.ucsc.edu or visit the Web at <http://www.crede.ucsc.edu>.

Announcements

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2,000 schools. AEL is pleased to make Onward to Excellence II available here.

OTE II is listed for adoption by Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program schools. The two-year implementation follows a 10-step process.

1. Get started. The principal and staff learn about the program. If they decide to use it, a leadership team is selected and a site facilitator (.5 FTE) is identified to assist the school staff.

2. Learn about research. The leadership team studies research on effective schooling practices and introduces the entire staff to the findings.

3. Profile student performance. An external study team, composed of community members, collects and analyzes data about student learning and other variables.

4. Set a schoolwide goal for improve-

ment. The entire school community identifies a schoolwide goal, based on data from the profile, to improve student performance.

5. Map curriculum and instructional practices. The leadership team collects data and summarizes findings for the entire staff, which helps to identify strengths and weaknesses.

6. Study the research and identify practices for improvement.

7. Plan for implementation. Responsibilities, resources, time lines, and professional development should be considered.

8. Implement the plan.

9. Monitor progress.

10. Evaluate progress, celebrate success, and renew improvement efforts.

AEL provides assistance to help schools achieve the program's two primary goals—to focus attention on learning success for all students and to develop the system's capacity for continuous improvement of student learning over the long run.

Get More Info

Onward to Excellence II awareness presentations are free; there is a fee for the complete two-year assistance package and limited federal grant support may be available.

For more information about Onward to Excellence II, contact Beth Sattes by e-mail at sattesb@ael.org or by phone at 800-624-9120. You may also visit the NWREL Web site at <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/ote>.

Small, but Powerful—the AEL CD-ROM

It introduces AEL research and services and provides a direct link to our Web page, where you will find much more information.

How to Use the AEL Digicard

- **Inserting disk into tray-style CD-ROM:** Place disk on the tray with the long sides parallel to the front of the computer. Line up the raised dots on the silver side with the inner circle of the tray. If the tray doesn't have an inner circle, center the disk as closely as possible. Close the tray. If the digicard doesn't start, eject it and start again.
- **Running the digicard for the first time (for Windows only):** Most users will need to install Quicktime videoplayer software and adjust display settings the first time they run the digicard. Quicktime is included on the digicard and will install if needed. If your color display needs to be

Important: If your computer does not have a sound card, the digicard will not run properly. Some graphics animations are linked to the audio track.

adjusted, you will get a warning stating: "Your monitor's color depth is set to less than 16 bit color." You must correct this for the digicard to play. From the start menu, under settings, go to control panel and choose display. Click on the settings tab. Under color palette, change the setting to high color 16 bit. Some computers may not have this option. If yours doesn't, the digicard will not play. Click OK to continue the instructions on the screen. When the computer is finished, eject and re-insert the digicard.

If you need assistance using the AEL Digicard, please call 800-624-9120 and ask for Nathan Davis.

Grant Opportunities

Recycle for Technology

The Educational Technology and Conservation Exchange Program (ETCEP) offers schools a way to help the environment while earning technology products. Collect empty laser and inkjet cartridges, send them in to earn points, then redeem the points to get equipment such as computers, network servers, printers, and more.

Free registration and more information available at <http://www.fundingfactory.com/etcep/visitorhome.asp>.

Federal Programs

NASA: Educational Workshops

Purpose: To model the integration of the national standards in science, mathematics, and technology.

Two-week summer workshops provide educators an opportunity to visit research and applied science facilities, collect and review educational materials, share their teaching experiences and ideas, practice a "hands-on/minds-on" instructional approach, and work cooperatively with their colleagues. About 250 K-12 teachers participate each year.

Grants include travel, housing, and meal expenses; graduate credit is available.

Deadline: February 2001

Applications available at <http://www.nsta.org/programs/new.htm> and by mail from NASA Educational Workshops, NSTA, 1840 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201-3000.

U.S. Department of Education: Magnet Schools Assistance Program

Purpose: To provide grants to eligible local education agencies and consortia of such agencies to support magnet schools that are part of approved desegregation plans.

The level of funding, if any, is contingent on final congressional action. However, applications are being invited to allow enough time to complete the grant process before the end of the federal fiscal year (October 1, 2001) should Congress appropriate funds for this program.

Grants may be for a period of three years, with a range of \$200,000 to \$3,000,000 per year.

Deadline: December 22, 2000

Additional information available at <http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg/grantann/q300/073100b.txt>.

National Center for Research Resources: Science Education Partnership Award

Purpose: To encourage biomedical and/or behavioral scientists to work as partners with educators on projects to improve student (K-12) and public understanding of health sciences.

Awards will support either development or dissemination of innovative models for enhancing health science education. State and local education agencies are among the eligible applicants. Grants may be for three or five years, up to \$300,000 per year.

Deadline: October 1, 2000

Application information available at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-00-036.html> and by phone at 301-435-0788.

Office of Postsecondary Education: Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program

Purpose: To support overseas projects in training, research, and curriculum development in modern foreign languages and area studies for groups of teachers, students, and faculty engaged in a common endeavor.

Projects may be short-term (4-6 weeks) or longer-term (2-12 months). Awards are expected to range from \$30,000 to \$75,000, though funding is contingent on final congressional action.

Only projects that focus on specific areas will be funded, and they are listed in the guidelines. Applications for short-term seminars that develop and improve foreign language and area studies at elementary and secondary schools will receive preference.

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, state departments of education, nonprofit private educational organizations, and consortia of these entities.

Deadline: October 23, 2000

Applications available at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/iegps>. Information available from Lungching Chiao, U.S. Department of Education. Telephone 202-502-7624, e-mail lungching_chiao@ed.gov

Foundations

National Foundation for the Improvement of Education: Leadership Grants

Purpose: To underwrite professional development for public school teachers, support personnel, and higher education faculty and staff, and thereby enable them to provide collegial leadership in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

Grants of \$1,000 will be awarded to individuals for professional development activities that meet a demonstrated need of students.

Deadline: October 15, 2000

Application available at <http://www.nfie.org/lead0.htm> or by mail at NFIE, attn: Leadership Grants, 1201 Sixteenth St. NW, Suite 416, Washington, DC 20036-3207.

Arthur Vining Davis Foundation: Secondary Education Grants

Purpose: To support high school teaching through sustained partnerships between the faculties of colleges and school districts or combined efforts involving reform organizations, colleges/universities, and high schools.

Proposals must generally come from postsecondary institutions or education research institutes. Projects seeking to address the concerns and problems of secondary education on a national level will receive special consideration. Grants will range from \$75,000 to \$150,000.

Deadline: Open

Application information available on-line at <http://jvm.com/davis>; by mail at Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, 111 Riverside Avenue, Suite 130, Jacksonville, FL 32202-4921; or by phone at 904-359-0670.

MCI WorldCom Foundation: MarcoPolo Professional Development

Purpose: To help K-12 teachers integrate the Internet into instruction through on-site professional development.

Award includes on-site trainers and

copies of training materials.

Deadline: Open

Application available on-line at <http://www.wcom.com/marcopolo/training/request.shtml>.

Other

Institute of International Education: Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program

Purpose: Sponsored by the government of Japan to provide opportunities for international experience to educators.

Primary and secondary school teachers and administrators are invited to apply to spend three weeks in Japan in either the spring or fall of 2001. Approximately 600 educators will be selected to participate.

Deadline: December 19, 2000

Application available on-line at <http://www.iese.org/pgms/fmf> or by mail at Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017-3580.

American Express: Economic Independence Grants

Purpose: To support initiatives that encourage, reinforce, or develop economic self-reliance, such as school-to-career programs, job-related adult education, and programs that teach the fundamentals of business and economics.

Proposals can be directed toward career readiness programs; education, training, and workplace experiences that build career awareness; education on the fundamentals of business and economics, the basics of personal financial management, and related consumer issues; promotion of entrepreneurship and small business development.

Deadline: Open

Guidelines available on-line at <http://home3.americanexpress.com/corp/philanthropy/economic.asp> or by mail from Terry Savage, Director, Philanthropic Program, American Express Company, World Financial Center, New York, NY 10285-4803.

Fulbright Teacher and Administrator Exchange Program

Want to trade jobs with a counterpart in another country for a year? This program offers that opportunity, and participants remain on the payrolls of their home schools. The program is administered by the Graduate School of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Information available on-line at <http://www.grad.usda.gov/International/ftep.html>.

Publications of Interest

A Compilation of Assessment and Evaluation

More than 150 technical reports, 25 newsletters, two videos, numerous assessments, scoring rubrics, guide-books, and research articles have been gathered on a CD-ROM from the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). The comprehensive results and products from a long-term federal investment in K-12 assessment and evaluation research appear on *9 Years of CRESST Research*, available for \$15. To order, contact Kim Hurst by phone at 310-794-9140 or by e-mail at kim@cse.ucal.edu.

Education Statistics Available

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) gathers statistics on many aspects of education and publishes them in print and on-line. Here are a few recent releases; a more complete list and the full text of many reports are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/index.asp>. To order print copies, phone 877-4ED-Pubs.

- *The Condition of Education, 2000* summarizes the health of education, monitors important developments, and shows trends in major aspects of education. The 65 indicators examine relationships; show changes over time; compare or contrast sub-populations, regions, or countries; or assess characteristics of students from different backgrounds and types of schools. Publication # NCES 2000062.
- *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1998* presents data on high school dropout and completion rates in 1998. It includes time series data for the period 1972 through 1998. Publication # NCES 2000-022a.
- *Vocational Education in the United States: Toward the Year 2000* is the third in a series of reports and attempts to capture the evolving enterprise of vocational education. It describes trends in participation in secondary and postsecondary vocational education, and presents findings about the academic preparation of high school students who participate in vocational education, relevant school reform efforts, and transitions after high school. Publication # NCES 2000-029a.
- *Trends in Educational Equity of Girls and Women* examines the extent to which males and females have access to the same educational opportunities, avail themselves equally of these opportunities, perform at the same level, succeed at the same rate, and obtain the same benefits. Publication # NCES 2000-030a.
- *Nutrition Education in Public Elementary School Classrooms, K-5* presents findings

from the survey *Nutrition Education in U.S. Public Schools, Elementary Teacher Survey, K-5*. Publication # NCES 2000-040a.

Support for New Teachers

At a time when many businesses encourage group work to boost productivity, many new teachers remain isolated in their classrooms, unable to take advantage of their peers' knowledge and experiences. A 28-page booklet from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education, titled *Survival Guide for New Teachers*, offers strategies for working with mentors, involving parents, and fostering supportive relationships, as well as Internet resources that can help reduce isolation.

The book includes stories and reflections from 53 award-winning first-year teachers. They "talk candidly about their successes and setbacks, with a particular emphasis on the relationships they formed with their colleagues, university professors, and their students' parents."

To order *Survival Guide for New Teachers*, call 877-4ED-Pubs. Publication # ORAD 2000-1001.

Science Education Examined

In 1985, the American Association for the Advancement of Science launched Project 2061, a long-term effort to reform science, mathematics, and technology education. Since then, the project has formed partnerships with scientists, mathematicians, technologists, teachers, and school district administrators to accomplish several pieces of work. Publications resulting from this work are available through the project Web site, in print, or on CD-ROM.

Science for All Americans defines science literacy, outlining what all high school graduates should know and be able to do. *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* outlines the progress that students can be expected to

make toward science literacy by the end of grades 2, 5, 8, and 12. *Resources for Science Literacy: Professional Development* offers a wide array of materials designed to provide educators with a deeper understanding of how to help students achieve science literacy. Other works include *Middle Grades Mathematics Textbooks: A Benchmarks-Based Evaluation On-Line*, which includes the results of the project's analysis of 13 middle school textbooks and reports on each.

For more information, go to <http://www.project2061.org>. A Spanish-language site is maintained at <http://www.project2061.org/espanol>.

Multimedia Tutorials

Educators and parents can now take short multimedia lessons on such topics as multiple intelligences, curriculum integration, standards, phonics/whole language, and more. From the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD),

these on-line tutorials include definitions, short articles, video and audio files of experts and practitioners, and a listing of resources that provide more information.

Viewing the files requires installation of RealPlayer, a free plug-in available at the site. To find the ASCD Tutorials, go to <http://webserver2.ascd.org/tutorials>.

Learning about Student Assessment—Boring? Not!

A new publication from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory shares 18 short, hands-on professional development activities that provide engaging assessment situations and dilemmas for teachers to work out. Principals and instructional leaders can use *Student Assessment Mini-Lessons for Your Staff* in staff meetings to help teachers develop the knowledge and skills needed to assess students well.

Most of the activities fit into a one-

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Help with IDEA and IEPs

A Guide to the Individualized Education Program is intended to assist educators, parents, and state and local educational agencies in implementing the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regarding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for children with disabilities, including pre-school-aged children. Go to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/IEP_Guide/

The Story of CSR Research

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less of whether the reform is associated with the federal CSRD program.

U.S. Department of Education. The department's primary role in research is to "tell the story"—communicate what works and why to national, state, and local practitioners and policymakers.

In terms of resources, the department needs to stress that states, districts, and schools can merge federal education funding streams for the purposes of planning and implementing comprehensive school reform. Local tradition can be a barrier in this effort, making community involvement even more important.

While school staff members frequently lack the time and expertise to conduct needs assessments based upon data, the department

can help by bolstering state financial resources and providing more on-site help through its cadre of technical assistance providers.

Federally funded researchers. Educators need readily available syntheses of existing research on comprehensive school reform. Of particular interest are syntheses that would help schools integrate comprehensive reform with other efforts and ensure that resources are being used effectively.

Suggested topics for future research include identifying common characteristics associated with long-term improvements (seven to ten years), examining more closely the factors that influence classroom change (particularly the relationship between teacher and student), and thinking about how to encourage district- and state-level entities to support reform and allow flexibility in achieving it.

The symposium was cosponsored by AEL, the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, and COSMOS Corporation and The McKenzie Group, in partnership with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the Planning and Evaluation Services of the U.S. Department of Education. A complete transcript and profiles of pertinent research will be available from AEL later this fall. Watch our Web site (<http://www.ael.org/rel/csr>) for more information.

Publications of Interest

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AEL is a private, nonprofit corporation. AEL serves as the regional educational laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. For these same four states, it operates both a Regional Technology in Education Consortium and the Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education. In addition, it serves as the Region IV Comprehensive Center and operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL's primary source of funding is the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This publication is produced with funds from OERI contract number RJ96006001. The contents herein do not necessarily reflect AEL or OERI policies or views.



hour time period, although they can complement other workshops, collaborative learning groups, and self-study as part of a comprehensive professional development plan. Tips for navigating the minilessons and tailoring them for teachers with varying degrees of assessment experience are provided.

To order, send \$19 to NWREL Document Reproduction Service. By mail: 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204-3297; by e-mail: products@nwrel.org.

Promoting Positive Behavior: Ideas That Work

A unique collaboration between school administrators and researchers, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, offers a print resource titled *Prevention Strategies That Work: What Administrators Can Do To Promote Positive Student Behavior*. This tool is useful for school administrators, teacher educators, parents, and social service personnel.

A companion Web page provides creative suggestions for how to include children with behavioral or emotional problems in various educational settings. It describes prevention practices that K-8 public school administrators have found to be effective in accelerating school performance, increasing readiness for learning, and reducing problem behaviors.

To order, go to the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice Web site at <http://cecp.air.org/preventionstrategies> or send e-mail to crsnyder@zoo.uvm.edu. The first copy is shipped free; there is a \$3.50 shipping and handling charge for orders of two to eight copies. Contact Cyndi Snyder (at e-mail above) for shipping costs on additional copies.

Strategies for Implementing Reform

Voices from the Field: Success in School Reform offers strategies and tips on implementing reform. The guidance comes from

work done by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), where researcher Shirley Hord has identified six strategies for school improvement. Two audiotapes present practical advice and down-to-earth solutions for implementing the steps of reform and improvement. A guidebook offers additional tips and reflection questions that school reformers can use as they work together.

Running time of the tapes is 40 minutes, the guidebook is 22 pages, and the price is \$25. To order, go to <http://www.sedl.org/pubs> or phone 800-476-6861.

Building Better School Leaders

In 1994, the Council of Chief State School Officers started a program called the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The Consortium has been working to "raise the bar for the practice of school leadership" and has led the development of standards for school leaders (1996), studied standards based professional development for school leaders (2000), and designed a professional development process for school leaders (2000).

Standards for School Leaders sets out six standards and identifies knowledge, dispositions, and performances connected to each.

Standards Based Professional Development for School Leaders and *Collaborative Professional Development Process for School Leaders*, developed in partnership with the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, set out research-based characteristics of professional development, provide examples of effective programs, and guide users through a collaborative and reflective learning process.

The publications are available in one notebook for \$35 from the Council of Chief State School Officers, One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431; phone 202-336-7016. To order on-line, go to <http://publications.ccsso.org>.