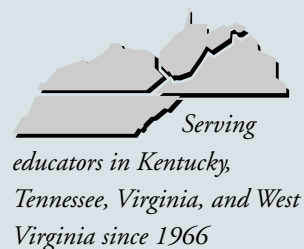


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THE LINK

A PUBLICATION FOR EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS



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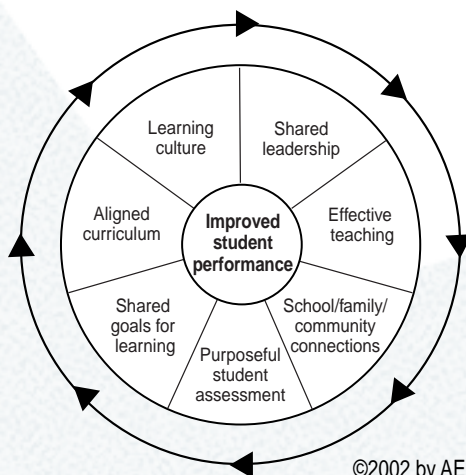
AEL's Framework for Research-Based School Improvement

AEL has been committed to research on school improvement efforts since 1966. Through partnerships with schools and other researchers, AEL has amassed a substantial knowledge base that underlies its products and services. This knowledge has been distilled into a conceptual framework that can also help schools make informed choices about where to focus improvement efforts.

A graphic depiction of this framework situates student performance at the center of seven well-defined dimensions of school improvement. Arrows indicate the dynamic nature of this framework: the dimensions are interactive, and they require continuous action on the part of the school community.

Inside this issue are condensed summaries of research in support of each dimension. Schools can draw on this information as they start or sustain efforts to raise student achievement levels.

Full citations for the research refer-



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AEL Framework for
Research-Based School Improvement

enced in this article are available online at AEL's Web site. Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes that open each section are from AEL's *Inside School Improvement*, written by Jackie A. Walsh and Beth D. Sattes (see insert for ordering information).

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IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of The Link presents AEL's framework for research-based school improvement. The framework and its dimensions underlie our work, and the research summaries presented here may be used to guide discussions and actions in schools and districts.

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On request, AEL will provide camera-ready copy on white paper. Current and many back issues are available in PDF at www.ael.org.



Learning Culture

Imagine a school where culture encourages everyone who walks its hallways to become excited about learning and to set high expectations for their own and others' achievement. What would such a school look and feel like? . . . A strong learning culture is customized to the school community that it supports. One size does not fit all.

Organizational culture is both a mirror and a maker of how things are done, what its members value, and what it strives to do. While there are many definitions of culture in the research literature, two beliefs are central to high-performing learning communities: (1) all students can learn at high levels and (2) teachers' actions matter.

Learning attitudes. Bandura (1982) claims "the strength of groups, organizations, and even nations lies partly in people's sense of collective efficacy that they can solve their problems and improve their lives through concerted effort" (p. 143).

Louis, Kruse, and Marks (1996) found that quality schools are likely to have a stable, professional community of experienced teachers with shared norms, values, and goals; a common focus on student learning; a willingness to collaborate; and an openness to reflection and new ideas—all directed toward high student achievement.

The presence of high expectations for acceptable student performance and behaviors, supported by policies that help communicate and effectuate such expectations, has been cited as a crucial characteristic of unusually effective schools (Levine & Lezotte, 1990).

Learning behaviors. Teachers and administrators in unusually effective schools exhibit a problem-solving orientation and willingness to change existing practices and try more effective approaches (Doll, 1969; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Levine & Stark, 1981; Taylor, 1984). Teachers in effective schools examine supports such as teaching materials, time use, and grouping practices to find ways to improve teaching and learning.

To demonstrate efficacious behavior, teachers must receive support from the school leadership. Leaders of schools with high student achievement "worked effectively to stimulate professional discussion and to create the networks of conversation that tied faculty

together around common issues of instruction and teaching" (Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996, p. 194). Schools that succeed despite adverse conditions are often organized so teachers can collaborate (Fullan, 1991). Specifically, leaders of schools that value collaboration provide common planning time, arrange for mutual observation of teaching, and welcome other activities that lead to a culture of collaboration and communication within the faculty (McDonald, 2001).

"Deep changes—in how people think, what they believe, how they see the world—are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve through compliance" (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, & Smith, 1999, p. 13). When compliance is replaced by collaboration and includes the conditions to support it, then teachers and students can achieve at higher and higher levels.

School/Family/Community Connections

One of the primary challenges of continuous school improvement is to revitalize the school's relationships to community and thereby enrich learning and community.

An important emerging theme in both sociology and education literature is the symbiotic relationship between schools and communities. That is, communities can help create great schools, and schools can help create great communities.

Schools sometimes fail to appreciate the value of working with the community. "Rural education scholars like [Alan] DeYoung and Paul Theobald believe that [schools'] consideration of 'the community' is too often *instrumental*, focusing on what the district needs to get from voters. Too seldom is it *substantive*, focusing on how the school can help sustain the locality of which it is, or should be, an important part" (Howley, Hadden, & Harmon, 2000, p. 150).

Bridges to community. People who live and work in the community—whether or not they have children in the school—are important assets to school improvement efforts. Most communities include what researchers from the Annie E. Casey Foundation call *natural helpers*—professionals who live and work with community youth through parks and recreation departments, child care centers, or community health centers. They can act as bridges between schools and families (Flaxman, 2001).

Thomas Hatch (1998) has observed that educators who witness parents and community members working



on behalf of students and schools are heartened and feel more accountable for the quality of their instruction.

Relationships with families. Joyce Epstein and other researchers have confirmed both the importance and nature of family influence on children's academic success (Epstein, 1992; Henderson & Berla, 1994). A high degree of congruence between the values and aspirations of the school and the family is important. For example, scholars of rural education have observed that asking students to aspire to achievements that are alien to "the knowledge structures of their parents (and community) drives a wedge between family and school" (Spears, Combs, & Bailey, 1990, p. 6).

Parents' involvement in their children's school and education needs to be focused and purposeful. Levine and Lezotte (1990) reviewed studies of unusually effective schools and observed that while many schools talk about parent involvement, the ones that achieve high parent involvement have identified and emphasized parent involvement activities that addressed the schools' most serious problems. More was happening in these schools than a general effort to increase parent communications or build more positive school and home relationships.

Proactive work by teachers and principals will be needed to communicate new expectations and responsibilities for parents. Among teacher practices that can facilitate home-school relations are selecting relevant tasks and literature, connecting through talk, and communicating with parents (McCarthy, 1999).

Shared Leadership

Sharing leadership means that you don't have to have all the answers, but you have to be willing to admire all of the questions. It means involving students and parents, faculty, and staff in creating an atmosphere where everyone feels an equal part of what's going on. It means being willing to take the extra time to arrive at decisions by consensus.

Sustained high levels of student achievement are more likely to occur in schools with effective leadership (Deal & Peterson, 1998; Fullan, 1998; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). An Educational Research Service (ERS) study found that "researchers, policy makers and educational practitioners agree: good school principals are the keystone of good schools. Without the principal's leadership, efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed" (ERS, 2000, p. 5).

Recently, interest in the idea of shared leadership has increased. A body of literature strongly indicates principals must collaborate and distribute leadership functions (Berman & Chambliss, 2000; Elmore, 2000; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hoy & Miskell, 1991).

Leadership characteristics. Louis and colleagues (1996, p. 194) found that leaders in schools with high student achievement "worked effectively to stimulate professional discussion and to create the networks of conversation that tied faculty together around common issues of instruction and teaching." Principals "delegated authority, developed collaborative decision-making processes, and stepped back from being the central problem solver."

Newmann and Wehlage (1995) identified the characteristics of leaders in schools with high-achieving students. They define "school leaders" as principals and teacher leaders who give central attention to building a schoolwide, collective focus on student learning of high intellectual quality; place issues of teaching and learning at the center of community dialogue; give concrete expression to the norms and values of the school vision; create time for reflective inquiry and opportunities for substantive staff development; see themselves at the center rather than at the top of their schools' organization; share power with staff and often with parents; and apply important political and entrepreneurial skills to relationships beyond the school.

Reducing leader overload. An Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) task force noted, "School systems should recognize that one person cannot provide effective leadership for student learning while tending to the thousand tasks traditionally heaped on principals. Instead, school systems must recognize the need to provide principals with the resources and flexibility to delegate specific responsibilities, distribute leadership or head up school leadership teams as needed" (IEL, 2000, p. 13).

An important result of shared leadership is that more people experience commitment to the improvement goals. Individuals in schools better support change efforts and feel more involved when working collaboratively (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Whitford, 2000). The efforts of a single, strong leader may move a school forward with jump-start solutions, but shared leadership and collaboration are essential if change is to be effectively

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implemented and sustained (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Sharing leadership with the community. An important study of shared decision making was conducted by Malen and Ogawa (1988). This study examined whether key factors—notably the creation of site-based councils with broad jurisdiction, formal policymaking authority, parity protections, and training provisions—actually enabled teachers and parents to wield substantial influence on school policy. Despite these highly favorable conditions, teachers and parents did not wield significant influence. Rather, principals continued to influence council decisions strongly. This suggests that getting other people to accept responsibilities may be as difficult as getting principals to give up their accustomed authority. Malen and Ogawa point out that “the research . . . underscores the difficulty of establishing arrangements that will fundamentally alter principal, teacher, and parent influence relationships” (p. 266).

Thus, more than a policy-level commitment to shared decision making is probably necessary. Fullan suggests that what is needed is not restructuring of schools but reculturing. “Restructuring bears no direct relationship to improvements in teaching and learning. Reculturing, by contrast, involves changing the norms, values, incentives, skills, and relationships in the organization to foster a different way of working together. Reculturing makes a difference in teaching and learning” (Fullan, 1998, p. 9).

Shared Goals for Learning

A strong, shared vision actually helps us focus our attention on the possibilities and potentials—not the problems and pitfalls. The vision lays the foundation block for the culture of the school; it has great power to energize and mobilize.

An important characteristic of a successful school is a clear vision, expressed through specific goals and high expectations, that guides action and contributes to improved student achievement (Cotton, 2000; Levine & Lezotte, 1990).

Successful schools begin by identifying and communicating a set of goals and then implementing those goals, actively seeking the support of key stakeholders (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Chubb & Moe, 1990; Newmann

& Wehlage, 1995). This may require a concerted effort, since schools can be marked by intense isolation among teachers, between teachers and administrators, and between parents and teachers. Shared goals can focus needs assessment activities, which then generate data that provide a solid base for informed decisions about instructional issues (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Kotter, 1990). In this way, goals prompt *and* sustain continuous improvement.

Characteristics of a good goal set. A few *easily-remembered goals* are better than a long list of elaborately worded goal statements. Because people must often make immediate decisions during classroom instruction and faculty meetings, and as they evaluate learning activities, they are more likely to implement a few clearly worded goals than a long list. When workable goals become part of the internal culture of the school community, all activities can be aimed at achieving them (Marks, Doane, & Secada, 1996).

Goals should be crafted to focus attention on *priorities*. Goals that are very narrow (affecting only one or two grades or groups of students, for example) are unlikely to be seen as important by everyone. Likewise, goals that are too broad may be interpreted to mean just about anything.

Goals should be *related to standards* (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). Goals based on the criteria by which the school will be judged make it easier for the school community to support the goals and to see if they have been met.

Goals should be stated to *drive action*. The goal statements should guide mundane decisions that may seem unrelated to school improvement—such as dress codes and faculty meeting agendas—as well as essential decisions about graduation requirements, scheduling of students and courses, and instructional delivery (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Goals, then, can be thought of as destinations. Well-articulated goals that are widely supported increase the likelihood that everyone will reach the destination together.

Shared understanding of goals. In schools that value shared leadership, a widespread understanding of important goals is crucial (O’Neill, 2000; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). This makes sense: if a number of individuals make important decisions, then the decision makers must share a common set of goals so they can act



in concert. Research has repeatedly revealed that low-performing organizations struggle because members don't clearly understand the purpose(s) of the organization and their own roles in helping the organization reach its goals (Senge, 1990).

When selecting strategies for continuous school improvement, all members of the school community should be able to understand how each action contributes to attaining the goals. Progress toward the goals will help to generate a spirit of collaboration and sustain willingness to support the school goals. (Housman & Martinez, 2001).

The impact of shared goals should be observable. When analyzing school performance, staff should try to identify how the goals were translated into actions. If some goals have been achieved, they can be replaced by others that represent future opportunities. The goals should be specific enough to sustain a coherent focus over time and to encourage the development of additional goals related to the school's mission (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

Purposeful Student Assessment

This complex, controversial subject lies at the heart of continuous school improvement. When assessment becomes a topic for conversation in schools, stakeholders at all levels are afforded opportunities to take ownership for improving student performance—and, as a result, test scores.

Much of the work of school and learning improvement has to do with decision making—targeting appropriate areas for improvement, deciding which students are ready for which lessons, and determining whether activities have resulted in learning. While there are no guarantees, the likelihood of success increases if these decisions are based on reliable student achievement data.

Most experts agree that multiple measures of student achievement and organizational performance are best (Bernhardt, 1998; Garcia, 2000; Ligon, 1996). One of the key strategies for improving student achievement is the use of data to drive improvement efforts (Rothman, 2000). Recent studies of successful school districts identified as a crucial attribute the use of data to make and monitor improvement decisions (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2000; Ragland, Asera, & Johnson, 1999; Skrla, Scheurich, & Johnson, 2000; WestEd, 2000).

Using data for continuous improvement. Information from standardized tests alone will not be sufficient; educators need a variety of evidence about achievement, such as teacher-made tests, student work on projects, and teachers' observations of student progress. Frequent testing and the use of both formative and summative assessments are important for making school decisions (Bernhardt, 1998; Herman & Gribbons, 2001; Rabinowitz & Ananda, 2001; Reeves, 2000). High-performing learning communities continually examine student achievement using a variety of indicators (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001).

Reporting the results. Achievement data need to be shared. First, the whole faculty needs to be aware of how students in all grades/classes are performing. Sharing results can create a system of internal accountability in which all staff have a strongly felt sense of personal responsibility for student learning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Schools that are committed to continuous improvement will find that collaborative analysis of student outcome data reinforces the sense of effectiveness that all teachers feel and renews their commitment to the goal of improving learning for all students.

Results of student assessment should also be communicated to parents and community members. When reporting to these constituencies, consider how they prefer to receive information and what the basic messages are. Detailed information will help parents understand how they can help their children do well and can communicate the message that this school has high expectations for all students (Doyle, Tetzloff, & Renze, 1993; Reeves, 2000). Moreover, if the school is committed to creating a community of learners in a community of learning, then all stakeholders need to know how the school is doing so they can help to plan improvements.

Effective Teaching

Whether talking together about effective strategies for engaging the unmotivated student or observing and being observed for the purpose of giving and receiving feedback, teachers are beginning to look to colleagues for assistance, support, and solutions.

It seems commonsensical to observe that what a student learns is affected by the teacher, for it is in the relationship between the teacher and the student that

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learning begins. Teacher effectiveness is a paramount consideration for school success.

Reviewing recent research on teacher quality, Mayer and colleagues (2000, p. 5) identify four characteristics of effective teachers. Such teachers (1) have high academic skills, (2) are required to teach in the field in which they receive their training, (3) have more than a few years of experience, and (4) participate in high-quality induction and professional development programs.

In a 1992 study, Hanushek estimated that the difference in annual achievement growth between students who had a good teacher and those who had an ineffective teacher was more than one grade-level equivalent in test performance (p. 107). Later, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain determined that the most significant variations in student achievement are related to teacher quality (1998, p. 23). These findings match those of William Sanders and June Rivers, who tracked the impact of both effective and ineffective teachers on students (1996).

Effective attitudes. Effective teachers believe in their efficacy. Guskey and Passaro (1994, p. 638) define teacher efficacy as “the belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be considered difficult or unmotivated.” Efficacious teachers believe what they do will determine both their own success and that of their students. They are more likely to be proactive about adopting new classroom behaviors.

This proactive orientation is captured by Levine and Lezotte (1990, p. 11): “If what we (faculty) are doing is not working for students, particularly low achievers, we will identify the obstacles we face and try something else that may overcome them.” It is important to note the *we* in this statement. Many teachers have observed that working with their colleagues—studying student achievement data, participating in meaningful staff development, and planning school improvement programs—is a powerful motivator. Yet, many schools continue to use teaching schedules, space allocations, and other structures that keep teachers isolated.

Effective behaviors. During the 1970s and 1980s, many studies of effective teaching examined what might be thought of as microskills: how time on task was maintained, how procedures were taught, how feedback was provided. More recent studies, however, tend to focus on how teachers create and manage conditions that enable

students to be more reflective about their learning and to assimilate new knowledge with old knowledge.

Effective teachers constantly work to improve student learning. One way to do this is by examining the usefulness of instructional materials provided for the class. Sizemore, Brossard, and Harrigan (1983) found that teachers in the schools they studied were active in adapting basal readers to better meet the needs of their students. By contrast, Shirley Jackson found that teachers in less effective schools seemed to be “controlled by the mechanics in the management aspects of their instructional system” (1982, p. 151). Efficacious teachers do not take for granted that anything in their environment is a given.

Enabling effective students. Walsh and Sattes (2000) have observed that teachers cannot make students successful; students must achieve this for themselves. But teachers can create environments in which curiosity reigns and students are enabled to take charge of their learning. Philip Schlechty (1990) has described teachers as designers of meaningful student work. That is, the value a teacher brings to the lesson arises from planning and creating learning activities that require students to do the work, not to watch the teacher doing the work. Some teachers use activities such as Socratic seminars and cooperative learning to engage student interest, promote interaction among students, encourage greater thinking, and redefine teaching as coaching rather than dispensing of knowledge. Effective teachers can foster the development of complex thinking in students by creating a supportive environment that helps students succeed.

Aligned Curriculum

Curriculum mapping provides a process by which educators can become active participants in improving teaching and learning. Because curriculum mapping builds on teachers’ strengths and creativity and focuses on students’ learning strengths, it is a teacher-owned and student-centered process.

—Rebecca Crawford Burns, “Curriculum Renewal: Curriculum Mapping,” *ASCD Curriculum Handbook*

Aligning the curriculum ensures a good match between instructional goals and daily lessons. This is especially important where learning standards are set by the state and/or district (Corallo & McDonald, 2002). However, while some learning standards are very clear,

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others are quite general. This opens the door to the possibility of different teachers interpreting the standards—and delivering the instruction derived from them—in very different ways (National Research Council, 1999). A precondition, then, of a successful program is a clear and agreed upon set of instructional goals that reflect the instructional standards for which the school is accountable. A recent study of strategies used to help schools meet high standards found that aligning curriculum to the standards and, when possible, to assessments, was essential for success (Laboratory Network Program, 1998).

Horizontal and vertical alignment. Curricula must be aligned both horizontally and vertically. The idea behind horizontal alignment is to ensure that all third graders, for example, have opportunities to learn the third-grade objectives, regardless of the teacher to which they are assigned. That is, all third-grade teachers agree to teach a specific set of objectives. Failure to ensure horizontal alignment leads to highly various learning opportunities for students. Mayer and colleagues (2000) note that researchers of the Second International Mathematics and Science Study attributed the poor performance of U.S. students to uneven exposure to mathematics topics in their classrooms.

Vertical alignment occurs when the objectives to be mastered at one grade level are the prerequisites for success at the next. Vertical alignment ensures that students are prepared to develop increasingly complex knowledge. It also benefits faculty and staff. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) point out that vertical alignment promotes teachers working together to achieve school goals, thus preventing “balkanization” of the school.

Elements of curriculum alignment. Early advocates of curriculum alignment proposed that it should include identifying the *what* (curricular topics) and the *when* (actual time to be spent on topics, along with the

sequencing of objectives or topics). Recent work in curriculum mapping suggests extending the definition to include the *how* of teaching (Burns, 2001).

The methods of teaching and assessing student learning should be aligned to ensure that students are prepared to demonstrate their learning on tests prepared outside the school. If, for example, the state test asks students to use graphic organizers, students who have not been taught how they work may be at a disadvantage. Similarly, aligning classroom assessments with important instructional objectives will allow teachers to continuously monitor student progress (Corallo and McDonald, 2002).

Fenwick English (1980) identified three aspects of curriculum that are related to alignment—the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the hidden curriculum. The written curriculum is the “official” curriculum that teachers and administrators have agreed should be taught. The taught curriculum is what teachers actually teach in their classrooms. To the degree that the taught curriculum differs from the written curriculum (either by omitting or by adding objectives), students will have different experiences from one classroom to another. The hidden curriculum consists of attitudes about who can learn, what can be learned, and whose learning has importance. For example, if a teacher allows some students not to participate in class—perhaps by not calling on them—then the hidden curriculum states that the learning of these students is less important than the learning of others. A school with a well-aligned curriculum thoroughly integrates these three aspects of curriculum so each student has an equal opportunity and responsibility to learn.

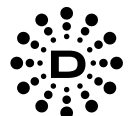
Schools are encouraged to copy and distribute this research summary. A PDF version of The Link is available free online (www.ael.org/page.htm?+pd=1+wcd=the8782) and contains a complete list of references on page 13. This summary of research was compiled by AEL with contributions by David Holdzkom, Nancy Balow, Merrill Meehan, and others.

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Recently, AEL became the first education institution in the world to use new Digimarc MediaBridge technology, which employs digital watermarks to instantly link printed materials with the World Wide Web. You can recognize an Internet-enabled page by the symbol you see at the right and in the blue bar below.

Most pages of *The Link* contain an image (a star) embedded with a Digimarc. When you hold the star up to a digital camera connected to your desktop computer, the Digimarc MediaBridge software reads the watermark, activates your Web browser, and delivers AEL's Web site to your screen. From there, you will be able to launch related Web sites and access a wealth of information—without typing long URLs.

To explore this technology, go to www.digimarc.com to download the free Digimarc MediaBridge software.



Publications of Interest

Online Honesty

An article in the Spring 2002 issue of *Scholastic Administr@tor* provides good advice to teachers and administrators who want to discourage technology-assisted plagiarism. It discusses the importance of having both a climate and policy that promote academic integrity.

To help prevent plagiarism, author James P. Tenbusch suggests holding open discussions of the topic, requiring students to print out Internet pages they use as references and attach them to assignments, and teaching the guidelines for citing electronic publications. His article also features 10 tips for catching plagiarists and 10 reasons students cheat.

Read it online at www.scholastic.com/administrator.

New Publications from the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE)

Reaching Out: A K-8 Resource for Connecting Families and Schools

By Diane W. Kyle, Ellen McIntyre, Karen B. Miller, & Gayle H. Moore (Corwin Press, 2002) \$27.95, paperback; \$61.95, hardcover

Produced through a CREDE project called Appalachian Children's Academic and Social Development in Nongraded Primary Schools: Model Programs for Children of Poverty, this book is for educators interested in building strong relationships with their students' families. Particularly helpful for teachers whose classrooms reflect a diverse student population, this guide presents concepts and techniques that bridge the gap between home and school, so that educators can involve students' families in education and enhance students' learning experience. To order, visit www.crede.ucsc.edu/products/print/books.html.

Educating At-Risk Students

By Sam Stringfield and Deborah Land, Editors (University of Chicago Press, 2002) \$37, hardcover

Researchers from CREDE and the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR) collaborated on this volume, which focuses on the background causes that place students at risk and specific strategies that have been shown to help address students' academic risk. To order, visit www.crede.ucsc.edu/products/print/books.html.

Educating Hispanic Students: Effective Instructional Practices

By Yolanda N. Padrón, Hersh C. Waxman, and Héctor H. Rivera (August, 2002)

This brief presents five research-based practices that have been particularly successful for teaching Hispanic students. It draws from CREDE's Educational Practice Report 8. Read the brief online at www.crede.ucsc.edu/products/print/pract_briefs.html.

Helping English Learners Succeed: An Overview of the SIOP Model

By CREDE, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

This 26-minute video for professional development is drawn from a research project conducted by CREDE. The video provides an introduction to The SIOP Model: Sheltered Instruction for Academic Achievement, a research-based instructional model that has proven effective with English language learners who are studying content curriculum while learning English. It is designed for administrators, policymakers, and teachers, and presents classroom footage that illustrates the SIOP components. The video also serves as a supplement for teacher methodology classes. It is available for \$50. To order, call 202-362-0700 or visit www.cal.org/store.

Resource for Data-Based Decision Making

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has just completed a major redesign of its Common Core of Data (CCD) Web site. CCD is a comprehensive, national, statistical database of information on all public elementary and secondary schools (approximately 95,000) and school districts (approximately 17,000) that is updated annually. The CCD contains much useful data in databases and downloadable files. NCES has developed powerful application tools to assist everyone, from the casual browser to the serious researcher, to search for and extract information. To put this information to work for you, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd>.

Online Tools for Effective Instruction

Although developed for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students, the tools in *In the Classroom: A Toolkit for Effective Instruction of English Learners* can be used with all students. This section of the



National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition Web site builds on research to address four specific teaching challenges—reading, writing, classroom management, and communicating with students. The site links to rubrics in all content areas and many hands-on resources. Visit www.ncele.gwu.edu/classroom/toolkit/index.htm.

Helping Your Child Series

The U.S. Department of Education is reissuing its popular *Helping Your Child* series for families and caregivers. The booklets have been updated with the latest research-based practices for helping children learn.

Print copies of the first three booklets, available in both English and Spanish, may be ordered through the Department's publication center at 1-877-4ED-PUBS. Electronic versions are available free on the Web.

Helping Your Child Become a Reader features dozens of activities parents can use to build the language skills of young children (infants through age 6). The 60-page booklet includes typical language accomplishments for different age groups, suggestions for books, and resources for children with reading problems or learning disabilities. It is available online at www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reader/index.html.

Helping Your Child with Homework tells how parents can make sure children develop strong study skills. Among the topics: setting a regular time and place, removing distractions, looking over completed assignments, discussing assignments to be sure they are clear, and talking with teachers. A brief checklist is included. Find it at www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Homework/index.html.

Helping Your Preschool Child offers fun activities for parents to use during everyday routines to help babies, toddlers, and preschoolers develop skills needed for success in school and life. The booklet also describes behaviors and changes parents can expect to see in young children as they develop. Get

this booklet at www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/preschool/index.html.

Free Cyber Security Kit

The NetDay Cyber Security Kit for Schools features tools and resources to raise awareness about online safety and computer security. It can help education leaders to ensure that schools and homes—the places where children are most likely to access computers—are “cyber secure.” The kit includes resources—some in both English and Spanish—for K-12 educators, school district administrators, parents, and families. To get one, visit www.netday.org/cyber_security_kit.htm.

Encourage Smart Mouths in Your Classroom

The Center for Science in the Public Interest has introduced a snazzy new Web site to teach kids that healthy eating can be fun. *Smart-Mouth* uses games to teach kids (and their parents and teachers) how to eat well and resist the food industry's marketing campaigns. Kids can see how their favorite restaurant foods stack up, play “true or false” with a food-industry spokesman, and “bite back” by asking food companies and government officials to promote nutrition. Visit <http://Smart-Mouth.org>.

Game Site Teaches Math

Record numbers of youngsters are flocking to Cyberchase Online, where they have a blast while learning math. Visitors embark on virtual adventures at the Web site, where, like the heroes of the Cyberchase television series, they can use problem-solving strategies to defeat the bad guys. The site has drawn more than 10 million unique users to play a wide variety of fun, math-based games tied to the popular PBS cartoon show. The Cyberchase site is one of the most popular on PBSKids.org. Major funding for Cyberchase is provided by the National Science Foundation, PBS, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Visit www.pbs.org/cyberchase.

Aligning Statewide Tests with Standards

A new publication from the Council of Chief State School Officers aims to guide states in analyzing the alignment between their content standards, statewide assessments, and curriculum and instruction.

The document presents a summary of four models of alignment analysis that states have used successfully. State funds under *No Child Left Behind* can be used to conduct alignment studies. The guide is available at www.ccsso.org/pdfs/AlignmentModels.pdf.



Grant Opportunities

For information on grant programs, funding sources, and technology funding, visit the eSchool News School Funding Center at www.eschoolnews.com/resources/funding.

Consider also watching the Federal Register, published every weekday, at www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreglfrcont01.html.

National Teachers Hall of Fame

If you know a great teacher—one who has made significant contributions to his or her students, school, profession, community, and to society—nominate him or her for the National Teachers Hall of Fame. Nominations will be accepted until January 15, 2003.

Information and nomination form available at www.nthf.org or from 2003 Teacher Induction Program, National Teachers Hall of Fame, 1320 C of E Drive, Emporia, KS 66801.

Federal Programs

FDA/National Science Teachers Association: Food Science Professional Development

Purpose: To prepare teachers to take advantage of the new understandings in food science and to provide topically relevant lessons consistent with the National Science Education Standards.

Selected middle-level and high school science educators (25 of each) will be involved in a summer 2003 workshop and a participant-led workshop for colleagues during the following academic year. Activities will include content updates by food science specialists, visits to government/industry facilities, hands-on practice with new curriculum materials, and exchange of teaching/learning strategies.

Deadline: March 1, 2003

Application and information available online at www.nsta.org/fdacurriculum or write to: FDA/NSTA Professional Development Program in Food Science, 1840 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201.

National Education Association Foundation: Fine Arts Grant

Purpose: To enable fine arts teachers to create and implement fine arts programs that promote learning among students at risk of school failure.

Programs must address the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, photography, music, theater, dance, design, media, or folk arts). Local NEA affiliates will award a total of 10 grants of \$2,000 each. Grant funds may be used for resource materials, supplies, equipment, transportation, software, and/or professional fees.

Deadline: February 3, 2003

Application and information available online at www.nfie.org/programs/finearts.htm.

Foundations

The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation: Melody Program

Purpose: To provide musical instruments and instrument repairs to existing K-12 school music programs that have no other financing to purchase additional musical instruments and materials.

The foundation does not make cash awards. Grants of repairs and new instruments typically range between \$500 and \$5,000 in retail value. Please note that delivery of instruments, if awarded, can take several months. If you are applying on behalf of more than one school, submit separate applications for each. Applicants whose music programs lack institutional financial support and whose students qualify for financial assistance will receive greater consideration.

Deadline: Open

Application, information, and eligibility standards available online at www.mhopus.org/melody.htm or by mail from The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, Grant Committee, 15125 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 204, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.

Other

The Dirksen Congressional Center: Robert H. Michel Civic Education Grants

Purpose: To help improve the quality of civics instruction, with a particular emphasis on the role of Congress in our federal government.

Areas of interest include lesson plans, student activities, applying instructional technology in the classroom, multidisciplinary strategies for education in civics, and curricular reform efforts to align instruction with state or national standards. Teachers (grades 4 to 12) and higher education faculty are eligible, as are teacher-led student teams and curriculum developers.

The Center will give priority to



projects that involve teaching about Congress, reach beyond a single classroom or school, demonstrate innovative teaching, and have a practical as opposed to a theoretical application.

Submit a preliminary proposal to learn if your idea has potential to be funded.

Deadline: Preliminary proposals may be submitted any time. Awards will be made in May and October.

Application and information available online at www.dirksencenter.org/

grantmichelciviced.htm or from Frank H. Mackaman, The Dirksen Congressional Center, 301 S. Fourth Street, Suite A, Pekin, IL 61554-4219; phone 309-347-7113, fax 309-347-6432.

American Association of University Women: Eleanor Roosevelt Fellowships

Purpose: To provide professional development opportunities for women public school teachers; improve girls' learning opportunities, especially in math, science, and technology; and promote equity and long-term change in classrooms, schools, and systems.

Two grant programs are offered.

- **Professional Development Fellowships** of up to \$5,000 each will fund K-12 women public school teachers' attendance at professional development workshops, seed money for planning a gender-equity school-based program, and attendance at the five-day Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Institute in July 2003. This intensive series of workshops, hands-on activities, and discussions brings fellows together to strengthen understanding of educational equity, learn classroom strategies, discover resources, and gain insights from national education leaders.

- **Project Implementation Grants** for women public school teachers provide up to \$10,000 support for a classroom or school program to advance gender equity.

Deadline: January 10, 2003

Information and application available online at www.aauw.org/3000/fdnfelgra/ertf.html.

ASCD: Outstanding Young Educator

Purpose: To honor an education professional, 40 years of age or younger, who demonstrates exemplary commitment and exceptional contributions to the profession.

Nominations should describe the educator's creative and innovative accomplishments within the classroom, school, district, state, or region that have had a significant impact on student performance and achievement and that provide an ongoing model of excellence in encouraging all learners to succeed. A nominee's body of work should consistently prove leadership among colleagues. The winner will be profiled in *Educational Leadership*, receive \$10,000, and be honored at the ASCD Annual Conference in San Francisco.

Deadline: December 16, 2002

Information and application available online at www.ascd.org/oyea.html.

Lysol/National Science Teachers Association: Science and Your Health Challenge

Purpose: To help students learn science while engaging in issues related to health.

This program is for certified K-6 public or private classroom teachers who have developed a classroom project. Eligible teachers must be U.S. citizens.

Awards of \$1,000 each will be made to 40 teachers for professional development support that includes registration, travel, and housing for the NSTA National Convention. Funds may also be used to attend an NSTA Area Convention or an NSTA Institute course/workshop. Awards include an additional \$500 that can be used to purchase materials necessary to teach science.

Deadline: December 16, 2002

Application and information available online at www.nsta.org/lysol.

Technology Resources

For links to technology resources, including opportunities to acquire equipment, go to www.schoolgrants.org/Links/technology.htm.

Find a comprehensive list of computer recyclers listed at <http://pnnonline.org/technology/computerrecycle1.cfm> and <http://pnnonline.org/technology/computerrecycle2.cfm>

For Macintosh equipment, go to www.mactreasures.com/default.tml?code=10094. This program matches schools to donors and sells software.



Desktop Reference to *No Child Left Behind*

The U.S. Department of Education has produced a 180-page desktop reference manual to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). The guide is a clear and straightforward, program-by-program look at the major reforms under the new law.

NCLB is built on four key principles: accountability for results, flexibility and local control, enhanced parental choice, and instruction based on scientific research.

For each section of NCLB, the manual details the purpose of the program, what's new in the law, how the program works, key requirements, how to achieve quality, how performance is measured, and key activities and responsibilities for state education departments.

The manual covers:

- Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

- Title II, Preparing, Training and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals
- Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students
- Title IV, 21st Century Schools
- Title V, Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
- Title VI, Flexibility and Accountability
- Title VII, Indian, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Education
- Title VIII, Impact Aid
- Title IX, Unsafe School Choice Option
- Title X, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance

Copies are free—call 877-4ED-PUBS or visit www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html. The report can also be found on the Department of Education Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/reference.html.

AEL serves as the regional educational laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. For these same four states, it operates 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 houses the Institute for the Advancement of Emerging Technologies in Education (IAETE) and the Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education (IARE). The REL contract includes a Technology Specialty for the nation's system of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories. This publication is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, contract number ED-01-CO-0016. The contents herein do not necessarily reflect AEL or OERI policies or views.



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Framework

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