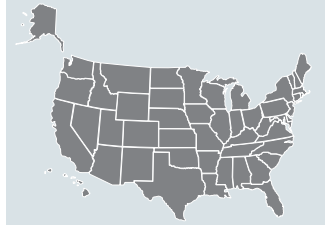


THE LINK

A PUBLICATION FOR EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS



Serving education since 1966

Introducing the Center for Education Services

The new Center for Education Services at AEL gives educators a direct link to high-quality professional development.

Because the Center draws on AEL's nearly 40 years of experience in conducting research and translating it into usable products and services, it is uniquely positioned to help educators respond to the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Programs and services focus on school improvement through leadership development, increased content expertise, and research-based classroom strategies. The Center's key programs and services offerings can be customized to meet state and district mandates.

Center director Dr. Sandra Angius explains it this way: "AEL's commitment is to help educators meet the demands of NCLB by delivering high-quality, research-based

professional development that is competitively priced. I'm very proud and excited to have the Center as an umbrella for research-based services that meet the real needs of real schools."

Professional Development Delivery

Online or on-site, AEL courses focus on providing administrators, teachers, and school improvement specialists with research-based leadership and classroom strategies that work across content areas. Programs can be tailored to meet client needs—or custom designed. They may be delivered face-to-face, online, or as a hybrid. Center staff are available to diagnose education needs or problems, develop a prescription, and deliver the intervention.

One of the most exciting aspects of the

(continued on page 2)



Learn about our new professional development format, now available from the Center for Education Services.

IN THIS ISSUE

School Improvement

Center for Education Services at AEL, p. 1

Resources of Interests

Driving on Mars; Finding ERIC; Supers Call Toll Free; Thinkport Web Site; Cyberchase Web Site; Evolution for Science Teachers; Crisis Planning for Schools; Guide to Research-Based Practice; Educating Homeless Students; Help for Student Newspapers; School-Family-Community Partnerships; Financing and Assessing Professional Development; Using Data to Improve

Professional Development; AEL's Free Tool for Data-Based Decision Making p. 3

Research Notes

Systemic Strategies for School Improvement; Out-of-School Programs Boost Achievement; OST Program Evaluation Tools; How Teacher Practices Affect Student Performance, p. 4

Resources from AEL

See the catalog insert in the center of this issue.

Grant Opportunities p. 10

QUILT Training for Trainers p. 12



Telephone:
304-347-0400
800-624-9120
E-mail: link@ael.org



Center for Education Services

(continued from page 1)

new Center is its electronic professional development site, known as ePD@AEL. Here we offer online courses and also important extra benefits—listservs, webcasts, Q&A with AEL content experts, and additional tools and resources clients can

download and/or consult.

One course, Assessment and Intervention in a Comprehensive Literacy Classroom, is up and running, with an enrollment of about 700 teachers. Between now and June, when

the summer professional development season begins, we will stock the site with the balance of our initial course offerings (see catalog insert in center of this issue).

Every person enrolled in a course—whether it lasts two days or six months—will receive one year of access to ePD as part of the fee. Groups of educators who attend the

same professional development sessions can continue their conversations beyond class time through listservs. As webcasts are scheduled, ePD “subscribers” will be notified so they can attend. Every course has a list of references, with online links to many resources. The most valuable extra might be the access to content experts. AEL’s knowledgeable research and development specialists have many years of experience in designing and delivering professional development, and their work in the field keeps them in touch with educator needs and contexts.

Costs

Total cost depends on the degree of customization required. Basic tuition for courses ranges from \$100 to \$500 per person, depending on the size of the group.

For More Information

See the catalog insert in the center of this issue or contact Carolyn Reynolds by e-mail at cesinfo@ael.org, by phone at 800-624-9120 or 304-347-0447, or visit www.ael.org.

“We selected AEL’s materials for our statewide training based on their comprehensive coverage of skills and knowledge, incorporation of findings from the most current research literature, and strong instructional design.”

—Henry Pollick, Director
Florida Technology Trainer Enhancement Center

Federal Funding for Schools to Purchase Services

Schools can use federal funds to improve student achievement through professional development for teachers, principals, and, when appropriate, paraprofessionals, whether face-to-face or online. These examples come from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001:

Title I, Part A: Minimum of 5% is set aside for ensuring that teachers are highly qualified.

Title II, Part A: Professional development activities should improve knowledge around

- core academic subjects, such as reading, math, and science
- effective instructional strategies for students with diverse learning styles
- use of collaborative groups of teachers and administrators

Title II, Part A: Professional development should improve the quality of the teaching force through innovative programs that

- promote technology integration
- can be accessed through strategies such as technology, peer networks, and distance learning

Driving on Mars

The same piece of software that people use to play video games on their cell phones now helps scientists drive the remote-controlled rovers across Mars. Java, the software developed as a universal platform for Internet applications, gave NASA a low-cost and easy-to-use option for running Spirit and Opportunity, the robotic rovers that rolled onto the planet's surface in search of signs of water and life.

For three months, NASA scientists and engineers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena are plotting the rovers' wanderings with the Java-based Science Activity Planner. With simple point-and-click skills, the team plans daily activities, pages through voluminous data, and communicates.

The NASA team has released Maestro, a public version of the software tool. Visitors—space nuts and students—can page through panoramic color images, check out the rover's wheel-mounted hazard cameras, or plan a mission. The simulated rover drives on a 3-D model of the Martian terrain as precise as the one used by NASA.

You can download Maestro for free from <http://mars.telascience.org> and use it to follow the mission. Maestro can help users view pictures from Mars in 2D and 3D and create simplified rover activity plans. During the mission, updates containing the latest images from Mars will be released.

Here's how to get started:

- Download Maestro to your computer; it comes with data taken during rover tests.
- Check the updates section of the site frequently for real data from Mars to use in Maestro.
- Visit the forums and share your Maestro experiences with other users and the Maestro staff.
- Read the online manual for all the details.
- The help area of the site has a user guide, answers to frequently asked questions, and online chat.

Finding ERIC

Last year, the U.S. Department of Education closed the 16 federally financed ERIC clearinghouses as part of its effort to revamp and centralize the Educational Resources Information Center. While a new contractor prepares its online system, many of the materials archived in the former system remain available.

The central online database can be found at www.eric.ed.gov. In addition, the managing bodies of many former clearinghouses have established new locations for their files, and users may find it less expensive to access materials through these. They are listed here by clearinghouse topic areas.

- Adult, Career, and Vocational Education: www.cete.org/acve
- Assessment and Evaluation: <http://edresearch.org>
- Counseling and Student Services: <http://counselingoutfitters.com>
- Disabilities and Gifted Education: www.cec.sped.org
- Educational Management: <http://cepm.uoregon.edu>
- Elementary and Early Childhood Education: <http://ecap.crc.uiuc.edu/info>
- Information and Technology: www.eduref.org
- Languages and Linguistics: www.cal.org
- Reading, English, and Communication: www.kidscanlearn.com
- Rural Education and Small Schools: www.ael.org/cress
- Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education: <http://stemworks.org>
- Social Studies/Social Science Education: www.indiana.edu/~ssdc/ssdc.htm
- Teaching and Teacher Education: www.aacte.org
- Urban Education: <http://iume.tc.columbia.edu>

If you yearn for the services provided by AskERIC, go to www.eduref.org. Here you will find a search interface to the new database and other AskERIC services.

(Resources continued on page 7)

Resources of Interest

Supers Call Toll Free

A new toll-free information resource provides superintendents with key information about No Child Left Behind.

The resource line—888-NCLB-SUP, or 888-625-2787—offers information about many topics. These include accountability and school progress, supplemental educational services, public school choice options, Reading First grants, and more.

The line is staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. During off-hours, or when the lines are busy, superintendents will be able to leave messages. They also may send e-mail inquiries to NCLBSUP@ed.gov.

Research Notes

The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences funds research through regional laboratories, national centers, and field studies.

Research from the nation's 10 regional laboratories can be found on the Internet at www.relnetwork.org.

The work of the 12 national centers is available at <http://research.cse.ucla.edu>.

Systemic Strategies for School Improvement

From the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)

In the 1990s, before No Child Left Behind (NCLB), high-stakes accountability systems created a new category of low-performing schools. These systems differ widely in their concrete approaches, and none aligns exactly with NCLB. However, a cross-system analysis of seven first-generation accountability systems provides lessons that may help states and districts to create or modify systems for use under NCLB.

Researchers looked at five state systems, one district system, and one specific program within a state system. Data from the states—California, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Texas—constituted the main body of research. Other information covered Chicago and the New York Schools Under Registration Review program. These systems were selected because they were truly first-generation systems that spearheaded high-stakes accountability and have been in existence for some time, they had fairly elaborate design features, they figured prominently in the public discussion of accountability prior to NCLB, and research material about the systems was available.

The analysis produced several lessons.

- **Less ambitious systems are more stable.** The bold equity goals and short timelines that characterized the early visions of Kentucky and Maryland could not be sustained, and as a result the cognitive complexity of the assessments was somewhat reduced. Systems with modest performance demands and flexibility in the calculation of growth targets were more able to move schools out of the lowest categories and less likely to revamp aspects of their programs.
- **Sanctions are not the fallback solution.** Nearly all the sanctions suggested by

NCLB have been tried by at least one of the systems examined in this study. The review showed, however, that the more severe sanctions were seldom applied. Rather, systems fairly early turned from pressure to support, for such reasons as ineffectiveness of reconstitution, exacerbation of teacher commitment problems, and recognition of capacity problems that cannot be solved by applying motivators.

- **Districts need to be centrally involved.** Some first-generation systems bypassed districts and established direct relationships between schools and states. This analysis indicates that, to the extent that pressures and sanctions have been shown to be limited and capacity-building strategies important, the role of the district becomes germane. Districts can intervene far more deeply into a school's instructional core, and precious state resources may be better spent on a few districts than on many individual schools.
- **Even small intervention burdens require a developed capacity-building structure.** In their initial stages, the first-generation systems sometimes identified as many as one fourth of their schools, but burdens have generally involved from two to seven percent of schools. No matter how few or many the identified schools, systems have found it necessary to build elaborate capacity-building structures. States without such structures had difficulty moving schools out of their systems if performance demands were high.
- **Capacity building is key, and can take many forms, but should be clearly focused.** Studies from first-generation systems found that schools with low organizational capacity benefited only slightly from accountability policies, and even intensive interventions might fail to move a school off the list. Strategies that seem to improve success include providing management to ensure high-quality support and oversight; assisting with data

analysis, modeling good instruction, and aligning curricula to standards; and focusing on classroom-level change.

- **The need for effective instructional programs ought to be balanced with work on professional norms and teacher commitment.** Two dynamics seem to be possible: (1) Labeling a school as low performing serves as a tool to establish compliance for district-selected and directed programmatic changes and targeted capacity building, such as literacy coaches. (2) The label motivates the school to develop new professional norms, and capacity-building strategies bolster the overall organizational capacity with a focus on instruction. Qualified instructional specialists lodged in a school seem to have had effects on improvement. On occasion, external consultants' efforts have dissipated. The lesson here is "Instructional specialists, but also management consultants, or change agents who cover both areas, need training specific to the conditions of the low-performing school."

Overall, the message is this:

If experiences of the first-generation accountability systems are any indication, states are advised not to rely on the power of pressures and sanctions to get the job of school improvement done. Rather, states need to construct low-performing schools programs that place heavy emphasis on support and intervention, bolster commitment of teachers to low-performing schools, and strongly motivate educators.

Systemic Strategies to Improve Low-Performing Schools—Lessons from First-Generation Accountability Systems by Heinrich Mintrop and Rosie Papazian (2003) is available free online at www.cresst.org/products/reports_set.htm.

Out-of-School Programs Boost Achievement

From Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

Schools face new pressure to provide effective out-of-school-time (OST) strategies (e.g., after-school, summer, and weekend programs) to improve student achievement. No Child Left Behind requires schools to provide supplementary education services, such as after-school programs, to students who need extra help.

Research to date has painted a mixed picture of these programs' effectiveness. For example, the first-year evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program found these programs had no statistically significant effects on mathematics or reading. However, given the uneven quality of local programs, a closer examination was needed to determine which OST strategies work and which do not. To provide this closer look, McREL researchers analyzed research conducted since 1984 on the impact of OST strategies in improving the reading and mathematics achievement of low-achieving or at-risk students.

Of 371 studies of after-school and summer programs, 56 were selected as being rigorous enough to include in the analysis. A quantitative analysis of the 56 studies found these programs have a small, though statistically significant, positive impact on student achievement in reading and mathematics.

Key findings from the study:

- OST strategies can have positive effects on the achievement of low-achieving or at-risk students in reading and mathematics.
- No difference in effectiveness can be attributed to time frames for delivering OST programs (i.e., after or summer school).
- Early elementary students appear to benefit more from OST strategies to improve reading.

(continued on page 6)

Research Notes

(continued from page 4)

OST Program Evaluation Tools

Want to know what your OST program is accomplishing? Evaluating the program regularly can provide feedback on what is working and what isn't so you can make continuous improvements. You already may be collecting student outcome data to show that your program is having a positive effect.

A resource manual from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory can help you assess the feelings of students, parents, program staff, and teachers through stakeholder surveys and focus group questions. You can find the tools online at http://www.nwrel.org/ecc/21century/publications/ost_tools.pdf.

Research Notes

(continued from page 5)

- Older students appear to benefit more from OST strategies to improve mathematics.
- OST strategies need not focus solely on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement.
- OST strategies that provide one-on-one tutoring for low-achieving or at-risk students have strong positive effects on student achievement in reading.

The full report and a research brief, *The Effectiveness of Out-of-School-Time Strategies in Assisting Low-Achieving Students in Reading and Mathematics: A Research Synthesis* by P. A. Lauer and colleagues (2003), are available online at www.mcrel.org/newsroom/OSTsynthesis.asp.

How Teacher Practices Affect Student Performance

From the Educational Testing Service

This study explored the link between classroom practices and student academic performance by applying multilevel modeling to the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress in mathematics. The study found that the effects of classroom practices, when added to those of other teacher characteristics, are comparable in size to those of student background, suggesting that teachers can contribute as much to student learning as the students themselves.

Classroom practices—such as various forms of assessment, applying problem-solving techniques to unique problems, and hands-on learning—along with teacher inputs and professional development, were examined for impact on student outcomes. In particular, the following variables were positively associated with achievement:

- teacher major
- professional development in higher-order thinking skills
- professional development in diversity
- hands-on learning

One conclusion of the study was that, of the aspects of teacher quality, classroom practices have the greatest effect. In addition, the findings suggest that ongoing assessments such as portfolios and projects need to be supplemented with tests that occur at distinct points in time.

The study also uncovered interrelationships among aspects of teaching. For example, professional development seems to have a strong influence on classroom practices. The more professional development teachers receive in hands-on learning, or in any topic, the more likely they are to employ hands-on learning activities. The more professional development teachers receive in working with special student populations, the less likely they are to employ lower-order activities.

In sum, the study found that schools matter because they provide a platform for active, as opposed to passive, teachers. According to the report,

Passive teachers are those who leave students to perform as well as their own resources will allow; active teachers press all students to grow regardless of their backgrounds. Schools that lack a critical mass of active teachers may indeed not matter much; their students will be no less or more able to meet high academic standards than their talents and home resources will allow. But schools that do have a critical mass of active teachers can actually provide a value-added; they can help their students reach higher levels of academic performance than those students otherwise would reach.

How Schools Matter: The Link Between Teacher Classroom Practices and Student Academic Performance by Harold Wenglinsky (2002) is available online from *Education Policy Analysis Archives* at <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n12>.

Thinkport Web Site

Thinkport, an Internet “super site,” was developed by Maryland Public Television and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education. Its primary audience is Maryland teachers, but many areas of the site can be accessed by all visitors. Thinkport organizes content under the categories of classroom, technology, career, and family and community. Teachers and parents can find tips, tools, and more to help enrich educational experiences. Visit www.thinkport.org.

Cyberchase Web Site

The PBS KIDS cartoon Cyberchase is about showing kids that math is fun, and now a Web site gives parents and teachers concrete tips to make math come alive. Children across the country have embraced the series that features the daring adventures of three Earth kids—Jackie, Matt, and Inez—who use math to save Cyberspace from the dastardly villain, Hacker. Like other PBS KIDS programs, Cyberchase reaches beyond the screen with home activities, classroom lessons, and, in particular, a general outlook that math should be a part of a child’s everyday life.

Check out Cyberchase Online at www.pbskids.org. The Cyberchase Parents and Teachers Site is at <http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/parentsteachers/index.html>.

Evolution for Science Teachers

NSTA Press has released a new book with valuable insights and views from leading scientists, professors, and teachers on the issue of evolution. *Evolution in Perspective: The Science Teacher’s Compendium* collects 12 articles first published in the National Science Teachers Association member journal *The Science Teacher*.

The articles fall into three categories. The scientific perspective explores the evidence supporting evolution. The educa-

tional perspective looks at evolution’s place in the National Science Education Standards and at the thorny problem of calling evolution a “theory.” The science teacher’s perspective discusses lesson plans that allow students to explore evolution and draw their own conclusions. Also included is the recently revised NSTA Position Statement on Evolution.

This collection comes from, and was developed for, educators who deal with the controversy over evolution every day. Geared for science teachers at the 5th- to 12th-grade level, *Evolution in Perspective* is now available from the NSTA Store at <http://store.nsta.org/showItem.asp?product=PB181X>. Hard copies cost \$12.76 for members (\$15.95 nonmembers) and a PDF version may be downloaded free.

Crisis Planning for Schools

As part of continuing efforts to keep teachers and students safe, the U.S. Department of Education recently released a guide to assist schools in planning for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents, and terrorist acts.

Using key concepts of good crisis planning, *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities* lists four areas of crisis management that school crisis plans should address:

1. mitigation/prevention, which addresses what schools and districts can do to reduce or eliminate risk to life and property
2. preparedness, which focuses on the process of planning for the worst-case scenario
3. response, which is devoted to the steps to take during a crisis
4. recovery, which deals with how to restore the learning and teaching environment after a crisis

The guide also describes how several districts across the country have approached crisis planning.

(continued on page 8)

Resources of Interest

(continued from page 3)

Guide to Research-Based Practice

Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide is a 19-page guide from the U.S.

Department of Education designed for practitioners and policymakers. Today, every educator needs to understand what is meant by scientifically based research and how to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and materials. The guide is available at www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousetid/index.html.

Resources of Interest

(continued from page 7)

This past spring, the U.S. secretaries of education and homeland security unveiled a new section on the Department of Education Web site—www.ed.gov/emergencyplan—designed to be a one-stop shop to help school officials plan for any emergency. The planning guide is available on this site.

Educating Homeless Students

Homeless children face numerous hardships that sometimes result in significant academic, health, developmental, psychological, and emotional problems in school. While these challenges are not insurmountable, educators must be aware of them and take steps to help these children overcome the damage done by homelessness. The Education Commission of the States offers a Web site to share state policies and practices, federal legislation, research, and resources for information on educating homeless students.

Visit the site at www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=207.

Help for Student Newspapers

Since the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) launched its hosting service, My High School Journalism, in 2002, more than 200 schools have joined. Now these schools publish online. Many put out more issues per year than in the past and others have school papers for the first time because they can avoid the difficulties of preparing print publications. Journalism teachers and ASNE administrators say online publishing provides incentive for students as well as training for those who plan to enter the real world of journalism, which increasingly relies on multimedia technology.

The hosting service (myhighschooljournalism.org) is one of four major components in the ASNE high school journalism project. Another is the Web site, which offers skill-building exercises, sample lesson plans, interaction with professional journalists, and more for students, teachers, advisors, guidance counselors, and professional

journalists. Third, the ASNE High School Journalism Institute helps high school teachers start and improve school newspapers, develop their journalism teaching skills, and earn graduate credits. Fourth, through the journalism partnership program, daily newspapers provide funds for high schools to launch or improve their papers.

Get information about these programs, plus some offered by the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation, at www.highschooljournalism.org.

School-Family-Community Partnerships

Schools often find it difficult to get beyond typical family involvement activities and build more effective and meaningful school-family-community partnerships. To help schools assess their approaches and implement more effective activities, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory offers *Partnerships By Design: Cultivating Effective and Meaningful School-Family-Community Partnerships*. This practical tool focuses on working with families and community members and provides easy-to-read information and an efficient planning process. It contains simple forms to help schools and organizations write their own plans.

A print copy of the book costs \$8.50 plus shipping and may be ordered or downloaded free at www.nwrel.org/partnerships/pubs/bydesign.html.

Financing and Assessing Professional Development

A recent paper from The Finance Project highlights promising practices for assessing professional development activities and how they are financed, in order to provide models to others who need information to make positive change. As the report says, “Currently, because schools and districts do not collect data on the effectiveness and efficiency of their professional

development investments, they lack the necessary information to make the most efficient choice when deciding what professional development to offer or require.”

With the goal of concisely synthesizing a range of information and disseminating it to the field, this paper examines what pre-service and in-service professional development is required and how it is delivered, financed, and assessed for teachers as well as principals and superintendents. An appendix provides a list of federal funding sources that might support professional development. *The Delivery, Financing, and Assessment of Professional Development in Education: Pre-Service Preparation and In-Service Training* is available at www.financeprojectinfo.org/Publications/prof%20dev%2011-2-03.pdf.

Using Data to Improve Professional Development

A recent issue brief from the National Education Association’s Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) presents a wide-ranging discussion about building data-based decision-making capacity within a school. It offers starting points for investigating the possibilities and challenges of using data to improve classroom practice and suggests two equally important ways to use data in professional development:

1. as the actual substance of professional development, as educators convene with each other to study student work and analyze the instructional practice that produced such results
2. as a basis for making decisions about educators’ on-the-job learning, including decisions pertaining to professional development resource allocation, content, and delivery

The brief suggests some models for looking at student work, including lesson study (see Vol. 21, No. 3 of *The Link*, Fall 2002) and Schools Around the World, which

is a nine-nation collaboration that maintains an international database of student work (www.c-b-e.org/saw/sawoverview.htm). NFIE also encourages the use of video to help teachers observe themselves and others.

To use data in these ways, barriers must be removed. Teachers need time—in the school day and the contract year. Schools need partnerships—with higher education or other sources of research-based knowledge. Communities need information—about the value and appropriate uses of different types of data.

To put these together effectively, NFIE suggests using a *cycle of inquiry* process such as that defined by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. It has six steps, each of which is influenced by the others: (1) establish desired outcomes, (2) define the questions, (3) collect and organize data, (4) make meaning of the data, (5) take action, and (6) assess and evaluate actions.

The brief offers sets of guiding questions to help educators get started. For example, under the heading “incorporating data into professional learning” are questions about how union representatives and administrators can

- establish a school culture that emphasizes and values the use of data for professional development purposes
- create incentives to engage in lesson study with colleagues
- provide risk-free opportunities to experiment with data collection, analysis, and application
- establish a climate in which data are used fairly and ethically
- link data analysis and professional development to school improvement plans

Using Data About Classroom Practice and Student Work to Improve Professional Development for Educators is free online at www.nfie.org/usingdata.htm.

Resources of Interest

(continued from page 8)

AEI’s Free Tool for Data-Based Decision Making

The Data-Based Decision Making Web tool guides school personnel as they use data to make decisions to promote school improvement. It includes useful examples, real school stories, and the best available tools and resources to help schools build effective data-based decision-making systems. The Web tool is easy to use and provides a wealth of information linked to questions that must be considered during the school improvement process.

The free, research-based Web tool was developed as a collaborative project of AEI and the Council of Chief State School Officers and recently underwent an eight-month pilot test in 21 states. Learn more at www.aei.org/dbdm.

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/fedreg/frcont01.html.

PBS Kids: 10th Annual Young Writers & Illustrators Contest

Purpose: To encourage reading and writing by children in grades K-3.

The contest is connected with the public broadcasting television show *Reading Rainbow*, and children may enter through local stations or independently. Each participating PBS station judges its entries and submits the winners to the national contest. Every child who submits an illustrated story receives a certificate of achievement signed by LeVar Burton, host of *Reading Rainbow*. National winners receive 10 *Reading Rainbow* episodes on DVD and episode feature books, and their stories are posted on the *Reading Rainbow* Web site.

Deadline: Generally the end of March; check local station

Information available online at <http://pbskids.org/readingrainbow/contest> or contact your local public broadcasting station.

ING Financial Services: Unsung Heroes Awards

Purpose: To support K-12 educators who pioneer new methods and techniques that improve student learning.

Each year, 100 finalists are selected to receive \$2,000 awards. Educators submit applications describing projects they have initiated or would like to create. Their applications are judged on their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and ability to make a positive influence on the children they teach.

Award checks are made payable jointly to the recipient and to his or her school. At least one award will be granted in each of the 50 United States, provided one or more qualified applications are received from each state. Of the 100 finalists, three are selected

for additional financial awards: 1st place gets \$25,000; 2nd place gets \$10,000; and 3rd place receives \$5,000.

Deadline: April 30

Application and information available online at www.ing-usa.com/us/about/connect/education/unsung_heroes.html or by calling 866-464-8727.

Scholastic: Kids Are Authors

Purpose: To encourage students to use their reading, writing, and artistic skills to create their own books.

This annual competition is open to grades K-8. Under the guidance of a project coordinator, children work in teams of three or more students to write and illustrate their own book. The creative process of working in teams helps provide a natural environment to practice editing, teamwork, and communication skills necessary for future success. All students involved get a sense of pride and accomplishment from submitting the team project. Scholastic will publish the winning books and distribute them at Book Fairs throughout the country.

Deadline: March 15

Information and application available online at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/fairs/kaa>.

Balance Bar: BALANCE Grants

Purpose: To provide financial support for sports enthusiasts and amateur athletes and help them to passionately pursue activities that enrich their lives.

Any activity that enables a person to enhance physical health while pursuing a passion is appropriate for the BALANCE grant. Eligible applicants must be passionate enough to apply, over the age of 18, and U.S. citizens. Individuals and amateur teams may apply. Grant amounts may range from \$500 to \$10,000, and awards must be used during the four months after receiving funding.

Deadline: May 15 and September 15

Application and information available online at www.balance.com/grants/rules.asp.

Consumer Aerosol Products Council: Science Class Challenge

Purpose: To commemorate the 25th anniversary of CFC-free aerosol products in the United States.

This challenge encourages teaching about the Earth's protective upper ozone layer, CFCs, and the environment. In this science challenge, 40 schools will win \$500 and a pizza party for the submitting teacher's science class. A \$5,000 Most Creative Award will be given to one entry that is both creative and scientifically accurate. Entrants must be full-time teachers employed by U.S. public or private schools and teach within these grade-level categories: elementary (grades 4-6) and middle (grades 7-9).

Deadline: May 21

Application and information available online at www.nocfcs.org/scc/scchome.htm.

National Council for the Social Studies: CiviConnections: Constructing the Past, Creating the Future

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for teachers and students in grades 3-12 to link local historical inquiry with community service-learning activities.

A team of three teachers can apply for a \$7,500 grant to cover the costs of attending a summer workshop, implementing the program during the fall of 2004, and attending the 2004 NCSS Annual Conference in Baltimore. Thirty-three teams of teachers in U.S. classrooms and communities will be awarded grants.

Teachers and students will participate in the following sequence of activities: (1) choose an issue of concern or need in the local community; (2) students become inquiring historians as they investigate the issue through their community's history; (3) compare local findings with learning about the issue in our nation's history; (4) students look at how the issue is affected by one or more government documents, such as the Bill of Rights; (5) students design and conduct quality service-learning activities to

work on the issue; and (6) students create a public display to educate the community and celebrate their collaborative service projects

Deadline: April 30

Application and information available online at www.socialstudies.org/civiconnections or by e-mail from civiconnections@ncss.org.

3D Life Adventures: Action Grants

Purpose: To release the power of young people to take thoughtful action to affect the hearts, minds, and actions of their peers and communities.

The program provides financial and consulting support for student-led initiatives related to natural or cultural diversity. Students can receive up to \$500 to help design and implement a project. Projects may be submitted by individuals or groups in a school, church, or community. Examples of grant uses might include leading a group of friends to create a cultural festival for a school or creating an environmental education program for grade-school children at a church, temple, or mosque. A group might team up with other groups to do a project with impact across an even greater area.

Deadline: Ongoing; allow at least one month for application review

Application and information available online at <http://3dzone.org/html/programs/grants.asp> or by contacting Laura Jackson at 703-312-0541 or lauraj@3dzone.org.

The Libri Foundation: Books for Children

Purpose: To help rural libraries acquire children's books they could not otherwise afford to buy.

This nonprofit organization donates new, quality, hardcover children's books to small, rural public libraries in the United States.

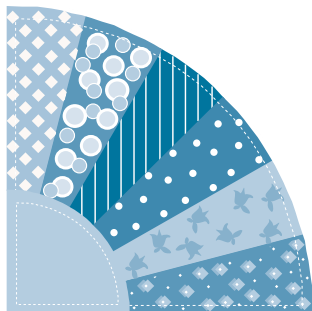
Deadlines: March, July, and December 15
Information and application available online at www.librifoundation.org or e-mail your name and your library's name and address to librifdn@teleport.com. You may also write the foundation at P.O. Box 10246, Eugene, OR 97440.

AT&T Wireless & the National PTA: Wireless for Schools

Purpose: To promote smart wireless phone use and help schools raise funds.

Each time a new AT&T Wireless service plan at a U.S. school is activated through the program, a \$50 donation will be made directly to the designated school or local PTA unit.

Deadline: Ongoing
Information available online at www.attwireless.com/attwirelessforschools or by calling 877-293-4338.



QUILT National Training for Trainers

June 28-July 1, 2004 • Nashville, Tennessee

QUILT stands for Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking. Effective questioning creates a classroom environment that leads to greater interaction and increased student learning.

A QUILT teacher involves every student in answering every question. QUILT students get involved in discussions that require higher level thinking. QUILT classrooms teach problem solving, decision making, conceptualizing, critical thinking, creative thinking, and metaphoric thinking. And it works in every classroom, whatever the grade level or content area.

What makes QUILT so powerful? It's based on solid research in several areas: professional development, learning, listening, and, of course, questioning.

QUILT's training-for-trainers approach helps school districts prepare cadres of local teachers who then train others in their schools, districts, and states. Send a team from your school—typically two teachers and an administrator—to learn how to facilitate QUILT with your faculty.

Costs for the four-day training, including materials, are covered in the registration fee of \$585.

For more information about QUILT, contact Beth Sattes (e-mail sattesb@ael.org, phone 800-624-9120 or 304-347-0400, ext. 5414). To register, contact Shirley Keene (e-mail keenes@ael.org, phone 800-624-9120 or 304-347-0400, ext. 5420), or visit www.ael.org/page.htm?&index=516&pd=1&pv=x.

Founded in 1966 as a not-for-profit corporation, AEL provides services to educators, education publishers, and policymakers. Services include rigorous research design and implementation, intensive product and program evaluations, randomized field trials, technical assistance, and award-winning professional development.

This publication is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, under contract number ED-01-CO-0016. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of IES, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. government.

The Link is free to educators on request. Readers are encouraged to reproduce its contents, giving proper credit. Current and many back issues are available in PDF at www.ael.org. Print copies of some back issues are available; please inquire by e-mail to link@ael.org.



Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Cleveland, OH
Permit No. 1940

AEL is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer