



# Success

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

February 2009

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## Speaking a new language

Wiki, Twitter, Facebook, Google Earth and Gagle are terms that teenagers understand, so educators need to explore their potential for instruction. Many teachers have grasped what is known as Web 2.0 to invigorate, motivate and engage their students. Ask your technology director to speak at a board meeting on how your district is using this new technology to raise student achievement.

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## State budget and you

Gov. **Ted Strickland** kicked off the biennium budget process when he unveiled his proposed budget on Jan. 28. Your next board meeting is a perfect time to discuss how student achievement in your district will be affected by state funding.

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## Learning by doing

“They (students) get excited about learning math when it helps them accomplish something useful,” wrote **Anthony Cody** in *Teacher Magazine*. Cody uses a process called guided instruction to teach science. To read more about this, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/44127>.

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## New teacher training works

A new study suggests that an alternative teacher training program is very effective in Louisiana. The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reports that educators in The New Teacher Project, in which outstanding college graduates earn teacher certification, outperform veteran teachers in math instruction. To read the story, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/25977>.

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## Share your success with other schools

In February, OSBA begins soliciting nominations for Capital Conference speakers, Student Achievement Fair exhibitors and student performing groups. Ask your superintendent and principals to consider what programs are worthy of a nomination. Nomination forms will be in the February *Journal* and *Briefcase* issues, or at [www.osba-ohio.org](http://www.osba-ohio.org).

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members.

## Understanding education research

School board members are bombarded with research from administrators, other board members, teachers, news media and yes, even OSBA. To help you understand why it is important to understand research methods, here is an introduction to “Consumer’s guide to education research.” It comes from the Center for Public Education, a collaborative effort of NSBA and its members, including OSBA.

Board members constantly want answers to certain questions (Are we using the best methods to teach students? What is the best curriculum to use? Are we operating our district in the most efficient and effective way?). By gathering information pertinent to those questions and reviewing the data, we can find the best answers. Research, then, is no more than a process of acquiring information to answer questions. Education research helps answer questions such as finding effective strategies for raising student achievement. Some people may be baffled by the various forms of research — what they are, how they’re conducted and what they say.

In a nutshell, research applies scientific thinking to questions. This means that the questions themselves must be constructed carefully so that the data gathered can actually help to answer the question. Moreover, the data must be gathered and analyzed in the most objective manner possible. What we’re after is solid research, which provides answers with facts and data that can be trusted.

What types of research methods are used? Research methods fall into two main categories — quantitative and qualitative — but at times they are combined to create a mixed-method research design.

Quantitative methods include: experimental research, quasi-experimental research, relational research (also known as cross-sectional or correlational), and descriptive studies and surveys.

Qualitative methods include: ethnographic research, grounded theory research and case studies.

Mixed methods include: quantitative and qualitative methods that are combined in a mixed-method research design.

The Center for Public Education offers an in-depth explanation for each of these research methods on its Web site. To read the entire “Consumer’s guide to education research,” and learn more about research, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/10223>.

### **Success**

February 2009

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**Success** is distributed only to student achievement liaisons.