



Success

Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

January 2009

Get on the bus, Gus

Mississippi's dropout average improved from 17.6% to 15.9% in one year thanks to a statewide campaign and other measures aimed at keeping students in the classroom. The creation of the Mississippi Office of Dropout Prevention and its "On the Bus" campaign helped 22 of 31 northeast Mississippi school districts improve their dropout rates. In the Baldwin School District, the dropout rate fell from 22.1% to 3.6%. To learn more, go to www.onthebus.ms.

How has NCLB changed your district?

Over 45% of those who responded to a survey by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development claim the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has caused their districts to make many changes. Another 27% say they completely revamped their curriculum due to the law. Invite your curriculum director to share with the board and community at a future board meeting how NCLB has affected the education process in your district and at what cost.

Are grades being inflated?

Grade inflation is a serious issue at some of America's top universities, reports Boston's *Globe Magazine*. Pressure from students to receive As is inflating grades. One study reports that one-half of the grades given at Harvard University in 2007 were in the A range. Is this happening in elementary and secondary schools as well? To read the story, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/54172>.

How to use *Success*

During the Capital Conference SALT Breakfast, one student achievement liaison suggested explaining how to use **Success**. While districts use the newsletter in different ways, most liaisons simply pass out the newsletter at board meetings to start a discussion on student achievement. Some districts distribute the newsletter to administrators throughout the district either by duplicating a paper copy or e-mailing the pdf version found at www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm. If you have another way to use **Success**, please send a brief note to editor **Scott Ebright**, APR, at s_ebright@osba-ohio.org.

Student achievement research brief

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

States make impressive gains in building longitudinal education data systems

While Ohio has seven of the elements of a comprehensive data system that can track student progress from preschool through college, six states have all 10 elements, according to the third annual report released in November by the Data Quality Campaign (DQC).

DQC, a national partnership to improve the quality, accessibility and use of data in education, annually highlights the power of developing and using longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement. Longitudinal data — data gathered on the same student from year to year — make it possible to follow individual student academic growth, determine the value-added dimension of specific programs and identify consistently high-performing schools and systems.

Key findings from the 2008 survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia:

- In 2005, no state reported having all 10 essential elements of a robust state longitudinal data system; this year, six states do (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana and Utah).
- 48 states now have five or more of the 10 elements.
- 42 states (compared to 14 in 2005) report they have the data systems necessary to calculate the National Governors Association longitudinal graduation rate. All states except one (Idaho) will report this rate by 2010–11.

While each state's P-12 education system is unique, DQC said there is a set of 10 essential elements that are critical to a longitudinal data system (● indicates element met by Ohio):

- A unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across years;
- Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information;
- The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth;
- Information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested;
- A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;
- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;
- Student-level college readiness test scores;
- Student-level graduation and dropout data;
- The ability to match student records between the P–12 and higher education systems;
- A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability.

Source: Data Quality Campaign, www.dataqualitycampaign.org.

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