



Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

January 2003

Share your *Success*

Since *Success* is only sent to student achievement liaisons, be sure to duplicate copies of this newsletter and distribute it at your next school board meeting so others can help you help your students achieve more success in your classrooms.

Plan now for the 2003 Student Achievement Fair

Share your success beyond your community. Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2003 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. The lineup for the Student Achievement Fair is now being assembled. Contact **Rob Delane**, OSBA director of school board development, as soon as possible at (614) 540-4000 to learn more about this wonderful opportunity to highlight your district's academic achievement. The application and supplemental information can be found at www.osba-ohio.org

SALT Symposium scheduled

Plan now to attend the free Student Achievement Leadership Team's annual SALT Symposium on Saturday, March 1, 2003. The main emphasis of the symposium will be the No Child Left Behind Act. The symposium will be conducted at Westerville South High School. More information will appear in the February *Success* and *Briefcase* issues.

Clearinghouse on the Web

Align to Achieve Inc., an independent, not-for-profit organization, maintains a Web database that allows searches of the academic standards of more than 40 states and several foreign countries. Visit www.aligntoachieve.org/ to compare Ohio's standards to others.

School boards lead student achievement efforts

January is School Board Recognition Month in Ohio. It is a great opportunity to promote the board's role in raising student achievement in your district. Take time to share the steps your board has taken to help students in the classroom. List your accomplishments and plans for the future. Point to increases in proficiency test scores and other measures of student performance.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members. Use it to generate discussion with the board and staff.

What should board members be asking about virtual schools?

Last month **Success** looked at the Center on Education Policy (CEP) downloadable newsletter called *Testtalk*. The same Web site (<http://www.cep-dc.org/>) offers an electronic report that studies how virtual schools will change American education, *Preserving Principles of Public Education in an Online World*.

In examining virtual schools, the CEP offers six key questions policymakers need to ask about education reform. The following questions could be the basis for any discussion on improving student achievement, in addition to looking at virtual schools:

- Effective preparation for life, work and citizenship. Will the proposed reform produce an education of the quality needed to effectively prepare young people: (a) to lead fulfilling and contributing lives, (b) to be productively employed, and (c) to be responsible citizens in a democratic society?
- Social cohesion and shared culture. Will the proposed reform promote a cohesive American society by bringing together children from diverse backgrounds and encouraging them to get along? Will it help to form a shared American culture and to transmit democratic values?
- Free and universal access. Will the proposed reform guarantee a public education that is universally accessible to all children within the governing jurisdiction and is free of charge to parents and students?
- Equity and nondiscrimination. Will the proposed reform provide the same quality of education for poor children as for non-poor children? Will it treat all children justly and without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religious affiliation or economic status?
- Public accountability and responsiveness. Will the proposed reform ensure that education supported with public dollars remains accountable to taxpayers and the public authorities that represent them? Will the reform be responsive to the needs of local communities and afford citizens a voice in the governance of their schools?
- Religious neutrality. Will the proposed reform provide a public education that is religiously neutral and respectful of religious freedom?

Editor's note: The CEP report quoted above cites financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as well as the William and Flora Hewlett Foundations.

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February 2003

Success is for you

This newsletter, *Success*, is designed to help you (as your district's student achievement liaison) and your fellow school board members help your students achieve more success in your classrooms. You are the only one to receive this newsletter, so please share the information you find here with your board.

SALT Symposium is soon

The free Student Achievement Leadership Team's annual SALT Symposium will be conducted on Saturday, March 1. The main emphasis of the symposium will be the No Child Left Behind Act and what school board members need to know. The symposium will be conducted at Westerville South High School. See the enclosed flier on the symposium to register. Bring the entire board.

Pins recognize your students' achievements

Want to find an inexpensive way to honor your students for their achievement? Check out the enclosed flier on the OSBA Student Achievement recognition pins. They are great to hand out at board of education meetings or at school functions throughout the year.

The 2003 OSBA Student Achievement Fair

Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2003 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. The lineup for the Student Achievement Fair is now being assembled. Contact **Rob Delane**, OSBA director of school board development, at (614) 540-4000 to learn more about this wonderful opportunity to highlight your district's academic achievement. The application and supplemental information can be found at www.osba-ohio.org

Say it proud!

For the next school board meeting, ask each board member to share the one district academic program of which they are most proud. You might want to contact them in advance, so they have a good answer. You could even invite the teachers and students involved in the program to make a brief presentation during the meeting.

Student achievement research brief

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What makes a teacher highly effective?

Between October 2001 and October 2002, Chattanooga's (Tenn.) Public Education Foundation studied the experiences, beliefs, credentials, and practices of 92 elementary and middle school teachers. The purpose of this research, funded by The Lyndhurst Foundation, was to determine the qualities a highly effective teacher possesses and to help the countywide school district recruit, train and retain quality teachers.

Seventy elementary teachers and 22 middle school teachers were selected to participate in the yearlong study as a result of their students' achievement in the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System, or they were selected by their principals as being highly effective. These highly effective teachers offered a remarkably similar picture when asked to define the characteristics of an excellent teacher. Over and over again, the teachers noted the need for a high degree of flexibility, excellent management skills, caring, respect and love for students, and high expectations and standards for themselves and their students.

The researchers who conducted observations found the teachers' classrooms to be quite similar in a number of interesting ways:

- student work could be found everywhere, inside the classroom, outside the door and, in some cases, in the hallway;
- the teachers did not stand still and lecture; they covered every part of the room and monitored every activity that took place;
- multiple small group activities were often found in their classrooms, with the traditional arrangement of desks in rows practically non-existent;
- students in their classes were at ease asking questions and commenting on statements made by teachers and other students;
- expectations for the students were clearly stated and exemplars of previous years' assignments were shown to students as models of what to produce;
- the organization of the rooms and the lessons was clearly evident. Materials were easily accessible when needed and no class time was wasted from lack of preparation.

Source: Public Education Foundation of Hamilton County, Tenn., at www.pefchattanooga.org/www/docs/2.

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Proficiency testing month March is the spring testing month for Ohio proficiency tests. Have your curriculum director make a presentation to the board on the district's plan to improve proficiency test scores this year.

Are our schools effective? Board members throughout the nation are struggling with this question, "Are our schools effective?" The Effective Schools Products Ltd. published a paper written by Lawrence W. Lezotte, "Revolutionary and Evolutionary: The Effective Schools Movement," which could serve as a good basis for a work session discussion. To obtain a free copy, visit: www.effectiveschools.com/free.stuff.html and click on the link at the end of the line under "Revolutionary and Evolutionary: The Effective Schools Movement."

Calamity days and learning If your district closed for a number of days due to snow or ice storms this winter, have the superintendent explain the correlation of attendance and student achievement. Discuss the district's plan to make up calamity days.

ACT & SAT prep School districts are often judged by their students' success on the ACT and SAT college entrance exams. Let the high school guidance department share what steps it takes to prepare your students for these important tests.

Promote your fine arts March is a good time to highlight the achievements of your district's fine arts programs. Stage a fine arts open house to showcase a variety of your different arts programs. Organize displays of artwork and performances from choral groups, drama classes and musical ensembles, then recognize each for their contributions to your district's student achievements. This would be a perfect time for the district to present the Outstanding Student Achievement pin to students who excel.

Student achievement research brief

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Do high-stakes tests really measure student proficiency?

The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a New York think tank, asked the question, “Do high-stakes tests really measure student proficiency?” The answer, according to *Civic Report* 33, is maybe.

The study of two state and seven school districts, representing 9% of the nation’s public school enrollment (including Toledo City and Fairfield City), was conducted by three Manhattan Institute researchers and reviewed by Chester E. Finn Jr., a known critic of public education. The researchers looked for schools that used both standardized tests to reward or sanction schools for academic performance (high-stakes tests) and “other standardized tests not used for accountability purposes” (low-stakes tests).

The study found that there was a very strong population-adjusted average correlation (0.88) between high- and low-stakes test score levels, and a moderate average correlation (0.45) between the year-to-year score gains on high- and low-stakes tests (if both tests produced identical results, the correlation would be 1.00).

<i>State/district</i>	<i>correlation between high- and low-stakes test score levels</i>	<i>correlation between the year-to-year gains on high- and low-stakes tests</i>
Florida	strong/0.96	strong/0.71
Virginia	strong/0.77	weak/0.17
Chicago, Illinois	strong/0.88	none-0.02
Boston, Massachusetts	strong/0.75	moderate/0.27
Toledo, Ohio	strong/0.79	weak/0.14
Fairfield, Ohio	moderate/0.49	moderate negative/-0.56
Blue Valley, Kansas	moderate/0.53	weak/0.12
Columbia, Missouri	strong/0.82	weak negative/-0.14
Fountain Fort Carson, Colorado	moderate/0.35	weak/0.15

The researchers said that where there is a high correlation between high- and low-stakes test results, the high-stakes do not distort test results, and where there is a low correlation, they are significantly less confident in the validity of the high-stakes test results. They never explain the reason the correlation between the year-to-year gains might be low or weak. For the complete report, visit: www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_33.htm.

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Education Vital Signs

This month's *Success* mailing includes a copy of the special *American School Board Journal's Education Vital Signs 2003*. OSBA is providing a copy to each student achievement liaison as a resource to help keep each board of education focused on student achievement. Please review this valuable publication and share the most important information with your fellow school board members.

Will budget cuts affect your students' success?

Board members are given the tough assignment of setting priorities and maintaining academic excellence with fewer dollars coming from the state. Ask your superintendent how the state's fiscal crisis will affect classroom instruction, especially your efforts to boost student achievement.

Don't be left behind

The No Child Left Behind Act has dramatic implications for public education. Unfortunately, the sheer size of the legislation is leaving many educators and board members behind in understanding exactly what the law means. OSBA created a publication, *No Board Member Left Behind*, to help members better digest the new law. You can find the newsletter in every other *Briefcase* issue. Please encourage your board, superintendent and treasurer to read each issue and follow up on the links to valuable Web sites.

Looking beyond the district boundaries

All eyes are focused overseas right now. It is a good time to share the positive stories of international cooperation. If your district has foreign exchange students, ask them and their sponsor families to come to a board meeting and share their experiences in your schools.

Spring trips are valuable

Field trips are always eye-opening experiences for students and staff. Have an administrator and teacher make a presentation to the board on their educational value. Also, discuss any changes to your policy if you have revised field trip policies as a result of the heightened national security.

Helping students understand the conflict in Iraq

Whether part of the curriculum or not, current events in Iraq and elsewhere in the the Middle East are sure to come up in your district's classrooms. This month, Success brings you resources recommended by TeachersFirst.com to help students during this time.

There is a wide range of opinions about the United States' course of action in this conflict. All of these beliefs are held sincerely, and they deserve our respect. We also know that, now that the United States has committed its military forces, Americans will want to encourage and support them.

Any disagreement is an opportunity for thinking, teaching and learning. And, any steps that can ease students' fears and concerns will help them remain focused on academic achievement. Students will have many questions. **Success** hopes these resources help them find answers.

The following links offer some age-appropriate resources to help students understand the various points of view on this issue. All links can be accessed through the TeachersFirst on Iraq Web site: www.teachersfirst.com/iraq.html.

- “Helping Children Cope with War and Terrorism”: A very helpful article for teachers and parents, especially those who work with younger children. TeachersFirst.com developed this article in cooperation with the National Association of School Psychologists.
- Operation Dear Abby: A Web site that lets users send e-mail to support service members deployed overseas. Those sending the message can pick the service branch to which they send e-mail, but not the individual service member. This is one that even younger students can use effectively.
- Support Our Troops: This U.S. Department of Defense page offers a variety of ways that users can support troops overseas — from simply sending e-mail to donating a phone calling card or sending a “virtual thank you card.” This is another site that some students may want to try.
- When a Parent is Called: When a reservist is called to active duty, it places additional strains on families, relationships, finances and more. Here are some ideas that can help children and families manage the long separations and look forward to the parent's return.
- How to Watch the News: Tips for young people on how to watch the news and get a more complete understanding of world events.

Source: TeachersFirst on Iraq at www.teachersfirst.com/iraq.html

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Celebrate your best

May is traditionally filled with academic recognition events throughout America's schools. Promote all your district events in school and community newsletters. Place signs inside buildings and on lawns near your driveways announcing recognition receptions and ceremonies. You can never say too many good things about your district's academic achievers.

Recognize National Honor Society membership

Possibly the top academic honor bestowed upon one of your students is being tapped for induction into the National Honor Society. Have the organization's officers share with the board what it means to be a member, and explain the society's four virtues: scholarship, leadership, character and service.

Report on spring trips

The annual rite of spring trips by school groups was canceled by many districts out of safety concerns. Discuss what your district did and how it affected spring trips to educational sites around the country. If you canceled the trips, remind people why. If you went ahead, explain the extra safety measures taken and the value of such trips.

Feature your ensembles

A school year's worth of instruction, study, practice and more practice culminates for your vocal and musical ensembles in competitions around the state. Feature your high school and middle school ensembles at the May or June board meetings. Invite several groups to perform before the meeting and have the instructor or lead performer tell of their experiences over the school year. Should you sense there might be some tension during your board meeting, have a string quartet perform some soothing Mozart or Beethoven chamber music throughout the meeting.

Enjoy elementary art

A display of elementary student art always brightens a day. Showcase your students' art on easels throughout your board meeting room or board office lobby.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members. Use it to generate discussion with the board and staff.

High poverty school districts can achieve student success, report shows

A new case study report released by the Learning First Alliance shows that five high-poverty school districts raised student achievement by focusing on districtwide strategies to improve instruction. Titled *Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts Can Do to Improve Instruction and Achievement in All Schools*, the report outlines lessons from the five districts and identifies practical steps that school districts can take to move beyond a few excellent schools to success across entire systems.

The five districts studied are: Aldine Independent, Houston; Chula Vista Elementary, California; Kent County, Maryland; Minneapolis; and Providence, R.I. The districts were selected based on their ability to exhibit at least three years of improvement in student achievement in mathematics and/or reading across multiple grades and across all races and ethnicities.

The study findings are particularly useful as school districts work to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, which intensifies the requirement for school districts to raise the achievement of all students.

More specifically, the study findings reveal that the districts:

- had the courage to acknowledge poor student performance and the will to seek effective solutions;
- recognized that to raise student achievement they had to focus more intensively on improving instruction and put in place a coordinated set of strategies to support this work;
- significantly shifted teacher and principal professional development from single-workshop approaches to comprehensive research-based strategies to improve teacher and principal skills;
- based decisions on good data, not instinct, using multiple measures of student and school performance to guide decision-making;
- recognized that no one group could carry the reform alone and engaged everyone — parents, principals, universities, teachers, school board members, unions, central office staff and the community — to improve results for students;
- recognized that there were no quick fixes and showed the patience, hard work, consistency and long-term support necessary for improvement.

Source: Learning First Alliance, www.learningfirst.org/bie/bie.html

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Sell your summer school

The June board meeting is a good time to promote your district's summer school. Invite the director of your summer instructional program to make a presentation to the board and community. Taxpayers like to see their schools being efficiently used year round. If your program is tuition-based, share the financial detail.

Support summer reading programs

Summer reading programs keep students in the learning mode when not in school. If your local library has a reading incentive program, find ways to support it. If it doesn't, create one. You could enlist your building parent-teacher associations to present ribbons to well-read students when they return to school in August, or create an incentive and recognize those achieving an attainable goal. The more one reads, the better a student he or she will be.

Your summer reading assignment

Summer is a good time for you to catch up on your reading as well. A good place to start is OSBA's Student Achievement Initiative Web site: www.osba-ohio.org/SpeakUp.html. There you will find links to a variety of useful Web sites and all of the initiative's resource kits. The National Association of Elementary School Principals also provides a number of valuable links at www.naesp.org/students/sslinks.htm. You might want to give each board member a reading assignment and have them report back to the board at the July and August board meetings.

Student Achievement Fair

Share your success beyond your community. Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2003 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. The lineup for the Student Achievement Fair is now being put together and due to the outstanding response, only a few booths are still available. Contact **Kathy Lasota**, OSBA deputy director of search services and board development, as soon as possible at (614) 540-4000 to learn more about this wonderful opportunity to highlight your district's academic achievement.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members. Use it to generate discussion with the board and staff.

Teacher knowledge and skills are critical to improving student achievement.

The success of your students depends heavily on the teaching ability, skills and subject knowledge of your instructional staff. The Higher Education and Leadership Preparation Inc. of Atlanta recently posted a report by Walter R. Jacobs Jr. called *Seven tips for improving instructional skills: Reminder for teachers*.

These tips are based upon Jacobs' 38 years of observing teachers and tutors, extensive research and professional opinions. "When teachers have a firm foundation of content knowledge and mastery of effective instructional skills, students are very likely to achieve at a high level."

The tips are:

- help students combat fear of academic failure;
- determine grades based upon academic accomplishments rather than on classroom behavior;
- ask questions dealing with "how," "why" and "what if;"
- do not feel compelled to cover all the specific topics in the textbook;
- use state and local standards to promote what your students need to know and be able to do in a "global community;"
- build on what your students know; respect diversity of opinions;
- especially in language arts, emphasize reading as a "literacy experience."

The report's final tip emphasizes the value of teaching reading, "... all instruction should involve the teaching of reading! Reading is important in science, mathematics, social studies, foreign languages and fine arts. It is critical for academic achievement in English/language arts."

Source: Higher Education and Leadership Preparation, www.helpforschool.com/. Click on "Improving Instructional Skills" to download complete report.

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Your summer reading assignment

Summer is a good time to catch up on **your** reading and a good place to start is the National Center for Education Statistics' just-released report, *The Condition of Education 2003*. This report summarizes important developments and trends in education. It is full of interesting information, including a study on full-day kindergarten. The 2003 print edition includes 44 indicators in six main areas. You can download the report at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003067>.

OSBA offers resources

One valuable part of the OSBA Student Achievement Initiative is the SALT resource page, www.osba-ohio.org/SpeakUp.html. Visit it to find a listing of informative links to other sites featuring student achievement and all the resource kits produced as part of the initiative. New student achievement liaisons should plan to spend some time touring the links and downloading resource kits for their own files.

Do a search

While using the Internet to check out the SALT Web site, why not fire up your favorite search engine and do a search on "student achievement"? Google.com found 1.9 million sites on that subject. Many sites offer reports, presentations and resources to download; some are state and district sites featuring student achievement and some are simply essays on the subject. Most provide food for thought.

Military newspaper says funding helps achievement

The *Stars and Stripes* Pacific edition, in late June, touted the success of the eighth-grade students in overseas Department of Defense Schools (DODS). They outperformed their U.S.-based peers for a first-place finish in reading comprehension in the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress, while DODS fourth-grade readers took fifth place overall. **Sheridan Pearce**, president of the Federal Education Association, a group of educators who work in DODS, told the newspaper, "DOD schools also are fortunate in that they are adequately funded, which ensures students don't suffer shortages of basic materials that often plague budget-crunched public schools."

Student achievement research brief

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Changing school start times to later in the day improves student attendance.

University of Minnesota researchers found that teenagers attend school more if school doesn't start so early. The UM Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) studied the Minneapolis School District, which had changed high school start times from 7:15 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. in 1997. The school day's end was pushed back from 1:45 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. The study was based upon the 1995 to 2000 school years using data on 50,962 students enrolled in seven high schools.

They found that attendance rates for all students in grades nine, 10 and 11 improved significantly in the years from 1995–2000. The greatest rate of improvement is for ninth grade students, where the daily rate of attendance went from 83%-87% after the later start was initiated. Attendance rates appear to improve as the grade of the student rises (11th graders have better attendance than 9th graders).

The percentage of high school students who were continuously enrolled in the district or in the same school rose significantly since the 1995–96 school year. For example, the percentage of 10th graders who were continuously enrolled went from 55% in 1995–96 to 67% in 1999–2000. Concurrently, the percentage of students who are not continuously enrolled has significantly decreased. This means that an increasing number of students are staying in the same school or in the same district for two or more years. And the number of students who move in and out of the district or move from school to school is in steady decline.

The researcher faced numerous obstacles to obtaining “clean data” in conducting the study. The ultimate findings from the analysis of the letter grades earned by students in grades nine-12 in the three years prior to the change versus the grades earned in the three years after the change revealed a slight improvement in grades earned overall, but the differences were not statistically significant.

Minneapolis high school students continue to get an hour's more sleep each school night (or five more hours sleep per week) than students whose high schools begin an hour earlier than Minneapolis schools. This supports medical researchers' finding that nearly all teenagers become sleepy at about 11 p.m. It also lays to rest the fears and expectations that a later start would mean that Minneapolis students would just end up staying up an hour later on school nights.

Source: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement,
www.education.umn.edu/CAREI/Programs/start_time/2001exec_sum.html.

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Ready for new report cards? In mid-August, the Ohio Department of Education will issue district report cards, which are in a new format. Even though preliminary (unverified) data was released earlier this summer to newspapers, reporters will be calling to ask why your district received the rating it did. If your results are not positive, the community won't want to hear excuses, but rather what the district is doing to raise student achievement. All board members and staff need to be well versed. Develop a consistent message and provide the board and staff with bulleted talking points to help them to be credible spokespersons.

Budgets affect student achievement Student success is dependent upon the resources available. Ohio's state budget crisis is hurting many districts' ability to continue new programs aimed at raising student achievement. Ask your superintendent to report to the board how the changes in state funding are affecting your district's efforts to better educate children. Share this information with staff before presenting to the public.

Do a community poll Each September, Phi Delta Kappa releases its annual Gallup Polls of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Since the format changes little from year-to-year, why not conduct a community survey, asking similar questions? Then report the results of your survey.

Athletes excel academically Students involved in co-curricular activities regularly outperform their classmates in the classroom. As fall sports gear up, ask your high school and middle school counselors to report the average grades received by athletes, thespians, band, choir and other co-curricular participants.

School will soon be back With most school districts beginning classes in August, recognize that teachers and administrators have been working hard over the summer to improve your academic programs. Ask key staff members to report to the board what is in store for students when they return to the classroom.

Student achievement research brief

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Helping you understanding research with 10 tips for advocates and policymakers.

For over two years, OSBA has provided members monthly snippets of research in each **Success** issue. Just what does the research mean? How should board members and administrators interpret research when making policy decisions? Those are tough questions.

The Voices for America's Children, formerly called the National Association of Child Advocates, offers some answers in its electronic publication **Understanding research: Top 10 tips for advocates and policymakers**. The publication raises the issue of determining if a given research project is one that you can trust. If you use research to measure the effectiveness of policies and programs in your district, you indeed need to be able to decide if research is good and appropriate for you to use in decision making.

Briefly, the top 10 tips to judge a research project's credibility are:

- consider the source;
- media is also a source to be evaluated;
- has the research been published and where?;
- research results are really about the topic *as measured*, not as we may think of it;
- different types of research have different strengths;
- sampling is more important than sample size;
- statistical significance explained;
- research findings are about groups;
- all research is not created equal;
- any one study is not the whole story.

The factsheet's author, Dr. Stephanie A. Schaefer, provides additional suggestions and questions to ask for each of the above tips, and further explains the significances of each one.

Source: Voices for America's Children,
www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Child_Advocacy_Institute/Research5/Data_and_Research.htm (report is available to download under the heading "Translating Research into Advocacy," which in the middle of the page)

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Beyond Islands of Excellence for you

This month's *Success* mailing is the Learning First Alliance's *Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts Can Do to Improve Instruction and Achievement in All Schools — A Leadership Brief* book. OSBA's Student Achievement Leadership Team distributes a thought-provoking publication to district student achievement liaisons quarterly. New for this quarterly mailing is a summarization of the publication we have enclosed. This new summary comes from a recommendation of the Student Achievement Leadership Team.

Another NCLB resource

In addition to the many resources listed in the recent OSBA *Adequate Yearly Progress Communication Toolkit* that was mailed last month, the Public Education Network has an 80-page guide, *How To Engage The Public*. This guide was created for community leaders, parents and educators to use the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to advocate for improved public education. To order or download the publication, visit: www.publiceducation.org/cgi-bin/nclborderform/orderform.asp.

Host a community forum

With the new Ohio school district report cards now including annual yearly progress (AYP) and performance indicators, seize the opportunity to invite community members to a forum to discuss the effects of NCLB. Explain how the new federal law changed the report cards and what your district's strengths and weaknesses are. Share what you are doing to improve student achievement, especially with special-needs students who are now included in accountability data.

Back-to-school nights

Prepare principals and teachers for the onslaught of questions concerning the new report cards, which will come up during the September back-to-school nights. This is the first time the Ohio local school district and building report cards were distributed before the opening of the school year (an NCLB requirement). The inclusion of special-needs students, who may have taken a proficiency test for the first time last school year, is altering building ratings, especially the federal AYP indicator.

Student achievement research brief

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Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools asks about NCLB.

The 35th annual PDK/Gallup Poll of public schools continues its tradition of measuring the pulse of the American people towards public education. The poll's results are released in the *Phi Delta Kappan* magazine. The authors of this year's study of the poll feels the public supports the concept of improving public schools, but are not behind the strategies used in NCLB. They came up with the following general conclusions:

- the public has high regard for the public schools, wants needed improvement to come through those schools, and has little interest in seeking alternatives;
- the public sees itself as uninformed on the NCLB, with 69% saying they lack the information needed to say whether their impression of the act is favorable or unfavorable;
- responses to questions related to strategies associated with NCLB suggest that greater familiarity with the law is unlikely to lead to greater public support;
- the public is concerned about getting and keeping good teachers, thinks teacher salaries are too low, and is willing to see higher salaries paid to teachers teaching in more challenging situations;
- the public continues to believe that closing the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students is important, but blames the gap on factors unrelated to the quality of schooling;
- the public is not convinced that narrowing the achievement gap requires spending more money on low-achieving students;
- a majority of respondents are opposed to vouchers and would oppose having their state adopt them, despite the 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision stating that voucher plans do not violate the U.S. Constitution.

Source: The 35th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0309pol.htm

Success

September 2003

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Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

October 2003

What have you read lately? How much of your board meeting do you really spend discussing academics? Why not add a discussion item to your board agenda to set aside time to examine the latest developments in education? Ask each board member and key administrator to report on what he or she has read about education research and trends. Spending time focusing on improving student achievement is a good investment.

Highlighting achievement The upcoming OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is chock full of student achievement programs. In addition to the instruction, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), student achievement and student issues learning tracks, there is a Pre-conference Workshop on NCLB accountability and a mini workshop on No Board Member Left Behind. Many of the nearly 500 vendors in the trade show offer products and services designed to help schools improve the learning environment. Visit OSBA's Web site (www.osba-ohio.org/CapitalConference/CC2003.html) to plan your conference now.

What was the reaction? What was your community's reaction to the new local school district report cards? At an October school board meeting, discuss the effect of releasing new indicators in the district and building report cards. What are the concerns of parents and nonparents, and what should the board, administration and teachers do to address those concerns?

Telling staff about NCLB Have you thoroughly prepared your administrators and staff on the finer points of NCLB? The accountability portion of the 1,000-plus page law hinges upon regular student achievement for all groups of students. Contact **Rachelle Bristol**, deputy director of legislative services, for information on how OSBA can help you explain NCLB to staff.

Student achievement research brief

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Crossing the bridge to 21st century learning

An organization called Partnership for 21st Century Skills recently published Learning for the 21st Century. In this report, the group offers a guide for education reform it calls milestones for improving learning and education. The partnership focuses not only on what students are learning, but how they are learning.

The report, which claims to complement the No Child Left Behind Act, offers six key elements of learning:

- emphasize core subjects,
- emphasize learning skills,
- use 21st century tools to develop learning skills,
- teach and learn in a 21st century context,
- use 21st century assessments that measure 21 century skills.

To encourage school leaders to get started on developing 21st century schools, the authors offer a road map to build momentum and support for such reform:

- embrace a powerful vision of public education that includes 21st century skills;
- align leadership, management and resources with educational goals;
- use this tool to assess where schools are going;
- develop priorities for 21st century skills;
- develop a professional development plan for 21st century skills;
- make sure students have equitable access to a 21st century education;
- begin developing assessments to measure student progress in 21st century skills;
- collaborate with outside partners;
- plan collaboratively and strategically for the future.

Source: Partnership for 21st Century Skills, www.21stcenturyskills.org/reports/default.asp

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November 2003

Plan your conference student achievement activities

OSBA has planned a number of student achievement activities during Capital Conference. A special flier is enclosed in this month's Success mailing highlighting all the special programs for you. With up to four student-related breakout sessions at seven different times, you will need to coordinate with your fellow board members and administrators to attend as many sessions as possible.

Student Achievement Liaison breakfast

Don't miss the Student Achievement Liaison breakfast at 7:45 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 11, in the Terrace Ballroom. Please attend. To register in advance: contact **Suzanne Resko**, OSBA workshop specialist, at (800) 589-OSBA, (614) 540-4000 or s_resko@osba-ohio.org by Nov. 5.

Outstanding Student Achievement pins

The SALT team will be distributing a unique academic recognition pin to liaisons attending the SALT breakfast on Tuesday, Nov. 11. These pins were designed for OSBA members to honor their students. Stop by the bookstore to purchase a supply of pins to give to your students.

Student Achievement Fair

If you have a program exhibiting at the OSBA Student Achievement Fair on Tuesday (noon to 4 p.m.), make sure you visit the booth and let those from your district know how proud you are of them. Then tour the fair to watch, listen and learn what others are doing.

Student entertainment

Five performing groups from around the state will display their talents during the Fair. Each group will perform for 20 minutes in the middle of the fair's exhibit area. The groups, their region and starting times are:
Lakota Local (Sandusky) — Show Choir, NW, 12:15 p.m.
Elyria City — The Westwood Signers, NE, 12:55 p.m.
Gahanna-Jefferson City — Chorale, C, 1:35 p.m.
Warren Local (Washington) — Handbell Choir, SE, 2:15 p.m.
Vandalia-Butler City — The Butler Kickline, SW, 2:55 p.m.

Student Achievement Fair participants

Central Region

Buckeye Valley Local (Delaware), booth 1747; Canal Winchester Local (Franklin), booths 1806 & 1811; Columbus City, booths 1944 & 1955; Crestline EV, booth 1900; Delaware ACC, booth 1910; Lancaster City, booths 1815 & 1803; Licking Valley Local (Licking), booth 1810; London City, booth 1852; Northmor Local (Morrow), booth 2048; Ontario Local (Richland), booth 2046; Whitehall City, booth 1755.

Northeast Region

Brecksville-Broadview Heights City, booth 1814; Brown Local (Carroll), booth 1818; Buckeye Local (Medina), booth 1741; Champion Local (Trumbull), booth 2052; Cuyahoga Falls City, booths 1854 & 1844; Cuyahoga Heights Local (Cuyahoga), booth 1709; Cuyahoga Valley JVSD, booth 1713; Elyria City, booths 1905; Euclid City, booth 1707; Harrison Hills City, booth 1946; Indian Creek Local (Jefferson), booth 1908; Jefferson County JVSD, booth 1850; Lorain County JVSD, booth 1812; North Olmsted City, booth 1745; Northwestern Local (Wayne), booth 2010; Painesville Township Local (Lake), booth 1909; Parma City, booth 2004; Portage County ESC, booth 1953; Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City, booth 2008; South Euclid-Lyndhurst City, booths 1959 & 1950; Springfield Local (Summit), booth 1948; Streetsboro City, booth 1859; Summit County ESC, booth 1711; Wickliffe City, booths 1911 & 1902.

Northwest Region

Allen East Local (Allen), booth 1951; Apollo JVSD, booth 1847; Bluffton EV, booth 1904; Central Local (Defiance), booth 1912; Eastwood Local (Wood), booth 2000; Elida Local (Allen), booth 1849; Hopewell-Loudon Local (Seneca), booths 1749 & 1759; New Knoxville Local (Auglaize), booth 1848; Old Fort Local (Seneca), booth 1907; Oregon City, booth 1816; Rossford EV, booth 1845; Vanguard-Sentinel JVSD, booths 1853 & 1805; Vermilion Local (Erie), booths 1857 & 1840.

Southeast Region

Eastern Local (Meigs), booth 1809; Fort Frye Local (Washington), booth 1804; Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking), booth 1914; Pike County Area JVSD, booth 1807; Union Local (Belmont), booths 1802 & 1813; West Muskingum Local (Muskingum), booth 1858; Wheelersburg Local (Scioto), booth 1808.

Southwest Region

Beavercreek City, booths 1913 & 1901; Fairborn City, booths 2002 & 2012; Fairfield City, booth 1954; Franklin City, booths 1717 & 2058; Goshen Local (Clermont), booth 1719; Great Oaks ITCD, booths 1957 & 2050; Greene County JVSD, booths 1715 & 1703; Mad River Local (Montgomery), booth 1949; Mason City, booth 2006; Mechanicsburg EV, booth 1753; Miami Valley CTC, booth 1851; Miamisburg City, booth 1842; Mississinawa Valley Local (Darke), booth 1751; New Miami Local (Butler), booths 1958 & 1855; Newton Local (Miami), booth 1956; Piqua City, booths 1743 & 1701; Preble Shawnee Local (Preble), booths 1846 & 1856; Reading Community City, booth 1705; Springfield-Clark County JVSD, booth 1800; Sugarcreek Local (Greene), booth 1903; Tecumseh Local (Clark), booths 1757 & 2056; Valley View Local (Montgomery), 1906; Vandalia-Butler City, booth 1801; Warren County JVSD, booths 1947 & 1952; Winton Woods City, booth 2054.

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Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

December 2003

Capital Conference SALT activities a success

OSBA's student achievement activities during Capital Conference were a success. Thanks to all who participated in the variety of activities, especially those who shared their outstanding programs and performed during the Student Achievement Fair.

Share what you learned

Plan to spend time during a school board meeting discussing the innovations and programs you learned about while at Capital Conference. This is a great opportunity to focus on improving your students' learning experience.

Student activities increase civic engagement

A Portuguese researcher says there's a relationship between student activities and civic engagement. **Isabel Menezes** of Porto University found that participation in extracurricular activities had a positive effect on student civic engagement. The more frequently students were involved in these activities, the higher the expectation that they would participate in future civic activities (such as voting). To read the study, visit www.ascd.org/publications/researchbrief/volume1/v1n23.html.

SALT Resource Kit enclosed

A resource kit to help schools improve their student achievement programs is enclosed in this month's mailing. It includes a variety of tips and ideas to help focus your district's efforts to improve student achievement.

Next year's student achievement liaison

Are you planning to continue serving as your district's student achievement liaison? Great, if you are! If not, plan to discuss the position and its importance at your next school board meeting. You may wish to identify an interested board member to take over in 2004. The student achievement liaison's job description is included in the enclosed resource kit.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members. Use it to generate discussion with the board and staff.

Fostering success in middle schools

The National Middle School Association (NMSA) recently released a position paper that offers some insight into successful middle schools. Twenty million American boys and girls attend middle schools. The maturity and developmental levels of these students between the ages of 10 and 15 vary greatly. Their needs are diverse.

In *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*, the association says its vision for successful middle schools is broken down into 14 characteristics. Eight have to do with the school's culture and the remainder deal with academic programs.

NMSA identifies successful schools for young adolescents as being characterized by a culture that includes:

- educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so;
- courageous, collaborative leadership;
- a shared vision that guides decisions;
- an inviting, supportive and safe environment;
- high expectations for every member of the learning community;
- students and teachers engaged in active learning;
- an adult advocate for every student;
- school-initiated family and community partnerships.

NMSA says successful schools for young adolescents provide:

- curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory;
- multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to their diversity;
- assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning;
- organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning;
- schoolwide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness and safety;
- multifaceted guidance and support services.

The National Middle School Association is located in Ohio at 4151 Executive Parkway, Suite 300 Westerville, 43081, and can be contacted by phone at (800) 528-NMSA (6672). This position paper can be downloaded at www.nmsa.org.

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