



Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

January 2004

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.

Plan now for the 2004 Student Achievement Fair

Share your success beyond your community. Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2004 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. The lineup for the Student Achievement Fair is now being assembled. Contact **Kathy LaSota**, OSBA deputy director of search services and board development, as soon as possible at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA 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 6, 2004. The main emphasis of the symposium will be value-added analysis, the statistical methodology that uses individual student achievement data to measure academic gain. Battelle for Kids Executive Director **Jim Mahoney** will be the featured speaker. The symposium will be conducted at Westerville South High School. More information will appear in upcoming *Success*, *Briefcase* and *Journal* issues.

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. For information on School Board Recognition Month, visit OSBA's Web site at: www.osba-ohio.org/sbrm.html.

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.

Can involving students in school reform increase student achievement?

Adam Fletcher says, “yes,” in a 24-page booklet he wrote for the Freechild Project & HumanLinks Foundation. The booklet is designed to acquaint the reader with “Meaningful Student Involvement” (MSI). By engaging all students through MSI, educators and administrators can positively impact all students in a school, he says. It can change the very framework of schooling.

Benefits to students

MSI encourages every student’s personal responsibility and shared accountability with adults. Research demonstrates that students’ attitudes are most affected when students are engaged as contributors to learning communities. For the individual student, meaningful student involvement can:

- encourage motivation, commitment and connection with coursework;
- promote positive academic, social and cultural outcomes;
- develop strong connections to other students and educators;
- enhance lifelong critical-thinking and community-building skills.

Benefits to teachers, administrators and school staff

MSI can support teachers and administrators by building strong relationships and increasing their effectiveness with students. For adults in schools, it can:

- revitalize educators’ love of learning;
- increase educators’ commitment to their students and schools;
- invigorate personalized, effective approaches to school change;
- promote urgency and purpose for the work of teachers and administrators.

Benefits to schools

For the education system at large, engaging students is an invaluable component of the school improvement process. In schools around the nation, MSI can:

- bridge the academic achievement gap;
- develop connections between schools and communities;
- foster dynamic, supportive learning environments;
- engage increasingly diverse student bodies.

Source: *Meaningful Student Involvement: a Guide to Inclusive School Change* can be downloaded from the Freechild Project & HumanLinks Foundation Web site at: www.soundout.org.

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Academic competition teams prepare to compete

If your district sponsors an academic competition program, invite team members to a board meeting. If you are brave, challenge the team to a friendly match with your board. Have some fun by intellectually sparring with your top students. Invite the community and news media to the event. People will be impressed with at least one of the teams.

Proficiency testing time

March brings the annual round of Ohio proficiency testing. Highlight the enhanced preparation your teachers and administrators are doing to help students do well on the tests. Have your curriculum director report to the board and encourage news reporters to cover the story in the classroom. Share with the community and media tips on how parents can help their children do as well as they can on the tests.

Volunteers do make a difference

February is a good time to recognize the work of your volunteers. People from all walks of life give their time to help your at-risk students. These community members have a tremendous impact in the classroom. Let them know how much you appreciate their contributions.

Bring a team to the SALT Symposium

Bring a team of board members and administrators to the free Student Achievement Leadership Team Symposium on Saturday, March 6. The symposium's focus will be value-added analysis, the statistical methodology that uses individual student achievement data to measure academic gain. Battelle for Kids Executive Director **Jim Mahoney** will be the featured speaker. The symposium will be conducted at Westerville South High School. More information will appear in the Feb. 2 *Briefcase*.

Athletics boosting academics?

Are your athletic booster groups actively promoting academics as part of their mission? Ask the booster president, along with the athletic director and other coaches, to explain their philosophy to the board and administration at the next school board meeting.

Student achievement research brief

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The good news: Student achievement is up

American public school students are doing better in the classroom, according to the American Federation of Teachers' *American Teacher* magazine:

- After declining between 1973 and 1982, math scores for 17-year-olds increased during the 1980s and 1990s on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Reading achievement of 9-year-olds increased significantly from 1971 to 1999, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Some of the most positive results can be seen in the 25% of students who constitute the lowest-performing NAEP reading group. Average reading performance for these students rose through the 1980s and 1990s for white, black and Hispanic students alike.
- The latest results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study show that U.S. fourth-graders performed above the international average in math and science. In science, U.S. fourth-graders ranked second only to Korean students.

There is a connection between school resources and progress, researchers stress in the 2000 RAND report, *Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us*. Differences in NAEP state scores for students with similar families can be explained, in part, by expenditures and how these funds are allocated. "States at the top of the heap generally have lower pupil-teacher ratios in lower grades, higher participation in public prekindergarten programs and a higher percentage of teachers who are satisfied with the resources they are provided for teaching."

- Students are taking more challenging courses. In 1982, only 35% of high school graduates had taken a science class beyond biology. By 1998, roughly 62% of students pursued advanced coursework, with most of the increase attributed to higher participation in chemistry and physics.
- During the past 20 years, NAEP scores of 9-, 13- and 17-year-old public school students have shown more of an upward trend in math and science than the scores of nonpublic school students.
- In 2002, 46% of that year's high school graduates took the SAT — the highest percentage ever, including an all-time high of 35% of minority students.
- In 1985–86, just over 7,000 high schools offered Advanced Placement (AP) classes; in 2001–02, more than 14,000 schools offered AP classes for nearly one million candidates.
- More students go on to college. From 1972 to 2000, the percentage of students who went on to college the next fall increased from 49% to 63%. The biggest gains were seen among blacks.

Source: AFT, www.aft.org/publications/american_teacher/apr03/achievement.html.

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Student Achievement Fair application deadline looms

You have until March 31 to nominate one of your outstanding academic programs for the 2004 SALT Student Achievement Fair at the OSBA Capital Conference. The Nov. 9 fair showcases 100 creative, successful academic achievement programs from around Ohio. See the latest *Briefcase* for an application form or contact **Kathy LaSota**, deputy director of search services and board development, at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or k_lasota@osba-ohio.org.

Answers to questions on proficiency testing

March is proficiency testing time in Ohio. Board members often are asked questions about these high-stakes tests. One good source for answers can be found on the Ohio Department of Education's proficiency testing page (www.ode.state.oh.us/proficiency).

Creative clubs boost knowledge

Does your school district have any creative clubs that increase student achievement? A Seattle-area school, Aki Kurose Middle School, has a Vocabulary Club, which challenges members to learn 200 new words. (http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/160811_vocabulary16.html). If your district has such a club, feature it at a future board meeting. If not, encourage your teachers to create fun-filled opportunities outside the school day to challenge students academically.

Performers needed

OSBA is looking for outstanding performing groups for the 2004 SALT Student Achievement Fair at the OSBA Capital Conference. Five groups will entertain conference attendees for 20 minutes each during the afternoon. To nominate a group, contact **Al Meloy**, deputy director of search services and board development, at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or a_meloy@osba-ohio.org.

Education Vital Signs

Enclosed with *Success* is a complimentary copy of the *American School Board Journal's Education Vital Signs 2004*. It contains interesting information and statistics on academic achievement across the nation.

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Closing the achievement gap

Closing the achievement gap between groups of students is a goal that needs to have the highest of priorities in our nation's schools. Improving learning opportunities for all children will require more than a school-by-school effort. Rather, it will demand systemwide approaches. Substantial gains will result only if we recognize that, to increase student achievement, we must improve instruction and commit the political will and resources necessary to develop effective strategies and solutions.

State leaders need greater knowledge about where to target resources and how to set policy to support entire school systems. Local leaders need guidance about the practices that will improve instruction. And, community members need good ideas about how to support high-quality teaching and learning most effectively.

Learning First Alliance leaders spent a great deal of time visiting school districts and conducting interviews to determine strategies that had the greatest impact on student achievement and instruction. As a result of those efforts, seven factors emerged as essential:

- districts had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions;
- districts put in place a systemwide approach to improving instruction — one that articulated curricular content and provided instructional support;
- districts instilled visions that focused on student learning and guided instructional improvement;
- districts made decisions based on data, not instinct;
- districts adopted new approaches to professional development that involved a coherent and district-organized set of strategies to improve instruction;
- districts redefined leadership roles;
- districts committed to sustaining reform over the long haul.

As we attempt to redefine school and district leadership roles, there must be efforts to ensure that stakeholders — boards, central offices, unions, principals, teachers and teacher leaders, universities, and parent and community leaders — are engaged in the roles that they are best positioned to lead.

Source: *Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts Can Do to Improve Instruction and Achievement in All Schools*, www.learningfirst.org

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Add some spirit to your board agenda

Many arts programs are wrapping up their performance projects in the spring, so this is a good time to feature student performances at your board meeting. Invite a musical group to sing or play a couple of selections for the April board meeting. Or, you could have a theatrical group give a reading or stage a short act from a play it is doing.

Ohio School Improvement Institute

The Ohio School Improvement Institute will be held in Columbus at the Adam's Mark Hotel on June 10 and 11. To learn more about the conference, which is sponsored by the High Schools That Work, Ohio College Tech Prep Consortia, Ohio Board of Regents and Ohio Department of Education, visit www.hstwohioregions.org.

Boost your boosters

When was the last time you publicly thanked all those community members who so strongly support your schools? Have the leader of your PTA, PTO or academic boosters give a five-minute report to the board on the success of their efforts. Then thank them for all they do to help kids succeed. As a board, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper thanking those who add so much to your educational program. Consider hosting a breakfast to recognize the contributions of these people.

Honoring academic achievement

Each spring your district will conduct a number of academic honors ceremonies. Ask the superintendent to provide the board with a list of such events, then arrange for at least one school board member to attend each program to show your support for academic achievement.

Vocational competition

Does your district have students competing in the Ohio SkillsUSA state vocational education competition April 23–24 in Columbus? If so, invite those students to a board meeting to recognize them and learn more about their outstanding work. After the state contests, do the same for students who might be going on to compete at the national level.

Student achievement research brief

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Can the use of technology significantly improve student achievement?

There are new expectations for how technology can be used to engage learning and improvement for students. There is a call for accountability in the use of technology in schools and questions about whether it is a cost-effective way to improve student learning. Schools are using different types of technology, including CD-ROM encyclopedias, network search tools, computer-based laboratories and database management programs.

The importance of all students having equitable access and use of technology cannot be discounted. According to Gaines, Johnson & King and their study “Ensuring Equitable Use of Education Technology,” too often students who would most benefit from technology use — special needs students, minority students, females and disadvantage students — are consigned to less frequent access, older equipment or outdated software applications. Many school districts have restructured the school day providing longer blocks of time so that students can work on projects and improve their use of technology.

School districts should have a clear set of goals and expectations for using technology.

- teachers, students, administrators and parents should have a shared understanding of what skills and abilities are important and how they should be measured;
- representatives of the community and parents should be actively involved in developing a vision for use of technology for student learning;
- technology by itself will not transform student achievement, but must be used in combination with the district's learning goals;
- technology should be integrated into many aspects of teaching and learning across the district;
- administrators, teachers and library personnel should receive ongoing professional development on the various uses of ever-changing technology;
- the district should establish a realistic time frame for improving student achievement with technology;
- parents should be educated about new assessment methods that enable administrators to make judgments about the effectiveness of technology upon student learning.

Source: *Critical Issue: Using Technology to Improve Student Achievement*. More information can be found on the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory web site at www.ncrel.org.

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Honoring student achievers The end of the school year brings many academic award receptions and ceremonies. Assign each board member a different event to cover. Prepare the board by reviewing the awards programs and what steps the district has taken in the past two years to improve student achievement. Provide a few talking points for board members to use should they be asked to speak at the receptions and ceremonies.

Review your CIP Your continuous improvement plan (CIP) serves as the district's roadmap for school improvement. Were the goals set for this past year achieved? Now is a good time to review the progress made and to examine the goals that will be established for the coming school year. You, your administrators and staff have worked hard to raise academic achievement. Give them the opportunity to report what has been accomplished and to detail their vision for the future.

Recognize perfect attendance Many districts recognize perfect attendance because children learn more if they are in school. Going to school regularly will increase student learning and achievement. Is that enough motivation? Try honoring perfect attendance by recognition at board meetings, student assemblies or announcements over the PA. Give them a reward, anything from a pizza party, a book or a chance to "slime" their principal. The Student Achievement Leadership Team has an award pin for recognizing worthy students. Contact Diana Hartings at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA to order the pins.

Student Achievement Fair If you wish to share your success beyond your community by participating in the 2004 Student Achievement Fair and missed the deadline, you are in luck. There are a limited number of booths still available. To showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2004 Student Achievement Fair, which is part of the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show, contact **Kathy LaSota**, OSBA deputy director of search services and board development, (614) 540-4000, as soon as possible.

Student achievement research brief

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Understanding public school accountability

The term accountability will crop up in any discussion dealing with public schools. While everyone clamors for it, the word's definition seems to have many meanings. What exactly is accountability? Accountability is not simply a term that should be applied to a single segment of the school community, but rather that all district stakeholders share in the accountability for student success. As a starting point, the school board and the superintendent should understand their unique responsibility in the accountability process. As reported in NSBA's *The Key Work of School Boards*, a strong accountability process will contain a number of characteristics:

- A strong accountability process that focuses on student results. For education, it is not just about what you did, but more importantly about what difference it made.
- A comprehensive data collection process that is established to answer the question, "How well are we doing?" Access to the data is readily available to all stakeholders, and results are reported in a cumulative format to track progress over time.
- Individual student results are measured against expectations set by district standards. This should not simply be an exercise comparing student performance against the performance of others, but rather against the standards developed by the district for its students.
- All school and district data are publicly reported in a straightforward, easy-to-understand format. Parents should be able to see clearly how their child's performance compares to district standards, as well as to students at the district, state and national levels.
- Student data is analyzed for growth and improvement, not just end results. Multiple pieces of data must be collected and analyzed from many perspectives. While proficiency must be measured, growth is as important a consideration as proficiency when setting up an accountability structure.
- Student results are included as part of staff evaluations. If individual teachers, principals and other staff members are going to be held accountable for student results, it is critical that their impact can be fairly measured. Student progress, annual growth, staff impact and accountability all are uniquely intertwined. That is why annual assessments are so important.
- Student results drive decision making. Accountability occurs when a district uses the information from student results to make educational decisions. Decision making therefore moves from being driven by politics and perceptions to being driven by facts and focus.

Ultimately, responsibility for learning goes from the board and superintendent all the way to, and including, students and parents.

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June resource is online

The usual resource you find in your June Student Achievement Liaison mailing is different this month; it is posted on the OSBA Web site. OSBA filmed James Mahoney, Battelle for Kids executive director, as he explained the Battelle for Kids program. Please see the insert for more information on how to view the video and download the six student achievement guides. Go to www.osba-ohio.org/battelleforkids.htm.

School libraries increase student achievement

Effective school libraries can help students learn, according to a recently released study. The Ohio Educational Library Media Association reported that 13,050 students who responded to a survey indicated that “the school library and its services, including the roles of school librarians, have helped them in some way, regardless of how much, with their learning, in and out of school.” The top five ways students receive help in the library are (in order): getting information, computers, using information, knowledge building and achievement. To view the complete study, visit: <http://www.oelma.org/StudentLearning/SLFindings.asp>.

Summer school report

Many districts have broad summer education programs. Have your summer school director report on this summer’s district activities. Find out what classes are the most effective in improving achievement.

SALT Web page moves

When OSBA redesigned its Web site, the Student Achievement Leadership Team’s Web page moved to: www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.

Student achievement forum is up and running

One new feature of the OSBA Web site is a forum for board members and administrators. Go to the SALT Web page and click on the link below “Student Achievement Forum.” First-time users will need to register, so click on the word “register” at the top and fill in the required information. Post a question, comment or success story, and wait for replies. Encourage all board members to register and participate in discussions on how to improve student achievement.

Student achievement research brief

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National board certification does make a difference in student achievement

In a recent study, an independent research team found that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) are far more likely to improve student achievement than those teachers without such certification. The study measured achievement by North Carolina's standardized testing system.

The research team, which used a sophisticated value-added model built from 600,000 North Carolina elementary student test scores during a 3-year period, was led by labor economist **Dan Goldhaber** of the University of Washington and the Urban Institute. The findings provide direct evidence that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is identifying and certifying teachers who will raise student achievement. The study could be used to put to rest the controversy surrounding the purpose of national certification.

Students of NBCTs scored an average of 7% higher on their year-end reading and math tests than those students who had teachers who had attempted gaining certification, but failed. Lower-income and younger students had gains as high as 15% when taught by an NBCT. This is the first study to link national board certification to student achievement on standardized tests.

The study concluded that NBCTs:

- are more effective at raising student achievement than teachers who pursue, but fail to obtain, NBPTS certification;
- are more effective at raising student achievement — outside of the year in which they apply — than teachers who do not pursue NBPTS certification;
- have a greater impact with younger students;
- have a greater impact with low-income students.

The research also showed a correlation between teacher characteristics and student achievement. The researchers found that “years of teaching experience and having a master’s degree (and a) continuous teaching license from the state” had a positive effect on test scores for reading and math.

Source: Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, Chapel Hill, NC,
www.teachingquality.org/resources/html/NBPTS_Goldhaber.htm

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Community library activities

Public libraries across Ohio offer incentives for children to read while on summer vacation. Invite the chair of your public library's board to a school board meeting to speak on special summer reading programs. This would be an excellent time to learn more about collaborative efforts between the library and your school district.

Leaving gifted and talented students behind

An article in the *Reno Gazette-Journal* asks if public schools are leaving gifted and talented students behind. Reporter **Ray Hagar** writes that the best students might be the ones truly at risk thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act. The story, which looks at the academic as well as the psychological needs of high achievers can be found at: www.rgj.com/news/stories/html/2004/05/22/71373.php.

Strike up a conversation

The new SALT "Student Achievement Forum" is a great place to learn more about what is working in other school districts. You can post a success story or a question. Visit www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm. First-time users will need to register, so click on the word "register" at the top and fill in the required information. Post a question, comment or success story, and wait for replies. Encourage all board members to register and participate in discussions on how to improve student achievement.

Get the latest buzz on public schools

When you are done chatting on OSBA's SALT forum, point your Web browser to the National School Boards Association's daily Weblog BoardBuzz: www.nsba.org/boardbuzz. You will find the latest news, trends and analysis on this page. Highlighted copy in the Weblog will take you to newspaper articles, electronic resources, state school boards associations, or allow you to send an e-mail to an NSBA staff member.

OSBA video updates

Check the OSBA home page for the latest news from OSBA. Every two weeks, an update on public education news is posted. Visit www.osba-ohio.org/ for the latest Ohio education news.

Student achievement research brief

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Solid research equals solid results

Ineffective teaching practices and unproven education theories are among the chief reasons children fall behind and teachers get frustrated. Programs and practices grounded in scientifically based research are not fads or untested ideas; they have proven track records of success. School board members must demand that instructional practices be evidence-based, and direct local funding so that only the best ideas with proven results are introduced into the classroom.

By using solid research we can get the best ideas to kids who will fail without them. For example, an experiment might involve teaching two groups of children to read using different methods and comparing the results to see which method is most successful. Some children will learn to read with a variety of methods. Children having problems learning to read need the most effective methods. Effective teaching and curricula can challenge children and interest them in learning, preventing problems of violence, hyperactivity and misidentification of learning disabilities.

Key characteristics of reliable research

Scientific method — A hypothesis about what works, or how it works, or is formulated. A treatment group and control group are used in a study to try to disprove the hypothesis.

Replicated — Several studies find the same result.

Generalized — Study findings can be applied broadly to students other than the ones studied.

Meets rigorous standards — The study's design, measures and interpretation of results meets rigorous standards of peer review.

Convergent findings — Results found using different approaches all point to the same conclusion.

Using data for board decision making

Is your board ready to talk about what data and reliable evidence is in place to measure whether you are reaching your goals? Asking the following questions will ensure that you are on the right track: Do we have data on student performance related to our goals? Do we examine our data by gender, race and socioeconomics? Do we expect our superintendent to use our student achievement data to plan staff development and reward teacher and staff performance? Do we have an assessment program that is based on district standards and reliable evidence? Does our assessment program have multiple measures, not just a single high-stakes test? Is assessment data provided to teachers and principals in a format that can be used to make informed instructional decisions?

Source: www.ed.gov

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Set a good example, read a book

Americans are reading less “literature,” according to a recent study from the National Endowment for the Arts. The number of nonreading adults increased by more than 17 million between 1992 and 2002. The study says that only 47% of American adults read poems, plays or narrative fiction in 2002. Encourage adults in your community to set a good example and pick up a book to read during the last days of summer.

Google for gifted

Want to know more about gifted education? Fire up your Internet browser, go to www.google.com and search for “gifted education.” You will find over 989,000 sites to visit.

Ready for report cards?

In mid-August, the Ohio Department of Education will issue district report cards. You still have time to brief board members and staff on what to expect on your district report card. Ask your superintendent to prepare a presentation for your August board meeting on what the district did the past year to improve student achievement and why the district earned the “grades” it did on the report card.

Summer in-service summary

Staff development is crucial to improving student achievement and summer is the time many staff members go back to school themselves. Ask the human resources director to give the board (and community) a summary of all the activities the staff participated in this summer to enhance education in the classroom.

Where are your grads going?

One way to highlight your academic successes is to recognize your June graduates and where they plan to further their education. Ask the high school guidance department to share with the board a list of 2004 graduates, and where they are planning to attend college or other post-secondary institution. It might be a good opportunity to invite a recent graduate to a board meeting to tell what his or her public education meant to him or her.

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CSI: public education

How do you use scientific evidence to improve student achievement? The summer *Northwest Education Magazine*, a Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory publication, says the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) challenges educators to use “scientifically based research.” **Steven Nelson**, in his article “The promise of scientific evidence in education,” offers tips on how to use science in applying educational research. Below are ideas to becoming a better consumer of scientifically based research:

Think like a scientist — Pose significant questions that can be investigated empirically. Link research to relevant theory. Use methods that permit direct investigation of the question. Provide a coherent and explicit chain of reasoning. Replicate and generalize across studies. Disclose findings to encourage professional scrutiny and dialogue.

Become a better consumer of research — Use the results of formally tested student performance by your district or state. Use the published findings of empirical research on the instructional practices of others. Rely on justification by proof-of-reason.

Know where and how to find research — Look for user-friendly sources of research, such as: the What Works Clearinghouse (www.w-w-c.org); the National Clearinghouse of Comprehensive School Reform (www.goodschools.gwu.edu); Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (www.nwrel.org); Educational Resources Information Center (www.eric.ed.gov); National Reading Panel (www.nationalreadingpanel.org); Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (www.enc.org); and National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (www.cse.ucla.edu).

Evidence is not enough — Ask the following questions: Is this valid research that is relevant to my work? Is the focus of the research consistent with my audience, setting and approach? Are the potential risks, necessary resources and organizational readiness feasible? How do the research conclusions fit with other substantiated evidence? Is it applicable for taking action at this time?

Be strategic — Be clear and quantitative in documenting the needs of your school and students. Build a compelling case for the best available evidence of what, how and why a proposed intervention should work. Include research references. Describe methods you will use to evaluate a program's effectiveness. Focus attention on full, consistent and true implementation of the program design. In areas that seem to work, focus on building a theory of action among staff members to provide a rationale of why practices logically lead to desired results. Regularly evaluate, debrief and gauge progress. This is the true measure of practitioner research. Share the results of your research with others.

Source: www.nwrel.org/nwedu/09-04/promise.php

Success

August 2004

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Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

September 2004

Lofty education standards require stable state funding

Seattle Times Columnist Susan Byrnes writes, “Public schools are doing some things right. But the challenges are daunting.... Alone, money will not boost student achievement. Some of the most important ingredients in successful schools cannot be bought: a culture of high expectations, exemplary leaders, devoted, high-quality teachers and dedicated parents. But money buys some things that work: preschool for disadvantaged children, full-day kindergarten, teacher training and incentives to attract the best instructors to challenging schools, smaller class sizes, and extra help for students who need it most.” Read the entire editorial at: http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/opinion/2001997846_susan06.html.

Creative career/technical programs spotlighted

Innovative career/technical programs are featured in the Student Achievement Leadership Team’s Resource Kit #8, which is enclosed with this month’s *Success* mailing. After reading the kit, plan to discuss ways you can adapt successful ideas into your schools.

Public Education (does) Matter

If you feel public education does indeed matter, then bring a team to the Public Education Matters forum in your area. The Sept. 29, 2004, forums will be held in each of Ohio’s 33 State Senate districts, beginning at 7 p.m. Be ready to discuss public education’s successes and significant challenges. Sites have changed since the Aug. 30 *Briefcase*. Visit OSBA’s Web site for an up-to-date listing of locations. Please check it before attending the forum nearest you.

More info on report cards

The Ohio Department of Education’s Web site provides a wealth of information on all school buildings’ and districts’ report cards. The *Media Guide* does an excellent job of explaining this year’s report card and Ohio’s accountability system. To obtain additional information and download the guide, visit: www.ode.state.oh.us/news/onlinemediaroom/2004lrc.asp.

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.

National ACT scores have risen

As we start the new school year, the National School Boards Association is reporting that, for the first time in seven years, national ACT scores have risen.

“It is encouraging to see national ACT scores rise after several years of relative stability,” said **Richard L. Ferguson**, ACT’s chief executive officer. “We still have a long way to go, however, in making sure students graduate from high school with the skills they need to succeed in college, particularly in science and math.”

The exam was taken by nearly 1.2 million graduates in the class of 2004 — four out of every 10 high school graduates throughout the nation. The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test made up of four separate exams in English, reading, mathematics and science. The ACT is the nation’s most widely accepted college admission and placement exam, and is scored on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 the highest possible score.

Key points:

- The average national composite score rose by one-tenth of a point to 20.9, a “statistically significant” increase from 2003.
- The average national composite score rose for the first time since 1997.
- Approximately 1.2 million students took the 2004 ACT, matching last year’s total, which was an all-time high. This represents approximately 40% of the 2004 high school graduates.
- Scores for females and most minority students increased, with African-American students making the largest gain.
- Fewer than half of students are ready for college biology and algebra courses.

State-by-state scores on the ACT, like the SAT, can vary depending on the percentage of students who actually take the test. Comparisons between states are not truly accurate because of these wide discrepancies. For example, Mississippi’s average composite score of 18.8 on the 2004 test cannot fairly be compared to Vermont’s average composite score of 22.7, because 91% of Mississippi’s graduates took the test, while just 12% of Vermont’s graduates did so.

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Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

October 2004

Changing your culture is easier said than done

Change is never easy, especially in education. Striving for academic success often means changing the culture of the district. **Paul Kelleher** and **Marya R. Levenson** look at changes in school and district cultures in the September *School Administrator*. The authors suggest that it often is easier to change the culture by opening up a school or school district to more shared-decision making than it is to confront the challenges of creating a culture of shared accountability. To read the article, visit: www.aasa.org/publications/sa/2004_09/colkelleher.htm.

Student Achievement Fair

If your district is one of the exhibitors showcasing an innovative program at the OSBA Capital Conference Student Achievement Fair, invite your representatives to the fair to attend a board meeting. Have them make a presentation to share with the board and community about why your program is so successful.

Plan your conference

The upcoming OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is chock full of student achievement programs, including: No Child Left Behind, student achievement and student issues learning tracks. Many of the nearly 500 trade show vendors offer products and services designed to help schools improve the learning environment. Visit OSBA's Web site (www.osba-ohio.org/CapitalConference/CC2004.html) to plan your conference now.

Visited the Web site lately?

OSBA's student achievement Web page is full of information and links to even more information. Encourage board members, administrators and teachers to visit www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.

Achievement pins

Ever wish to recognize students for their classroom success? The Student Achievement Leadership Team has lapel pins that you can buy to give to those who deserve a pat on the back. Contact **Diana Hartings** (d_hartings@osba-ohio.org or (614) 540-4000 ext. 113) to order.

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.

Principals must be strong instructional leaders

In order to be truly accountable for student progress, boards of education have a critical role in assuring that leadership for all students in their district will be led by competent instructional leaders. While we take for granted that our teachers will be well-versed in effective instruction and assessment practices, too often we find that our building principals are engaged in managing buildings, rather than leading them.

In order for a school to improve instruction and student achievement, the principal must be a strong instructional leader. This does not mean that the principal will be the only instructional leader in the school. Instructional leadership is a collaborative process and all those in a leadership role must take responsibility for how students are progressing. Expectations for student performance have never been greater. Neither have the consequences for ineffective leadership.

The research tells us that to be effective, principals must possess essential knowledge and skills. Some of those skills include:

- having a deep understanding of literacy, learning, curriculum and content standards;
- being able to organize a school for improved instruction and student achievement;
- having a deep understanding of effective teaching practices;
- being able to judge quality teaching and provide teachers and other staff with constructive feedback that leads to improved performance;
- having a deep understanding of data-based decision making (including formative and summative assessments);
- being able to analyze and use a variety of data about the learning and teaching process in order to pinpoint school improvement targets, organize efforts for increased student achievement and coordinate professional development for staff and self;
- having a deep understanding of school improvement and instructional collaboration processes;
- being able to create or re-create a school culture centered on learning for students and staff;
- having a deep understanding of learning and instructional accountability for all stakeholders;
- being able to lead a reciprocal process in which principals are responsible to staff for conditions of effective professional learning; staff are responsible to the principal for conditions of increased student learning; students are responsible to the teachers for the self-management of learning; teachers are responsible to students for the best teaching; and parents are responsible to the school for active participation in their children's schooling; and the school is responsible to parents for quality programs.

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Success

Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

November 2004

Student achievement activities abound

The OSBA Capital Conference is full of student achievement activities. Check out all of them in the special flier enclosed in this month's *Success* mailing. With 30 student achievement-related learning sessions offered at seven different times throughout the conference, you will need to coordinate with your district's management team to attend as many sessions as possible.

Student achievement liaison breakfast for you

Don't miss the Student achievement liaison breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 9, in Room E 150 (a new location). Please attend the 45-minute program. To register in advance, contact **Debbie Beckman**, OSBA administrative assistant, at (800) 589-OSBA, (614) 540-4000 or d_beckman@osba-ohio.org by Nov. 3.

Recognition pins

The SALT team created a colorful recognition pin to honor students for their academic achievement. Many board members buy a supply of these pins to hand out to their district's students throughout the year. Stop by the OSBA Bookstore to purchase some SALT pins for your district. An order form is included in this mailing.

Student Achievement Fair

If you have a program exhibiting at the OSBA Student Achievement Fair on Tuesday, Nov. 9 (noon to 4 p.m.), make sure you visit the booth and let those from your district know how proud you are of them.

Student entertainment

Five performing groups from around Ohio will display their talents during the fair. Each group will perform for 30 minutes in the middle of the fair. The groups, their regions and starting times are: **Coldwater EV** — High School Symphonic Choir, NW, 12:15 p.m.; **Wynford Local (Crawford)** — Sixth-Grade Xylophone/Drum Ensemble, Cen., 12:55 p.m.; **Zanesville City** — High School Devilettes, SE, 1:35 p.m.; **Champion Local (Trumbull)** — Middle School Jazz Band, NE, 2:15 p.m.; **Piqua City** — High School Show Choir "The Company," SW, 2:55 p.m.

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.

Is money for early childhood learning the most bang for the buck?

One of the most debated topics this year not only at the State Board level, but also with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Financing Student Success, centers on early childhood learning. There have been many discussions leaning toward recommending additional funding increases to three- and four-year olds in preschool programs. The Ohio Department of Education has estimated that early childhood intervention will cost around \$9,073 per child.

Many of the findings are coming from a report titled "Financing Universal Early Care in Education for America's Children Project," written by **Richard Brandon** and **Sharon Kagan**. In their report, they estimated practical solutions based upon how many children from families of different income levels, racial and ethnic groups, special physical needs and urban/rural residences, and how they were financed under different childhood policies. Ultimately, the authors want detailed estimates and to have an informed policy debate for financing better universal early care education for America's children.

To view the full report, go to <http://www.hspc.org/publications/pdf/pub-polbrief.pdf>

The State Board of Education has just endorsed a plan to boost the early learning program line item by 272% in the first year, for a total funding of \$90 million a year. These early learning programs would target children and families below 185% of the poverty line. Also under the plan, the state would serve an additional 11,500 three- and four-year olds in preschool programs. The focus upon additional monies going into early childhood learning has been supported by recent research showing that early intervention funding is the best way to make the most difference in a child's education.

The major components of the total costs are:

Basic early education	\$6,525
Family and community liaison	1,185
Administration at 10%	771
Transportation with 10% administration	<u>592</u>
Total costs	\$9,073

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Timely tips for OSBA Student Achievement Liaisons

December 2004

Capital Conference SALT activities a success

OSBA's student achievement activities during the Capital Conference were a success. **Thanks to all who participated** in the variety of activities, especially those who shared their outstanding programs, displayed their award-winning art, or performed during the sixth annual 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 the Capital Conference, or submit an article to your community newspaper. This is a great way to focus on improving your students' learning experience.

Plan now for the 2005 Student Achievement Fair

Share your success beyond your community. Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2005 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. The lineup for the Student Achievement Fair is now being assembled. Applications are currently available on the OSBA Web site (www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm) and will be in the December OSBA *Journal*. **Sign up now to highlight your district's academic achievement.**

Capital Conference workshop handouts available online

The OSBA Capital Conference was full of student achievement activities. With 30 student achievement-related learning sessions, we want to make sure you have every opportunity to get the material from each session. Along with the student achievement and student issues learning tracks, **most workshop handouts from the 2004 OSBA Capital Conference now are available online.** You can download copies at www.osba-ohio.org/CC2004/handouts.htm.

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 2005. The student achievement liaison's job description can be found at www.osba-ohio.org/saliaison.htm.

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.

How do I help my child succeed?

Board of education members and school staff often hear this question from parents. All of the research indicates that parents can have a major impact on the success of their child in school. As school officials, our message to parents should be that you can help your child succeed by providing a home that encourages learning and supports your child's physical, mental and emotional development. And, you can help your child succeed by working with the school and other community groups that have an impact on your child.

As a parent, you are the most important influence in your child's success in school and in life. Each of the 10 Ways to Help Your Child Succeed, below, contains a variety of ideas for parents.

- If we talk early and often with our children, they will come to us first before going elsewhere for information.
- Noticing children's strengths, talents and interests, as well as areas where they need assistance, will help them develop realistic self-expectations.
- As children act independently, and make choices and mistakes, they learn and grow. Thinking positively about unconditionally accepting our children helps them develop a positive self-concept.
- It is important for children to come to school emotionally, physically and socially healthy. When children feel good about themselves, are well rested and well nourished, they are more ready to learn.
- Showing our children that we value learning and education is important and will pay off in the long run.
- Frequent communication with your children's teachers and school is the key to academic success.
- By encouraging your children to develop their interests and seek out opportunities to try new things, you help them make the most of the world around them.
- All children want to fit in, be accepted and feel like they belong. Helping your children develop good relationships can have a positive impact on their development.
- By identifying potential risks and giving clear instructions to your children on how to avoid them, children can sidestep danger by knowing what to do in threatening situations.
- Your children's knowledge and talents, while nourished in the classroom, are recognized when put to good use. Children learn valuable lessons when helping others through volunteerism and community service.

For more information, go to www.pta.org.

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