



# Success

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

January 2006

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## **Staff could be your best resource**

Your professional staff may be the best resource for learning what works well to improve student achievement. Create a panel of outstanding administrators and teachers to make a presentation on learning research to the board. Also, such a panel could plan a community forum on student achievement. Remember, the Web-based SALT resource kit on understanding the district report cards can be used as a foundation for a community meeting. It can be found at: [www.osba-ohio.org/ldr.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/ldr.htm).

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## **Are we creating Baby Einsteins?**

*Christian Science Monitor* reporter **Patrik Jonsson** writes that America's "near obsession with academic excellence is filtering down to the level of the jungle gym and nap-time rug. School districts are pushing students to new levels as a growing body of research indicates the importance of early learning and the demands of a competitive world close in on the American classroom." To read the entire story, visit: [www.csmonitor.com/2005/1208/p20s01-legn.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1208/p20s01-legn.html).

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## **Baby Einsteins part 2**

The Alliance for Childhood questions the push to increase academics in kindergarten and preschool. The organization issued a statement that says, among other things, "We call for early education that emphasizes experiential, hands-on activities, open-ended creative play and caring human relationships." For the complete statement, visit: [www.allianceforchildhood.org/pdf\\_files/call\\_action\\_education.pdf](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/pdf_files/call_action_education.pdf).

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## **Plan now for the 2006 Student Achievement Fair**

Share your success beyond your community. Plan now to showcase one of your outstanding programs at the 2006 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](http://www.osba-ohio.org).

# 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 is education success?

In April 2003, **Thomas A. Hinton**, director of state relations at the Heritage Foundation, offered his “Four Essential Principles for Education Success” during the Third International Symposium on Innovations in Education in Mendoza, Argentina. Here is a brief summary of his points:

**Our goal is success, not process** — Success, student success, should not be defined too narrowly; that is to say, we are often tempted to make sure that someone is funneled to — and trained in — one skill in order to hold down a job and be a productive member of society. A job and productivity are worthwhile endeavors indeed, but success should be called such when people have a broad education, with as many tools as possible at their disposal, which they in turn can use to secure the maximum number of opportunities as adults.

**Reform and education innovation must be addressed in the context of universal principles of human nature** — The U.S. spends \$422 billion each year on elementary and secondary education. Yet the results of the most recent national assessment tests are deeply disappointing. Nearly six in 10 high school seniors do not have a basic knowledge of American history, and more than half of the nation’s low-income fourth-graders cannot read, even at the basic level. People want to be free, and they want to determine their own paths. Education innovation that recognizes that will more likely succeed.

**Education does not equal salvation** — Education is not the final answer to every question. Though it is critical and can make a huge difference. The story is bigger than that. Educators and policymakers must be open and encouraging of the cultural elements of church, family, community and other character development forces, without which all of our best efforts will not be ultimately successful. This is both a relief and a challenge. But it is also a caution that in raising the importance of education, we do not try to make it more than it was ever designed to do. At the very least, we should do nothing to hinder these other positive influences on our students.

**We should always remember to whom we are accountable** — Society? Yes, to some extent we answer to “society.” But how do you measure that with any accuracy in the short, correctable term? Students? In a sense, yes, in that they have to live with the blessings or consequences of what we do. But we cannot consider them an accountability receptor for the same reason most civilized cultures do not allow people who have yet to reach maturity to make certain choices.

Source: [www.heritage.org/Research/Education/hl822.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/hl822.cfm)

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## **Proficiency testing time**

Most of Ohio's proficiency testing occurs in March. Now is a good time to spotlight at a February board meeting what your teachers and administrators are doing to help students do well on the tests. Share with the community and media tips on how parents can help their children do as well as they can on the tests. For a list of testing dates, go to: [www.ode.state.oh.us/proficiency/proficiency/dates2005-06.asp](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/proficiency/proficiency/dates2005-06.asp).

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## **'I will study tonight'**

*Washington Post* Staff Writer Jay Mathews reports that the key to academic success may be found in self-discipline. In a Jan. 17 article "Self-discipline may beat smarts as key to success," he writes that students who do their homework faithfully and practice their musical instruments regularly could be the "key to saving U.S. schools." He quotes an article in *Psychological Science* by Angela L. Duckworth and Martin E.P. Seligman that says self-discipline is a better predictor of academic success than even IQ. The story can be found at: [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/16/AR2006011600788.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/16/AR2006011600788.html).

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## **Say it proudly!**

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.

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## **No SALT Symposium**

Instead of hosting a free Student Achievement Symposium this school year, the OSBA Student Achievement Leadership Team (SALT) focused its resources on offering a Web-based program to help Ohioans better understand the state report card. The SALT and Ohio PTA joined forces to create the program, which is supported by the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators. It can be found at: [www.osba-ohio.org/ldr.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/ldr.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.

## Standards for student learning

Standards are a part of everyday life and come in many forms. In education, standards form the foundation for a school district's learning system. They give a common focus to classroom instruction, assessment and resource use. Standards help teachers and principals set priorities and provide a measure for identifying students who need extra or different instructional support to succeed. School boards cannot establish a successful standards-based educational system without the support of all critical stakeholders. If teachers do not take ownership of the standards, they will not prepare their students to meet them. Parents who do not understand and support the standards cannot help their children meet expectations. If the community does not support the standards, it will not provide the resources necessary for schools to prepare students to meet them.

Accountability is essential to maintaining public confidence, and accountability begins with a shared understanding of the desired results. The following self-assessment can help determine where your district needs to go regarding standards. In many cases, you may be able to determine that the district has fully achieved the following indicators, or you may find that there is still work that needs to be done.

- Our district has established student performance standards that clearly define what students are supposed to know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Our local standards reflect external state and national standards for student performance.
- Staff and community have been involved in determining our standards.
- Our standards are published in a single document for distribution to the public.
- Our standards are written in a format that is easily understood by parents and the community.
- Our district has a plan for keeping these standards constantly in front of parents, students and staff so that everyone knows what is expected.
- We have a process for reviewing and revising our district standards so that they remain current and viable.

In addition to the self-assessment, there are a number of questions that the school board should ask itself relative to district standards. They will be discussed in the March **Success**.

For more information, see *The Key Work of School Boards* or visit [www.nsba.org/keywork](http://www.nsba.org/keywork).

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## What do parents think?

Gov. Bob Taft's CORE 40 proposal to beef up math and science education has received lots of media coverage and sparked discussions among educators and policymakers. Did anyone ask parents and students themselves? Yes, the Public Agenda did. According to the organization's Reality Check initiative, parents and students think things are just fine in math and science education. Find out more information and download a free copy of the report at: [www.publicagenda.org/specials/realitycheck06/realitycheck06\\_main.htm](http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/realitycheck06/realitycheck06_main.htm).

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## ACT & SAT prep

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

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## Education Vital Signs

Student achievement liaisons will find a copy of the *American School Board Journal's Education Vital Signs* with this issue of **Success**. This complimentary copy contains interesting information and statistics on academic achievement across the nation. You can see how your district compares to the national averages and share your success.

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## Student Achievement Fair application deadline looms

April 28 is the deadline to nominate one of your outstanding academic programs for the 2006 SALT Student Achievement Fair. The Nov. 14 fair showcases 100 creative, successful academic achievement programs from around Ohio. See the latest *Briefcase* or *Journal*, or visit [www.osba-ohio.org/Files/SAF06app.pdf](http://www.osba-ohio.org/Files/SAF06app.pdf) for an application form. If you have questions, contact Kathy LaSota, deputy director of search services and board development, at (614) 540-4000 or [k\\_lasota@osba-ohio.org](mailto:k_lasota@osba-ohio.org).

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## Performers needed

Also, OSBA is looking for outstanding student performing groups for the 2006 SALT Student Achievement Fair. Five groups will entertain for 20 minutes each during the afternoon of Nov. 14. To nominate a group, contact Al Meloy, deputy director of search services and board development, at (614) 540-4000 or [a\\_meloy@osba-ohio.org](mailto:a_meloy@osba-ohio.org).

## 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.

### Standards for student learning, part 2

Standards are a part of everyday life and come in many forms. It is important to understand however that school boards cannot establish a successful standards-based educational system without the support of all critical stakeholders. Mutually agreed upon standards define the desired expectations and set consistent levels of performance for all students. Standards, therefore, are the foundation of quality educational programs.

In last month's **Success**, we took a look at a brief self-assessment to help determine where your district needs to go regarding standards. In this issue, we will examine a number of questions that the school board should ask itself relative to district standards.

- What have we done as a board to promote involvement of the community — including business, political and higher education leaders — in setting standards for our students?
- How are standards clearly communicated to students, parents, teachers and other members of the community?
- How do we help parents and community members understand that standards should address both what students should know and what they should be able to do at key points in their schooling?
- Is the rigor of our standards consistent with parent and community expectations?
- What can the board do to foster and sustain public support for standards?
- How do we determine what policy bases and resources are needed for the superintendent and staff to implement standards-based instruction?
- What is the connection between our local standards and the state standards?
- What policies does the board need to adopt to enable successful implementation of standards?

For more information on this topic: *The Key Work of School Boards* or [www.nsba.org/keywork](http://www.nsba.org/keywork).

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## Why do you send your children to public schools?

Vouchers ... charter schools ... private schools ... Why do people send their children to your public schools? Personal testimonials are some of the most successful advertisements. Ask the board members and administrators with children in your schools to share their reason for doing so at your April school board meeting.

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## Tackling the dropout rate

Many students do not drop out of school because they cannot do the work. Ask administrators to research why your students are dropping out of your schools. *The Christian Science Monitor* reports that many school districts and states are getting creative in tackling the dropout problem. The paper says the stakes are high, but fixes are on the way. For the story, read: [www.csmonitor.com/2006/0303/p01s02-legn.htm](http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0303/p01s02-legn.htm).

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## Success in Sight

One size does not fit all when it comes to improving academic achievement in diverse schools. The Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) offers a new approach to school improvement in a recent report, *Success in Sight*. McREL proposes a five-step approach: Take stock, focus on the right solutions, take collective action, monitor and adjust, and maintain the momentum. The report can be downloaded at: [www.mcrel.org/successinsight](http://www.mcrel.org/successinsight).

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## Fighting the fat

The number of obese children has tripled in the past three decades, according to the *The Future of Children*, a publication of The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the Brookings Institution. A recent report, *Fighting Obesity in the Public Schools*, suggests schools provide the solution to improving the health of American children. "Schools offer a prime target ... to reduce rates of obesity and thereby promote child health." The report can be found at: [www.futureofchildren.princeton.edu/briefs](http://www.futureofchildren.princeton.edu/briefs). The latest SALT Resource Kit, *The student wellness-student achievement link*, can be downloaded from OSBA's student achievement Web page: [www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm).

## Student achievement research brief

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### Does your district have a successful K-12 technology plan?

School districts have spent millions equipping schools with technology, but often without a plan of how it would impact learning and teaching. What is important is how the technology is integrated with the instructional program. The guiding question while developing a plan is, "Are students using technology in ways that deepen their understanding of academic content and advance their knowledge of the world around them?" Does your plan incorporate the following?

- **Create a vision.** Vision is the first step for technology planning. The district or school must have a picture of what a technology-enhanced program will look like in three to five years.
- **Involve all stakeholders.** For any plan to be effective, all stakeholders should have the opportunity to have an input into the goals of the plan.
- **Gather data.** You must understand where you are in order to plan for the future, so gather as much data as possible about your present use and determine the present level of use in your classrooms.
- **Review the research.** Technology's effectiveness is divided into two areas: learning *with* computers, using computers as tutors (most often drill and practice), and learning *from* computers (students using computers as a tool for communication, collaboration, research or publishing).
- **Integrate technology into the curriculum.** As the research demonstrates, technology impacts student learning when there is a match between content standards and the technology being used.
- **Commit to professional development.** Providing appropriate training is the key to effective use. Research shows that an ongoing professional development program is required.
- **Ensure a sound infrastructure.** To impact student learning, the technology plan must ensure that appropriate resources are in place to support and maintain networks and equipment. Technical support also is essential so that all systems work 24/7.
- **Allocate appropriate funding and budget.** The plan should be in line with your district's finances. A recommended formula is as follows: 40% should be for hardware, 20% for software, 20% for professional development, and 20% for upgrades and additional needs as teachers' expertise grows.
- **Plan for ongoing monitoring and assessment.** The plan must address ongoing monitoring and assessment. Plan to collect data using rubrics, student artifacts, surveys and tests. Develop benchmarks and timelines for all components of the plan.
- **Prepare for tomorrow.** Keep an eye on tomorrow by allowing for new and promising practices and technologies. How will personal digital assistants (PDAs) and other handhelds change the way we organize and learn in 10 years? Will we all be totally wireless then?

Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology Syracuse NY, author Harvey Barnett.

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## **K-8 schools are making the grade**

Cleveland Municipal Schools are seeing positive results since moving away from traditional middle schools, according to *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*. Test scores and behavior are both improving. Several urban districts have made this move, including **Cincinnati City**. To read the story, go to: [www.cleveland.com/metro/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/cuyahoga/1144571892146370.xml&coll=2](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/cuyahoga/1144571892146370.xml&coll=2).

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## **Look past yonder window?**

School boards are forever looking ahead to next month, next year, next decade. What will the future of education be? **Kenneth Stevenson** of the University of South Carolina shares his dream of 2055 education in a paper on the National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities Web site. To read about the trends he identifies and his conclusions, visit: [www.edfacilities.org/pubs/Ed\\_Facilities\\_in\\_21st\\_Century.pdf](http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/Ed_Facilities_in_21st_Century.pdf).

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## **Dispelling the high school graduation myth**

A new Economic Policy Institute (EPI) report says about 75% of black and Hispanic students receive diplomas nationally, contrary to what is reported. In *Rethinking High School Graduation Rates and Trends*, EPI president **Lawrence Mishel** and economist **Joydeep Roy** examine all possible data sources to present a more accurate graduation picture. One study shows an overall graduation rate of 82%, and rates for black and Hispanic students of 75%. The report can be found at: [www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org).

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## **Share student success**

May is traditionally filled with academic recognition events throughout public 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.

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## **Highlight your elementaries**

Conduct a show-and-tell session for elementary school programs at a school board meeting. Invite principals to organize a brief presentation featuring creative activities that enhance learning.

## Student achievement research brief

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### Is ninth grade the key to a student's performance?

The Talent Development High School Model was created by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR), based at The Johns Hopkins University. The Talent Development High School model is an education reform initiative that aims to improve the academic achievement of students in large, nonselective, comprehensive urban high schools. Currently in operation at 33 high schools in 12 states across the country, Talent Development seeks to transform the ninth grade and the choices being made by students. This formula produced substantial and pervasive educational gains for students in very low-performing schools in Philadelphia.

The model has five main features:

- small learning communities,
- curricula leading to advanced English and mathematics coursework,
- academic extra-help sessions,
- staff professional development strategies,
- parent- and community-involvement in activities that foster students' career and college development.

The centerpiece of Talent Development is the Success Academy, in which ninth-graders are taught by teams of teachers in "small learning communities." The students receive instruction using specialized curricula in extended classes — with double doses of English and math. Other features include a Twilight Academy, an after-hours program for ninth-graders having special difficulties, and Career Academies in the upper grades to extend the small learning communities concept and provide course choices built around career themes. Teachers also receive sustained professional development on site, as well as in-class coaching support.

"Ninth grade is the largest leak in the educational pipeline, where struggling students often fail to make the transition from middle school to high school," said **James J. Kemple**, director of MDRC's (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation) K-12 education policy area. "Talent Development eases the way for students during this 'make-or-break' year both, by strengthening instruction in math and English, and by changing the structure of school to make it feel smaller and more personalized."

Source: [www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org).

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## Telling your story well can help students succeed

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) offers research to show that improved communication increases community and parental involvement in schools. The research shows how better communication can raise grade-point averages, scores on standardized tests, enrollment in more challenging academic classes, attendance and improved behavior. *How Strong Communication Contributes to Student and School Success: Parent and Family Involvement* is available to NSPRA members at: [www.nspr.org/WhitePaper.pdf](http://www.nspr.org/WhitePaper.pdf).

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## Where's your focus?

If your school culture spotlights student conformity more brightly than the joy and importance of learning, it may be time to refocus that spotlight, according to **Joanne Rooney**, co-director of the Midwest Principals' Center and associate professor, National-Louis University, in the April *Educational Leadership* magazine. Her battle with bubblegum illustrates that time spent chasing gum chewers may be better spent. To read the article, visit <http://snipurl.com/PickingBattles>.

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## Need help testing students with disabilities?

The U.S. Department of Education has created an online tool kit to help states and districts do a better job of teaching and testing students with disabilities. The kit provides information, guidance and resources in four areas: instructional practices, assessment, behavior and accommodations. It is available at [www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp](http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp).

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## Uniform resource kit is coming this summer

Do uniforms and strict dress codes improve academic success and behavior? The Student Achievement Leadership Team's next resource kit will examine a variety of facets of this controversial issue. Look for it in the next **Success** mailing or at [www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm).

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## Center for Public Education Web site launched

NSBA's new Center for Public Education Web site offers resources and news on student achievement and best practices in public schools. Visit it at [www.centerforpubliceducation.org](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org) and sign up for news updates.

## Student achievement research brief

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### Does heterogeneous grouping in advanced mathematics classes work?

How does assigning students of different abilities (heterogeneous grouping) to an accelerated middle school mathematics curriculum affect student achievement and course-taking patterns over time?

Ohio is one of many states currently looking at strengthening graduation requirements and defining more-advanced core courses for student study. As a result, course-taking patterns and sequences are likely to change as educators seek to align instruction with new curriculum requirements.

Such changes are likely to affect what courses students will take, bringing many more into high-level courses. While low-achieving students have traditionally been assigned to remedial courses, some research suggests that placing these students in high-level classes can have a significant, positive effect on student achievement and course selection without adversely affecting their higher-achieving peers.

By the end of grade 12, students in the universal acceleration group were more likely to have completed the equivalent of algebra II or trigonometry than their peers in traditional classes. In addition, the percentage of students not taking math courses (or taking math courses below their grade level) decreased. Researchers also looked at course-taking across initial achievement levels (low, average and high) and found that more students in each subgroup completed higher-level mathematics courses. The same pattern was observed when the data was examined by ethnicity and socioeconomic status—students in the universal acceleration cohorts outperformed their peers in the traditional cohorts. The researchers also looked at student enrollments and found no evidence to suggest that retention or dropout rates increased as a result of the accelerated course requirements.

When looking at the academic achievement of initially high-achieving students, they found no significant difference between students in the universal acceleration group and the traditional group. They did find that high-achieving students in the universal acceleration group were statistically more likely to take the advanced placement exam.

Heterogeneous grouping of students into accelerated courses may significantly improve the academic performance and course-taking patterns of all students: low-, average- or high-achieving. It is noteworthy that such heterogeneous grouping does not appear to negatively affect the achievement of initially high-achieving students.

Source: *American Educational Research Journal* 43(1), [www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/index.jsp](http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/index.jsp)

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## Take it personally

Laura LoGerfo, an education researcher at the Urban Institute, found that teachers who take “personal responsibility” for their students’ learning are more successful. Her study of first-grade teachers showed a 3% increase in annual student achievement. She also learned that supportive administrative leadership made a substantial difference as to whether teachers held themselves accountable for student learning. To read more about LoGerfo’s peer-reviewed study go to: [www.educationnext.org/20063/68.html](http://www.educationnext.org/20063/68.html).

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## Mandatory summer school

Since the test scores of St. Louis (Mo.) Schools’ incoming freshmen were so poor, Superintendent **Creg Williams** is mandating summer school. Nearly 3,000 freshmen will be working on their reading, math and other learning skills this summer. The requirement is based in part on a successful summer session at the district’s nationally recognized Metro High School. For more details, visit: [www.ksdk.com/news/news\\_article.aspx?storyid=96753](http://www.ksdk.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=96753).

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## Get the latest buzz on public schools

Have you visited the National School Boards Association’s daily Weblog BoardBuzz: <http://boardbuzz.nsba.org>? There you will find the latest news, trends and analysis. Highlighted copy in the Weblog will take you to newspaper articles, electronic resources and state school boards associations, or allow you to e-mail the topic to a friend.

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## Google student achievement

With your free time this summer, why not fire up your favorite search engine and search for “student achievement”? **Google.com** found 99.6 million sites on that subject. Many offer reports, presentations and resources; some are state and district sites featuring student achievement and some are essays on the subject. Most provide food for thought.

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## Uniform resource kit coming soon

The Student Achievement Leadership Team takes a look at school uniforms and strict dress codes in a new resource kit. Find out what some districts did to improve academic success through better dress. The resource kit will be mailed to liaisons in July.

# Student achievement research brief

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## Summer reading programs successful in the past

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Summer Reading Achievers Program encouraged students to read during summer months, therefore hoping to increase their reading skills. Students in grades K-8 were involved in reading actively during the summer months and avoided the loss of reading skills that often occurred during summer vacation.

The program was first piloted by the Atlanta Public Schools, with nearly 18,000 students participating. Then the second year of the program was run at the following sites: Springfield, Mass.; Portsmouth, N.H.; Pittsburgh; Camden, N.J.; Atlanta; Gainesville, Fla.; Kansas City, Kan.; Minneapolis; Albuquerque, N.M; San Diego and the state of South Dakota. The second-year sites were selected based on supportive community and business groups and active school district leaders who were working to reduce the achievement gap.

Former U.S. Secretary of Education **Rod Paige** said, “We wanted to make sure that reading was enjoyable for children and became a regular summertime ritual. We know from research that students often lose some of their skills during the summer break, so it’s important to encourage children to keep up those skills. Through past summer reading programs, we hoped that children saw reading as not just a schooltime activity but as something that was also fun, entertaining and a regular part of life.”

Conclusions from the two-year summer program showed that although only two of the 10 research hypotheses were upheld, several trends in the data were noted. The phenomenon of summer reading loss did not occur for this sample. Both the treatment and control groups experienced gains from pretest to post-test. NCLB Summer Reading Achievers Program participants had higher scores on average than control group students at all grade levels. Although no statistically significant differences in reading achievement were found for first-graders and grades 3-8, the NCLB Summer Reading Achievers Program intervention did appear to have an effect on reading achievement levels. The finding of no summer reading loss suggests that the district’s sustained focus on student achievement, whole-school reform implementation and standards-based reform initiatives may be “paying off.”

Source: [www.ed.gov/parents/academic/summer/reading/outcomes.html](http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/summer/reading/outcomes.html).

### **Success**

July 2006

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# Success

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

August 2006

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## Test scores can raise real estate values

According to an Ohio State University (OSU) researcher, state proficiency test scores play a role in house prices. **Donald Haurin**, an OSU professor of economics, studied the relationship between academic achievement and home values. The study showed that an increase of about 20% in the proficiency test “pass rate” increased house values about 7%, even after taking into account other factors that impact house values. To learn more about the study of 77,578 Ohio house-buying transactions, visit <http://news.publiceducation.org/t/5468/189462/146/0>.

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## Snoozin’ their life away

Once a week, 28% of high school students fall asleep in school, 22% fall asleep doing homework, and 14% arrive late or miss school because they oversleep, according to a National Sleep Foundation (NSF) study. Sadly, most parents are not aware that their children are not getting enough sleep to perform well in the classroom, behind the wheel and at after-school jobs. The lack of sleep lowers grades. The NSF reports that 80% of adolescents who get an optimal amount of sleep say they’re achieving As and Bs in school. For more information, visit [www.sleepfoundation.org/press/index.php?secid=&id=290](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/press/index.php?secid=&id=290).

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## Report cards are coming

On Aug. 15, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) will issue district report cards. Be prepared to tell what your district did the past year to improve student achievement and why the district earned the “grades” it did on the report card. For assistance with the release of the report cards, go to ODE’s informative local report card Web page at [www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard).

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## What’s in store for students?

At the last board meeting before schools open 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 students (and parents) can expect when they return to the classroom. This is a good time to announce to the community the dates and times of back-to-school open houses.

# 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.

## Measuring student progress

In education, assessment or testing, occurs at the classroom, school, district and national levels. The most common kind is in the form of teacher-made tests. Some school districts have developed testing programs and many states have developed some kind of state-level testing, as well. These programs are achievement tests designed to measure student progress on state-devised learning standards. Testing programs can seem very confusing to the average person. Complicated terminology and statistics can become the focus of discussion rather than the content or purpose of the tests themselves. So what are the basics that school board members should understand and promote?

- **Multiple tests are used to determine student progress.** There is no one perfect test that produces all the information needed to measure student achievement or school quality. The challenge for school districts is to determine the right fit when selecting assessments for measuring student achievement.
- **The assessment program is aligned with the academic standards.** Such alignment may seem simplistic and obvious, but it is not at all uncommon for school districts testing programs to lack coherence with the curriculum. There should be a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn and confidence that the assessments used will measure those same learning outcomes.
- **Assessments are conducted annually.** Many districts administer systemwide testing only at certain grades. This type of testing does not provide the information school boards need to improve student achievement. Infrequent testing fails to identify students who need intervention and support.
- **Local district assessment programs complement state assessment programs.** The best course of action is to design the district's testing program to complement those of the state. If your district does not include the state standards and incorporate their testing within your own, your results will suffer in comparison with results in districts that follow state guidelines.
- **Classroom assessment programs complement district assessment programs.** Teacher-made tests should prepare students for district assessments and for the high-stakes state assessments. That requires that teachers are knowledgeable about the district assessment programs not only in terms of content, but also in terms of format.
- **School board members are familiar with the basic tests and their formats.** It is not necessary to understand all of the specifics in detail in order to make good policy decisions. There are, however, some basic categories of assessment that school board members should understand. Frequently testing programs use one format for K-8 and a different format for high schools. The most common types of assessment are norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced test and performance tests.

Source: NSBA Key Work of School Boards, [www.nsba.org/site/page.asp?trackid=&cid=121&did=8799](http://www.nsba.org/site/page.asp?trackid=&cid=121&did=8799)

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

September 2006

## Why do they drop out?

While some students drop out of school because of academic challenges, most are students who believe they could have succeeded in school, according to *The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, a report by Civic Enterprises for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This survey of those who left high school without graduating suggests that, despite career aspirations that require education beyond high school and a majority having grades of C or better, circumstances in students' lives and an inadequate response from the schools led to dropping out. For an executive summary, visit [www.gatesfoundation.org/nr/downloads/ed/TheSilentEpidemic-ExecSum.pdf](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/nr/downloads/ed/TheSilentEpidemic-ExecSum.pdf).

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## Back-to-school tidbits

This fall, 49 million prekindergarten through grade 12 students will be enrolled in public schools. Fun facts from an Associated Press story include: in 1964 only 10% of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds were enrolled in school, while 40 years later, the number rose to 54%; in 2004, 18.8% of children ages 5 to 17 spoke a language other than English at home; and total spending on public schools topped \$450 billion in 2004 with 8.5% coming from the federal government, 48.7% from the states and 42.8% came from local sources. For more facts, go to [http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1110AP\\_School\\_Statistics.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1110AP_School_Statistics.html).

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## Really ready at 5?

Most students start school as 5-year-olds. Is this the optimum age? Nationwide, 90% of eligible children attend kindergarten, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, with 73% starting at age 5, 13% at 6 and 7% at 4. To read the *Chicago Sun-Times* story, go to <http://www.suntimes.com/output/education/cst-nws-kinder30.html>.

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## The debate continues ...

*Stanford Magazine* invited two experts to offer their views of the state of public education after the No Child Left Behind Act. **Terry Moe**, Stanford University's political science chair, and 1967 graduate **Gerald W. Bracey**, author of *Reading Educational Research: How to Avoid Getting Statistically Snookered*, present their cases at: [www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2006/julaug/features/nclb.html](http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2006/julaug/features/nclb.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.

## Ohio study reports public schools exceed charters on elementary and high school tests

Disadvantaged and African-American students enrolled in regular public schools perform better on state achievement tests than their counterparts who attend charter schools, according to an analysis by the Coalition for Public Education (CPE). The data refutes claims by charter school advocates that the privately operated schools provide better educational options for poor and minority students.

CPE's annual review of charter school performance shows that:

- 50% of charter schools are in academic emergency and academic watch, compared to just 9% of traditional public schools.
- 16% of charter schools were rated excellent or effective, while 74% of regular public schools earned such high marks.
- 24% of economically disadvantaged students in charter schools met the state standard for math proficiency, compared to 68% in traditional public schools.
- 15% of economically disadvantaged students in charter schools met the state standard for reading proficiency, compared to 49% in traditional public schools.
- 20% of African-American students enrolled in charter schools met the state standard for math proficiency, compared to 40% in traditional public schools.
- 11.5% of African-American students enrolled in charter schools met the state standard for reading proficiency, compared to 27.8% in traditional public schools.
- Overall, 29% of charter school students met the state standard for math proficiency compared to 86% of traditional public schools students.
- Overall, 21% of charter school students met the state standard for reading proficiency compared to 80% of traditional public schools students.
- 75% of charter schools failed to meet the federal requirement to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), while only 38% of regular public schools did not make AYP.

OSBA is a CPE member.

For more information on the CPE study, visit [www.osba-ohio.org/files/chartersreport.pdf](http://www.osba-ohio.org/files/chartersreport.pdf). Recent news reports confirm this trend nationally. For a copy of the National Assessment of Educational Progress' *Comparing Private Schools and Public Schools Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling* study, visit [www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/NAEPCharterSchoolReport.pdf](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/NAEPCharterSchoolReport.pdf).

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# Success

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

October 2006

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## **Plan now for Capital Conference SALT activities**

Be sure to attend the many Student Achievement Leadership Team (SALT) activities at Capital Conference. Enclosed in this mailing are a letter to student achievement liaisons and a flier promoting all the student achievement sessions and SALT programs. OSBA President **Linda E.R. Omobien, Akron City**, invites you to the Student Achievement Liaison Meeting at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 14, in rooms E 150-151. A **continental breakfast** will be provided.

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## **Improving the quality of pre-K education**

The Pew Charitable Trusts awarded NSBA a grant to engage school boards in support of quality pre-K education. Ohio, through OSBA, is one of three states to participate in this two-year program. Attend the Capital Conference Student Achievement Liaison Meeting (see above) to learn more details about this exciting program.

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## **Homework, no homework**

A Duke University professor, **Harris Cooper**, claims that elementary school students get little or no academic benefit from homework — except reading and some basic skills practice. In a Washington Post story, Cooper says the key to productive homework is teachers knowing how to design effective assignments. To read more about this controversial issue, visit: [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/11/AR2006091100908.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/11/AR2006091100908.html).

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## **New SALT pins available**

The response to the Student Achievement Leadership Team's recognition pins has been so great a second design was created. If you would like to order pins of the new design, see the enclosed order form. Stop by the OSBA Bookstore at Capital Conference if you would like to see the pins before buying a bunch.

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## **Conference Guide available**

The complete, 190-page OSBA *Conference Guide* will be delivered to your district in October. If you can't wait, an electronic version is posted on OSBA's Web site at: [www.osba-ohio.org/CC2006.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/CC2006.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.

## Three measures to watch on student achievement

The three areas to watch as you monitor the progress of your students include: attainment, growth and achievement gaps. Although these areas are interrelated, looking at all three will correct misperceptions likely to be formed if only one or two of the areas are considered. Data in these areas will paint an overall picture of student achievement and lead you to ask important questions.

**Attainment: How are students performing at a given point in time?** Most assessments are, by their nature, providing information about the learning students have attained at the time they take the test. Attainment scores also may be calculated at a subgroup, classroom, grade, building or district level.

**Growth: Is each student progressing at an acceptable rate, comparing last year's attainment to this year's?** Quality measures of student growth are becoming more important in this period of increasing expectations of accountability. Growth measures are attractive because the average person finds them more meaningful in understanding not only what students have learned, but also how quickly they are learning it. Growth measures, combined with attainment measures, provide a more complete picture of students' learning, a sense of value the school is adding and where resources need to be applied.

**Achievement gaps: Are there significant achievement differences among subgroups of students?** Achievement gaps refer to differences in either attainment or growth for any identifiable group of students. Gaps are often tracked for demographic subgroups of students: gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, students with special needs, etc. But gaps also can be tracked for other characteristics, such as achievement level, attendance, the amount of time the student has been in the district, etc. Regardless of the makeup of the groups, the benefit of looking at assessment information by subgroups allows school leaders to monitor equity of achievement by identifying gaps among groups of students and developing strategies to reduce those gaps.

When reviewing data, remember to look at trends. It's important to consider all three progress points over time. Is attainment going up? Is growth of all students sufficient and increasing? Are gaps narrowing? Look beyond data in your own district for comparability. How does student achievement in your district compare to what we know is possible? Finally, consider what evidence your board will accept of student achievement progress. Work together with administrators to develop acceptable measures and reports. Remember that what gets measured gets done. Ask for regular reports of progress and ask staff and administration what supports are needed to improve.

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Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

November 2006

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## Thank you liaisons: Attend the SALT breakfast

Thank you for your efforts to keep your board focusing on student achievement. The Student Achievement Leadership Team would like to provide you with breakfast during the Capital Conference. We hope you can attend the 45-minute student achievement liaison breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 14, in Room E 150-151. **A continental breakfast will be provided.** Please register in advance by contacting **Debbie Beckman**, OSBA administrative assistant, at (800) 589-OSBA, (614) 540-4000 or [d\\_beckman@osba-ohio.org](mailto:d_beckman@osba-ohio.org) by Nov. 3.

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## Student Achievement Fair

If you have a program from your school district exhibiting at the OSBA Capital Conference's Student Achievement Fair on Tuesday, Nov. 14 (11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.), **make sure you visit the booth and let those from your district know how proud you are of them.** Musical performances and an art show also will be showcased at the fair.

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## If you could rebuild ...

If you could build a public school district from scratch, what would you do? Following Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has the opportunity to do just that. **To learn what is happening in the Crescent City**, the site of many NSBA conventions, read the Center for Community Change's unsettling report *Dismantling a Community*. You can download the publication by visiting [www.communitychange.org/issues/education/publications](http://www.communitychange.org/issues/education/publications). A chronology of the rebuilding process, along with essays by public school students, offers insight.

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## More HS students take college prep classes

Between 1980 and 2002, the percentage of high school sophomores who reported that they were in a college preparatory or academic program increased from 33% to 51%, according to the Economic Policy Institute ([www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures\\_snapshots\\_20061018](http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_snapshots_20061018)). **The increase was particularly noticeable for minorities:** for African-American, the rate increased from 27% to 50%; Hispanics, 25% to 43%; and native Americans, 20% to 42%. Ask an administrator to report similar statistics for your school district and make a report at your next board meeting.

# 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 there a better way?

The Center for Public Education has just released a research packet on time, instruction and student learning and lessons to be learned by local school districts. This research packet looks at current research on different approaches to organizing school time and schedules, beginning with the obvious question: Does more time make a difference? Plus, the kit looks at the advantages and disadvantages of approaches such as year-round school, block schedules, and four-day school weeks and consideration of the costs involved.

School districts have tried different strategies for making more time available for instruction by reconfiguring schedules to use available time and resources more effectively.

Beginning with the obvious question: Does more time make a difference? Here are some of the results:

● **More school time produces more learning when the time is focused on academic activities.**

While most researchers find a generally positive relationship, one meta-analysis suggests that extra time does not in itself make a difference; rather it's how the extra time is used. For schools, this means "maximizing the time during which students are actively and appropriately engaged in learning," or what is often simply called "time on task."

● **Professional development is key.** Teachers trained in traditional modes of instruction, including reliance on lectures, will likely need appropriate professional development to make the best use of class time and keep students actively engaged.

● **Students in full-day kindergarten post more gains than their peers in half-day programs.**

Younger students seem to benefit from more school time regardless of other factors. While half-day kindergarten is still the norm, researchers have found that children in full-day programs learn more during the year in reading and math.

For more information, visit [www.centerforpubliceducation.org/site/c.kjXJ5MPIwE/b.2086551/k.9967/Making\\_time\\_What\\_research\\_says\\_about\\_reorganizing\\_school\\_schedules.htm](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/site/c.kjXJ5MPIwE/b.2086551/k.9967/Making_time_What_research_says_about_reorganizing_school_schedules.htm).

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December 2006

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**Teaching students to serve:  
A resource kit for you**

The OSBA Student Achievement Leadership Team's latest resource kit, *Teaching students to serve*, is enclosed with this **Success**. It takes an in-depth look at service learning in Ohio and around the nation. Seven copies of the kit are enclosed in this mailing to share with your fellow school board members, your treasurer and superintendent. For more printed copies, contact **Ann Herritt**, OSBA printing and mailroom supervisor, at [a\\_herritt@osba-ohio.org](mailto:a_herritt@osba-ohio.org) or download an electronic version at: [www.osba-ohio.org/Files/SALTkit13.pdf](http://www.osba-ohio.org/Files/SALTkit13.pdf).

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**Students shine**

The eighth annual SALT Student Achievement Fair at the Capital Conference was a success. The 100 exhibits of creative school programs, the five student performances and art show were outstanding.

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**You are not alone**

To help you as the district's student achievement liaison, OSBA has posted a database on its SALT Web page ([www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm](http://www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm)) of all student achievement liaisons. Use this database to develop a network of liaisons from your area or like districts.

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**What do liaisons do?**

To further help student achievement liaisons, OSBA has a new five-minute video on its SALT Web page. Student Achievement Leadership Team member **Bill Spahr**, a veteran board member who serves at **Xenia Community City** and **Greene County Career Center**, explains the roles and responsibilities of being a student achievement liaison.

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**Learn about others' success**

Also new to the SALT Web page is a database of all Student Achievement Fair exhibitors from the last three Capital Conferences. Contact information is listed for the nearly 300 programs. This is a great resource to share with your board, administrators and teachers.

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**Thank you! Thank you!**

The SALT members would like to thank you for your work as a student achievement liaison. What you do benefits your district's students!

# Student achievement research brief

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

## Do we have the schools our students need?

*Survive or Thrive: Education in a Flat World*, from Battelle for Kids, suggests we ask: “Are we preparing students to compete, succeed and prosper in the 21st century? If not, why not? Are we teaching our students to survive or thrive in this new world?” *Survive or Thrive* was designed to provoke discussion, generate ideas, spark creativity and encourage collaboration among educators. It explores three strategies that educators must use effectively to develop students who will thrive in a flat world:

- know your students,
- give students what they need,
- connect and collaborate.

Businesses began adopting these very strategies long ago to ensure their success:

- conduct market research and use this data to personalize customer service;
- give customers what they need;
- explore best practices to expand organizational capabilities, and operate more efficiently and effectively.

Can you imagine where businesses would be if they didn’t apply these strategies? At the very least, they’d lose some of their market share. Ultimately, they’d be out of business. If schools are in the business of preparing the next generation to be successful, productive citizens, they must address both the needs of the future and the skills and capacities of the students they seek to educate. The challenge is adapting and expanding the strategies that great educators have used over the years, and creating classrooms and schools that develop students who thrive in a flat world.

If we work together to develop the key skills that these strategies require, we will create the schools our students need. The monograph continues to suggest that as we find our way in the flat world, we must decide whether we will “surround ourselves with the artifacts of the old world and cling to a superficial sense of safety we get from isolation, or forge into the new world.”

While the strategies proposed in the monograph are essential to helping students thrive, they are not the only solutions. The truth is, no one knows all of the answers and tools for success in a flat world, because new challenges and opportunities continue to surface and evolve every day.

Source: [www.Battelleforkids.org/flatworld](http://www.Battelleforkids.org/flatworld)

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