



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

January 2010

Preschoolers can do division

New research shows that children can learn math before the age of 5 as their brains are ready to tackle simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, according to a recent *New York Times* story. To read about the findings from research called cognitive neuroscience, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/60172>.

iPod touches electrify student learning

Students across the country, including a special ed class at **Canton City's** Gibbs Elementary School, are using Apple iPod touches to energize students. The touch-screen media player and handheld computer is making spelling and math exciting to students who were born into the electronic age. To read a *St. Paul Pioneer Press* story on iPods in the classroom, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/76599>.

Public schools speak

During School Board Recognition Month, accentuate all the positives of public schools. OSBA sent each member district a DVD featuring a powerful video, "Ohio Public Schools Speak," to promote public education. Show the short video before board meetings and at meetings throughout your school and community. The video can be viewed and downloaded from <http://links.osba-ohio.org/OPSS>.

What is effective teaching?

Stephen Fink, executive director of the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership, writes that instructional leadership programs need to address how to identify and explain good teaching. In an article published in *The School Administrator*, he suggests ways to improve principals' ability to use a research-based instrument to help teachers become more effective. The story can be found at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/42711>.

What works in school improvement?

The University of Michigan and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education conducted a large-scale study of whole-school approaches to instructional improvement. To learn more about the study, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/52198>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Small group projects offer students a deeper understanding

A popular trend in many schools is to teach students by using small group projects. According to a special report published by *eSchool News*, some educators believe students gain a deeper understanding when they participate in group projects.

“When a teacher lectures to them, they forget; when you have kids help design something, they will remember for a lifetime,” said **Lance Sutton**, a teacher at Westview Elementary School in Goose Creek, S.C. Sutton said collaboration is “a more positive way of teaching” and addresses the needs of students who learn best in different ways, such as those who are visual or auditory learners.

Various studies support Sutton’s views. The University of Oregon’s Teaching Effectiveness Program looked at a number of studies and suggests that additional benefits of collaborative learning include:

- effective groups assume ownership of a process and its results when individuals are encouraged to work together toward a common goal;
- students’ critical thinking skills improve, along with retention of information and interest in the subject matter;
- collaborative learning allows the assignment of more challenging tasks without making the workload unreasonable;
- collaborative learning provides weaker students with extensive one-on-one tutoring, while stronger students gain the deeper understanding that comes from teaching others;
- students are less likely to consider teachers the sole sources of knowledge and understanding.

“Everyone needs to be able to collaborate in a group, because that’s how things are done in the real world. No one sits alone and works by themselves any more,” said **Stan Silverman**, director of technology-based learning systems at the New York Institute of Technology.

Collaborative projects not only help teach content, but also can help students develop 21st-century skills in communication, time management, teamwork and facilitation, Silverman said. With this approach, “the teacher is seen less like an evaluator and more as a coach, facilitator and mentor. Teachers today need to know how to mix and match those different roles to maximize learning.”

To learn more about the benefits of collaborative learning and read the entire report, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/54788>. Free registration is required to download the report.

Success

January 2010

Success is published monthly as member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

February 2010

Reading for pleasure pays off on tests

Students who read outside of the classroom do better on standardized tests. A new book by Clark Atlanta University professor **Veda Jairrels**, titled *African Americans and Standardized Tests: The Real Reason for Low Test Scores*, says that children who read for pleasure learn not only words, but gain perspective and a broader world. To read more about this issue, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/88449>.

Rap, rhymes, metaphors

Students are learning "\$10 words" using a program created by two hip-hop artists. The *New York Daily News* reports on one urban school's success in math and vocabulary using a program called Flocabulary. To read how future wordsmiths are writing similes and metaphor raps, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/39400>.

Stay-in-school stimulus

Reducing the number of high school dropouts by 50% in the nation's 50 largest cities and the communities surrounding them would increase earnings by \$4.1 billion. That projection comes from a report from the Alliance for Excellent Education. To read the report, including data on Cleveland and Columbus, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/61395>.

Does anybody really know?

What works best, focusing teaching on relatively low-level skills or high-level skills? A *Harvard Education Letter* article looks at the results of the Study of Instructional Improvement that documents dramatic differences in the kinds of skills and content taught from classroom to classroom. To read the story, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/23345>. The study can be downloaded at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/76078>.

Share your success with other schools

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

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Improving assessments

The U.S. Department of Education has been holding public input meetings around the country to listen to and learn from assessment experts and practitioners. Thirty-seven states joined department leadership and nearly 700 members of the public to hear from assessment experts in general assessment, high school assessment, the role of technology in assessment, assessing students with disabilities and assessing English-language learners.

The goals of these meetings were:

- to gather technical input to inform the development of a Race to the Top Assessment Competition;
- to enable states, who will be the competition applicants;
- to enable the public to participate in and learn from these events.

U.S. Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan** has pledged to reserve up to \$350 million to support consortia of states that are working to create new assessments tied to a common set of standards. The assessment grants will come from the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund and will be awarded under a separate program from the larger one designed to support states' comprehensive efforts to reform education. The department invited states to attend the meetings, and is sharing on its Web site the transcripts of the meetings, as well as all written input received.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act appropriated \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund. The law focuses on four areas of reform:

- adopting college- and career-ready standards and assessments;
- recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals;
- building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve their practices;
- turning around our lowest-performing schools.

"To succeed in comprehensive efforts to reform, states need to have plans to address each of these areas," Duncan said. "High-quality standards and assessments are the foundation on which reforms are built." The department published an official notice about the assessment meetings in the *Federal Register*.

You can read the notice and download PowerPoints from many of the assessment experts' testimony at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/35552>. Past transcripts and written input received to date are available at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/87403>.

Success

February 2010

Success is published monthly as member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Rob Delane, deputy executive director and director of school board development, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

March 2010

Keeping great teachers

Good teachers have tremendous impact on students. A report from the Center for Teaching Quality explores what it really takes to accomplish the goals of developing, supporting and *retaining* effective teachers. To download the report, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/74449>.

It's the culture ...

What makes a middle school high performing? According to a study from EdSource and Stanford University, it is the culture of the school district. A shared district and schoolwide culture that places its primary focus on improvements in academic outcomes for all students and designs its instructional program to prepare students for a rigorous high school education makes a difference. To read more about the study, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/92058>.

Title IX pays dividends

Lifelong benefits and improved results in education, work, and health may be realized by girls who play high school team sports. Using a complex analysis, Dr. **Betsey Stevenson**, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, showed that increasing girls' sports participation had a direct effect on women's education and employment. To read more, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/92931>.

Free YouTube tutoring

The YouTube phenomena now includes math and science tutoring. Harvard-educated **Salman Khan** created the free online tutoring site with the goal of using technology to educate the world. Khan offers nearly 1,200 short lessons on some of the most complex concepts at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/52348>.

Meet the (Gen X) parents

Your students' parents are transforming from Boomers to Gen Xer. "Helicopter" parents have become "stealth-fighters," according to an article by **Neil Howe**, in the January 2010 *The School Administrator*. While Boomers may complain and argue, Gen Xers simply walk, with their children, to another school. To learn how to deal with these parents, read the article at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/45781>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Data-based decision making is hard work.

Data-based decision making is an important tool for educational improvement. However, the effective use of school data requires planning and persistence. Two University of Wisconsin Center for Educational Research staff members, **Bill Clune** and **Norman Webb**, working with school and district staff in Milwaukee Public Schools, have identified six challenges that schools face as they build capacity for data-based decision making.

These challenges are:

- cultivating the desire to transform data into knowledge;
- focusing on a process for planned data use;
- committing to the acquisition of data;
- organizing data management;
- developing analytical capacity;
- strategically applying information and results.

Effective leaders support the local use of data by supporting a school culture that not only accepts the use of data, but considers it to be a rich source of information that can contribute to problem solving and knowledge building.

Data does not magically appear, ready-made to provide evidence of success and solve all school problems. School staffs have to build the will, capacity and organization to make data work for them. They have to learn where to get the data, how to manage it, how to ask good questions, how to analyze the data accurately, and how to apply the results appropriately and ethically to improve teaching and learning. The results of the process can be used to guide school planning and decision making, and can help identify progress, explore problems and target strategies for change.

Source: WCER Highlights. Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI. Volume 13, No. 4, 2002. The report is available at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/82372>.

Success

March 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Dr. Damon Asbury, director of legislative services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

April 2010

Understanding autism

Animal behavior expert **Temple Grandin**, diagnosed with autism as a child, offers a look inside her two worlds during the 2010 TED Conference. To learn how her ability to “think in pictures” helps her solve problems that neurotypical brains might miss, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/69883>.

State test goes online

The *Honolulu Advertiser* reports that the Hawai‘i State Assessment went online in February in a test run. If successful, the state expects to save millions in printing costs, reduce scoring errors and provide almost immediate feedback to teachers. To read more about the experiment, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/11613>.

Just what is student achievement?

The OSBA Student Achievement Liaison Team’s stated purpose is to focus school board members’ efforts on improving student achievement. So how do you define student achievement, and what does it mean in your district? Use **Patrick Riccards’** thoughts on theapple.com to start the conversation at an upcoming board meeting. To read them, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/92682>.

Credit flexibility and your schools

Senate Bill 311 introduced Ohio’s credit flexibility plan, whereby students can earn graduation credit by demonstrating they mastered certain subject matter. Have a board discussion on what this legislation means to student achievement in your district. To learn more and download resources from the Ohio Department of Education Web site, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/44745>.

Closing which gap?

A report from the Institute for Advanced Study seeks to answer the age-old discussion of whether our current education system is preparing students for their future. The “Opportunity Equation” looks at how we can change math and science education quickly. To download the report, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/70861>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Does school size affect student achievement?

Though much has been written about the relationship between class size and student achievement, there is less active interest in the interplay between overall school building size and student success. Historical studies focusing on the success of college and university freshmen seemed contradictory. In one 1969 study by **W.H. Clements**, students coming from small high school graduating class sizes (fewer than 25) appeared to fare better academically than those from larger classes (more than 100). A more recent analysis by **R.G. Downey** (1978) concluded that the differences in achievement among class sizes were not statistically relevant.

A 2003 study from Claremont Graduate University's **R.M. Eddy** focused on California college students' achievement in relation to the overall size of the high schools from which they graduated. While this study drew some conclusions that smaller schools did indeed produce graduates with more successful college achievement, the study emphasized that variables including the students' feelings of connectedness, personal accountability, student-teacher communication, peer-to-peer collaboration and parental involvement had much greater long-term effects on student achievement.

In a study done in 1989 by **E.D. Edington** and **H. Martellaro**, the performance of New Mexico middle school students was examined. This study showed little or no correlation between school size and student success, but placed high degrees of importance on a variety of socio-economic factors.

More recent work shows a correlation between the culture established and maintained in smaller secondary schools or in large schools that create "small schools" within the larger one. In 2002, **J.B. Johnson** and **C.B. Howley** looked at the effect of poverty and student achievement in large and small schools. Their work, studying students in rural and urban Arkansas, found that impoverished students in larger secondary schools were less likely to be high achieving than impoverished students from small schools, where financial status seemed to be less important.

One notion apparent in much of this work does strike a chord. Students in large high schools, as a percentage of the overall student body, are less involved in cocurricular or extracurricular activities than students in smaller schools. Related to the "connectedness" factor cited above and in other studies, it is apparent that administrators and teachers in larger schools must place much more emphasis on efforts to keep all students engaged in some type of school-endorsed, non-classroom activity. Students who do so, regardless of school size, fare better academically than those who do not.

For more information on this topic, visit www.ERIC.ed.gov.

Success

April 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Cheryl Ryan, education management consultant, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

May 2010

Poetry taught by texting Students in **Mel Wesenberg's** Chester (N.Y.) Middle School reading class are learning poetry by using the texting feature of their cell phones. The students texting their poetry lessons correctly answered 80% of the questions on a state test, double the success rate of the school's students taught the same material the traditional way. To read the *Times Herald-Record* story, visit <http://links.osba-ohio.org/93539>.

Register for student achievement webinar The **Cuyahoga Heights Local (Cuyahoga)** academic strategic plan is helping students do better in the classroom. And the district has 14 years of data to prove it. To learn more about this program, tune into the student achievement webinar on May 10, 2010. The free webinar starts at noon. To register, go to www.osba-ohio.org/webinar.

Clinical training for teachers? National Public Radio (NPR) asks, "Why not train teachers the same way we train doctors?" NPR looks at how the Boston Teacher Residency program helps recent college graduates be successful in the classroom. To read the story, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/67451>.

Texas pays for ACT/SAT The Texas Education Agency is offering to pay the cost of one SAT or ACT for high school juniors. The state's department of education is hoping to raise college attendance. To read the *Austin-American Statesman* story, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/22885>.

ESL students making improvements Students for whom English is a second language are making gains in the classroom. A report from the Center for Education shows progress on state math and reading tests. To download the report and read Ohio's statistics, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/81560>.

Bullying in school Most Americans consider bullying and harassment a serious problem in their public schools, according to a new survey by the Public Agenda. To learn more about the survey, go to <http://links.osba-ohio.org/82766>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

One-to-one computing programs are only as effective as their teachers.

One-to-one computing research needs to focus more on classroom practices — and less on equipment, according to the Feb. 16 *eSchool News*. An article draws this conclusion based on a new report published in the January issue of the *Journal of Technology, Learning and Assessment*, which indicates that the most important factor affecting the success of a one-to-one program is the teaching practices of the instructors. The report concludes that besides teaching practices, adequate planning, stakeholder buy-in and strong school or district leadership also contributed to the success of the program.

According to the editors of the report, **Damian Bebell**, an assistant research professor at Boston College's Lynch School of Education, and **Laura O'Dwyer**, an assistant professor of education, "a big mistake that both researchers and educators make in talking about one-to-one computing programs is assuming that by adding computers to the classroom, nothing else has to change."

Bebell and O'Dwyer found improvements in student engagement and increases in student achievement in classes using laptops. But the results varied widely among the various programs.

One study by Bebell and **Rachel Kay**, a Boston College doctoral candidate in the educational research, measurement and evaluation program, found that teaching and learning practices changed when students and teachers were given laptops, wireless learning environments and other technology resources. It's "impossible to overstate the power of individual teachers in the success or failure of one-to-one computing," they write. "Teachers nearly always control how and when students access and use technology during the school day. In addition, teachers must make massive investments in time and effort to adapt their teaching materials and practices to make the one-to-one environment effective and relevant."

The study looked at laptop use in 21 high-need Texas middle schools and noted that "teacher buy-in ... is critically important, because students' school experiences with technology are largely dictated by their teachers."

The authors of the Texas study conclude: "Respondents at higher implementing schools reported that committed leaders, thorough planning, teacher buy-in, preliminary professional development for teachers and a commitment to the transformation of student learning, were keys to their successful implementation."

You can read more on the report's findings at <http://links.osba-ohio.org/96921>.

Success

May 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication and information services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.osba-ohio.org/sa.htm.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

June 2010

Quality child care improves behavior

The Washington Post reports on a study showing how poor-quality non-relative child care increases risk-taking and impulsivity in 15-year-olds. Hence, the better the quality of child care before age 4½, the better the classroom behavior and student achievement. To read the article, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/54938>.

Schools bucking the trend

A handful of Ohio public schools that show significant achievement for disadvantaged youngsters are featured in a recent Thomas B. Fordham Institute report. To learn why these urban schools are “needles in a haystack,” visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/64381>.

The cost of multitasking

We have all heard someone say, “Today’s kids learn differently” and often blame that on their tendency to multitask using technology. Cognitive scientist **Daniel Willingham**, a University of Virginia psychology professor, looks at how multitasking comes with a cost and how it affects a child’s (or adult’s) ability to focus on one task. To learn more about this, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/18420>.

Never too late to learn

Eighty four-year-old **Ona Goff** was awarded her high school equivalence diploma during a **Dayton City-Miami Valley Career Technology Center** commencement last month. During a summer board meeting, have an administrator share what your district does to help dropouts attain their general educational development diplomas. To read Goff’s story in the *Dayton Daily News*, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/71338>.

10 tips for rookies

National board-certified teacher **Marsha Ratzel** offers 10 tips for brand new teachers in *Teacher Magazine*. From buying a supply of pencils to creating a birthday list to building relationships with the classified staff, veteran teacher and author Ratzel’s suggestions can help a rookie make a strong start to his or her first school year. To read the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/66859>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

The distinction between reading difficulties and reading disabilities

There is a difference between reading difficulties and reading disabilities. Some students who struggle with reading in the upper grades may not have a disability. For most struggling readers in middle school, the problem is not that they cannot read words accurately, but that they do not comprehend what they have read. Poor reading instruction in the past or achievement gaps that exist before students enter school can cascade into real struggles later on. Assessing and diagnosing students' reading skills when they enter and changing teachers' attitudes toward low-achieving students can help discouraged students start achieving.

Research shows how to help struggling readers. Expanding vocabulary, adapting instruction, enhancing comprehension strategies and challenging students may sound like simple strategies, but they work with struggling readers.

Fluency, vocabulary and comprehension are especially important in middle and high schools. Although students still rely on phonemic awareness and phonics, more advanced skills start coming into play. For instance, the number of complex words increases dramatically, especially subject-specific words; literary styles become complex and subtle; and key information may be implied rather than explicit. Repeated reading, explicit and indirect vocabulary instruction, and monitoring for comprehension are effective strategies at this level.

Have all teachers teach reading skills. Most middle and high school teachers (including English teachers) are content specialists and not trained for, or willing to teach, reading instruction. But students learn comprehension strategies more effectively when they can apply them in real-life situations. Teachers need to remember what it was like to be a new student in the discipline and articulate the skills necessary to comprehend material. Schools can hire literacy coaches and reading specialists to help those struggling with reading itself.

Find materials that motivate students. At this level, even strong readers may find the more difficult reading assignments challenging, and those who struggle may become demoralized. Although the stereotype of teenagers as nonreaders is widespread, several researchers note that they read a great deal — just not traditional books or textbooks. The trick is to select texts that have a direct connection to students' experiences and build a bridge between the “everyday literacies” students use in reading things like movie reviews and the skills they need to complete academic tasks.

For more information, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/77452>.

Success

June 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Rob Delane, deputy executive director, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

July 2010

Education does pay

According to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the value of education stands out in a down economy. The unemployment rate for people who had not earned a high school diploma was 15%. The unemployment for those with a diploma drops to 10.9%, then to 8.3% for people with some college or an associate degree. The rate for bachelor's degree holders is 4.7%. To read more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/89912>.

Viva the BA and BS!

Not only do you earn more with a bachelor's degree, you also live longer, according to the Center for Public Education. A study found that a 25-year-old male with a college degree could expect to live seven years longer than his buddy without a degree. To learn more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/53921>.

Spare the rod, reduce dropouts

Excessive discipline for tardiness and truancy can increase dropout rates. The Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy came to that conclusion after examining school discipline in Massachusetts. The center's report on disciplinary removal can be downloaded by going to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/14168>.

Boost graduation through extracurriculars

Denver Public Schools are investing \$7.8 million to raise graduation rates by increasing participation in extracurricular activities. Students involved in sports, bands, student council and after-school clubs are more successful in school, according to national studies. The money will go to reduce pay-to-participate fees and tutoring. To read *The Denver Post* story, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/44385>.

What's our condition?

Summer is a good time to catch up on the condition of our nation's schools. The National Center for Educational Statistics website offers months worth of reading materials to help you understand the latest trends in public education. To learn more about the states with growing student populations or shrinking populations, such as Ohio, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/14717>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Create partnerships to boost achievement

Creating partnerships between schools and higher education institutions can be an important vehicle to boost student achievement and close achievement gaps among groups of students. These conclusions arose from a two-year study that examined the role of school-university partnerships in supporting the achievement of students in California.

The study found that school-university partnerships led to higher test scores, improved reading levels, increased college participation rates and greater numbers of qualified teachers. The evidence also demonstrated that partnerships helped close achievement gaps among groups of students of differing socioeconomic levels and racial-ethnic backgrounds.

The study found that successful partnerships were based on several essential elements, including:

- shared vision and goals,
- effective communication,
- respect for differences,
- adequate resources,
- continuous processes to stay focused on task,
- an appropriate organizational model,
- committed responsible members,
- continuous evaluation.

The essential elements of partnering appear to be just that — essential. All of the partnerships studied were employing them in one way or another. The supportive and collegial environment fostered by partnerships and the resources that they can marshal often make the difference in implementing successful school improvement efforts.

Partnerships help enlarge educators' awareness of the circumstances facing students in their daily lives. This awareness can enable and empower educators to tackle challenges that no single institution can address as effectively.

Source: California Alliance of Pre-K–18 Partnerships. California Academic Partnership Program. "Raising Student Achievement Through Effective Education Partnerships: Policy and Practice." Long Beach, Calif., 2004.

Success

July 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Damon Asbury, director of legislative services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

August 2010

Prepare for report cards

The Ohio Department of Education will release the state's local school district report cards on Aug. 27. How will your district do? The August board meeting is an excellent time to discuss the steps taken in your district to increase student achievement. To learn more about district report cards, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/83001>.

Use common sense

Heather Zavadsky writes in the *Los Angeles Times* that five urban school districts are using five common-sense steps to increase student success. To read about the sometimes obvious solutions, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/86339>.

Teacher induction helps

A report from the Institute of Education Sciences shows that beginning teachers given two years of a comprehensive induction program will impact students after three years. To learn how average students moved from the 50th to the 54th percentile in reading and to the 58th percentile in math go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/60684>.

Creating a silk purse out of an oil spill

Eric Brunsell offers resources to turn this summer's biggest ecological disaster/news story into a valuable lesson for students. To read his blog at Edutopia.org, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/49273>.

Grouping students by ability

Kansas City, Mo., schools are planning to teach students in groups by ability, not grade level. This fall, students will advance to the next subject level once they master their current level. To read The Associated Press story on this innovative program, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/69449>.

Hybrid learning works

An Illinois high school is combining online learning with classroom work. To learn why some say Forest Lake High School's blended learning is simply a better way of teaching, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/31139>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

What teachers want in compensation

In new research from the Economic Policy Institute, researcher **Charlie O. Trevor** used data collected from more than 2,500 public school teachers from a single state to explore the issues around nontraditional teacher pay (NTTP). The study involved not only those issues related to pay itself (the “how much” question), but also those related to ways in which teachers are compensated (the “how” question).

The research grouped data around three main areas:

- teacher attitudes and preferences about bonus-based pay systems,
- teacher attitudes about traditional (education and service) versus nontraditional (standardized test scores) criteria for salary increases,
- changes over time in all of these preferences and attitudes.

Trevor’s research showed that teachers continue to support an emphasis on education and service as opposed to the use of student test scores or individual performance evaluations related to salary increases. Perhaps not surprising is the strong preference among teachers with significant years of service to prefer service and education as the main (or even singular) criteria for a salary increase.

When four different NTTP systems were presented, teachers least favored those linked to merit-based salary increases. This feeling may result from a fear that any pool set aside for merit-based pay would take away from traditional pools allocated for traditional salary-schedule increases. Related to this finding were data points showing that teachers continue to hold strongly to norms of equity among pay increases and oppose any criteria that is perceived to possibly be subjective or lead to decisions based at all on favoritism.

Fifty-two percent of the teachers recommended that 0% of salary increases be tied to performance evaluation. The relatively small 35% of teachers who did support increases tied to performance evaluation advocated for it being only a small piece of the overall salary increase decision.

Teachers continue to be strongly opposed to the use of student test scores as the basis for salary increase. In this study, 83% disagreed that a school building’s test scores should be an important factor, and 87% disagreed that their own classroom test scores should be considered.

Interestingly, there was the strong link between job satisfaction and a perception that the district’s senior administration deals fairly with teachers’ unions and their willingness to consider test scores as a larger factor in salary increase decisions.

Success

August 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Cheryl Ryan, school board services consultant, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

September 2010

Taft's tremendous turnaround

Cincinnati City's Taft High School's graduation rate rose from 18% in 2000 to 90% in 2008. The high school's story was one of 15 outstanding programs featured at Harvard University's The Achievement Gap Initiative. To read about Taft and the other high schools, download the conference report at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10091>.

Snooze you win

The LA Times says to blame biology, not laziness, if students are not at their best the first two periods of the school day. Not only do later starting times affect academics, but in one study, middle schools that started at 7:15 a.m. had more behavior problems and four times more tardiness than schools that started at 8:37 a.m. To learn more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10092>.

Teacher quality counts in pre-K

A report out of Texas identifies high-quality teachers and strong relationships with students as the keys to success for prekindergarten programs. To read "Lifting Pre-K Quality: Caring and Effective Teachers," go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10093>.

Learn more, earn more starts in kindergarten

Those who learn more in kindergarten (and were in smaller classes) earn more money as adults, according to a story posted on www.sciencedaily.com. A study, funded by the National Science Foundation, looked at the 30-year-olds who were part of the much-cited Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio Project and found that those who gained more knowledge in kindergarten were more likely to attend college and earned \$2,000 more per year at age 27. To learn more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10094>.

To bore or not to bore

Many teachers debate the question of whether to lecture or not to lecture. Some (mostly students) feel all lectures are boring. **Jeff Sliva-Brown**, a 10-year teacher at Ukiah (Calif.) High School, is a frequent blogger who feels lectures do have a place in the classroom. To read his blog on the subject, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10095>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Using iPods to improve reading comprehension and ELL skills

It is common to find that the technology students use in their personal lives is more advanced than what is being used in their classrooms. One example of this, the iPod, is finding its way into the classroom and helping improve student performance. Some districts have seen success in two areas. One is improving reading comprehension and the other is in teaching English-language learner (ELL) students.

Districts are using audio books on the iPod. The uses include independent reading, shared or small-group reading, whole-class listening and lending the audio books for home use.

Research has shown that audio books accelerate reading gains. Audio books can improve reading comprehension by 34% as they bridge the gap for students attempting to read text above their individual reading level. Listening to oral reading also is proven to help students acquire new vocabulary while stimulating vocabulary development by allowing opportunities for students to hear and see words multiple times. Research shows that effective fluency instruction begins with modeled reading. Audio-assisted reading can provide unlimited practice for students, while silent independent reading alone has not shown to increase reading fluency. Finally, audio books create motivated readers.

iPods are also improving performance in ELL programs. Along with improving reading fluency, the iPod can be used in developing writing and speaking skills. With the right software, the iPod can record audio, allowing a teacher to get feedback on linguistic skills. A district in New Jersey reports that in the first year of using iPods, 50% of the students went from an ELL program to an all-English program, a switch that usually takes between three to six years.

In either area, the biggest strength of the iPod is the ease of accommodating multiple learning styles and students at different skill levels.

As more district leaders consider the implications of incorporating new technologies into the classrooms, those that are using a device most students already possess are seeing student achievement gains.

Success

September 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

October 2010

No merit to merit pay

A study, described as the “first scientifically rigorous review of merit pay in the US,” looks at incentives for Nashville teachers and concludes that a bonus alone was not enough to boost student achievement. “Pay reform is often thought to be a magic bullet,” said **Matthew Springer**, a Vanderbilt University education professor who led the study. “That doesn't appear to be the case here.” To read the *Washington Post* article, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10101>.

Attendance does matter

One indicator of success in the classroom is attendance. Many families struggle to get their children to school on time every day. Researchers **Hedy Chang** and **Mariajose Romero** look at the issue of chronic absence in *Present, Engaged & Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*. To learn what schools can do, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10102>.

Frisbees for fitness

A Rocky Point, N.C., physical education teacher is using Frisbees to teach fitness. At Cape Fear Elementary School, **Chris Wirszyla** is teaching throws in one sport that's truly accessible, without any star athletes outshining the others, according to the *Wilmington Star News*. To read the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10103>.

Making homework meaningful

Homework can enrich the curriculum by challenging students, according to the September *Educational Leadership*. Explaining how assignments relate to their learning and the course of study makes homework meaningful to students. Also, it improves family involvement in students' education. To learn more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10104>.

Putting pen on paper

Danville, Calif., fifth-grade teacher **Cheri Eplin** is turning her students *on* to the process of writing. “I want them to not only have the essential tools to write, ... but the ability to understand that what they have to say is *worth* listening to, or reading,” she writes. To read more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10105>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Organization and study to improve student learning

Much of teaching is about helping students master new knowledge and skills, and then helping them not to forget what they have learned. A practice guide has been developed by the National Center for Educational Research. It is intended to provide teachers with specific strategies for organizing both instruction and students' studying of material to facilitate learning and remembering information, and to enable students to use what they have learned in new situations.

The seven recommendations in the practice guide reflect a panel's consensus on some of the most important concrete and applicable principles to emerge from research on learning and memory. The first recommendation about the spacing of key course content is an overarching principle that teachers should attend to as they plan out sequences of instruction. This recommendation provides advice that is intended to help students remember information longer.

The second, third and fourth recommendations relate to how different forms of instruction should be combined: worked example solutions and new problems posed to the student, graphical and verbal descriptions of concepts and mechanisms, and abstract and concrete representations of a concept. Recommendation five reflects an ongoing concern with memory. In these days of high-stakes tests, teachers are often reminded of how often students appear to have mastered information and concepts in December or February, only to have forgotten them by June. As well as using spacing to mitigate forgetting, a substantial body of work recommends that teachers use quizzing, both formal and informal, as a tool to help students remember. Although forgetting is a reality of life, its effects can be somewhat mitigated. Recommendation six relates to students' ability to judge how well they have learned new knowledge or skills.

Finally, a seventh recommendation is included that targets ways to shape instruction as students gain expertise in a particular domain. After students have acquired some basic skill and conceptual knowledge of a topic, it is recommended that teachers selectively ask students to try to answer "deep" questions that focus on underlying causal and explanatory principles. In sum, the guide recommends a set of actions that teachers can take that reflect the process of teaching and learning, and that recognizes the ways in which instruction must respond to the state of the learner. It also reflects the central organizing principle that learning depends upon memory, and that memory of skills and concepts can be strengthened by relatively concrete strategies.

For more information and a copy of the guide: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10106>

Success

October 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Rob Delane, deputy executive director, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

November 2010

Bullying hurts class work Parents need to talk to their children about bullying, as it does affect student achievement. “CNN Student News” gathered resources for parents to help them with this challenging issue. To view the tips, discussion questions, videos, articles and online materials, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10111>.

Closing the Conn. gap Create a longer school day. Expand alternative teacher/administrator certification programs. Hold teacher preparation programs accountable. Link student performance to teacher and principal evaluations. These are a few of the 65 recommendations from the Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement, a group created to narrow what is considered the nation’s largest achievement gap. To find out more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10112>.

Strategic staffing works Charlotte-Mecklenburg (N.C.) school Superintendent **Peter Gorman**’s plan to place the best principals in the toughest schools is working. His “Strategic Staffing Initiative” is a competition to find the best principals and reward them if they take on the challenge to turn around a school. To read the *Newsweek* story on this turnaround effort, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10113>.

Time helps language arts Give a language arts teacher 90 minutes of uninterrupted time to teach reading and student interest in literacy will grow. To read the *Des Moines Register*’s story on how block scheduling affected language arts at Urbandale (Iowa) Community School District’s middle school, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10114>.

Offer the outrageous From the San Francisco State University professor who gave us the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) Program comes outrageous lessons. **Stanley Pogrow** encourages teachers to creatively engage and educate students in his book *Teaching Content Outrageously*. To read one teacher’s review on the Teacher Leaders Network, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10115>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

Providing fair and accurate grades for English language learners and students with disabilities

Two University of Kentucky professors wrote about their five-step model for grading exceptional learners in the February 2010 issue of *Educational Leadership*. **Lee Ann Jung** and **Thomas R. Guskey** suggest that students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) often differ from their classmates in the ways they engage in and contribute to learning activities. Should such students be held to the same standards as the rest of the class? Have your teachers been trained to assess exceptional learners? Must teachers choose between fairness and accuracy? Can exceptional learners' grades be both fair and accurate?

Any grading system starts with high-quality reporting for all students, according to Jung and Guskey, who claim there are two basic characteristics to grading systems. The first clearly explains what students should learn and how grades are assigned. The second part is divided into product, process and progress, and reports each separately.

Using such a reporting system gives parents of ELL and disabled students much more useful information on how their child is progressing in school. It helps educators when preparing for parent meetings for individualized education/504 plans.

The five steps to the model grading system are:

- ask whether the standard is an appropriate expectation without adaptations;
- if the standard is not appropriate, determine what type of adaptation the standard needs;
- if the standard needs modification, determine the appropriate standard;
- base grades on the modified standard, not the grade-level standard;
- communicate the meaning of the grade.

Of course, this simplification of a very complex issue needs further explanation than the room available on this page. For example, will such a student need extra support to meet the “appropriate expectations”? If yes, then does a teacher make accommodations or modify the expectation? It is possible that the student can learn at the level of other students, but needs to use another form of communication to show his or her knowledge of the subject being tested. Or maybe the student just needs more time to take a test. If the exceptional student cannot learn at the level of the rest of the class, then the teacher needs to decide what is reasonable and test to what is taught.

To read Jung and Guskey's complete article go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10116>.

Success

November 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

December 2010

Learning like Leonardo

Students in Muskogee, Okla., are modeling **Leonardo da Vinci's** journaling to track their own thoughts and observations. Those in the Sadler Arts Academy gifted program study the master's art, as well as his methods. To read the Muskogee *Phoenix* article on this after-school program, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10121>.

Think small or big

Public schools should consider small interventions to resolve the achievement gap issue for students of varying social classes and ethnicities. Studies show large interventions often do not create large improvements while many smaller and cheaper interventions have provided immense results for student achievement. To learn more visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10122>.

CD raises the bar, rigor

Students from Camden-Rockport Middle School in Maine were given a peek outside of their traditional music curriculum and holiday rehearsals. **Alyssa Anderson**, music teacher, took them on a tour of commercial music studios to teach them how professionals record and produce a CD from start to finish. "It's a way to enhance the curriculum, to raise the bar and raise the rigor," Anderson said. To read the *Bangor Daily News* story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10123>.

Village needed to support ELL success

Education Northwest suggests five steps to improve the success of our growing English Language Learners populations. To read more on how to involve your entire staff in supporting immigrant students, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10124>.

Measuring your reform

How do you know if your efforts to turnaround your schools are working? Mass Insight Education offers four toolkits to help districts measure their success at reform efforts. To download the kits, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10125>.

Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

How to grade your school

The ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Whole Child Initiative encourages school communities to embrace a whole child approach to learning, teaching and community engagement. Education policy and practice must define achievement and accountability in ways that will promote the development of children who are healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. Schools and communities must collaborate to create situations where:

- Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
- Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified and caring adults.
- Each graduate is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

The ASCD Whole Child Initiative seeks to re-frame how we think about and act on education policy and decisions. It asks, “What if decisions about education policy were made by first asking, ‘What works best for children?’” It challenges the education, health, housing, public safety, recreation and business systems within our communities to align both human and capital resources to provide coordinated service to kids and families. It encourages policymakers at all levels to work with educators, families and community members to ensure we prepare children for their future rather than the past.

How well does your school and community deliver on these conditions?

- Are your school and community committed to **health**?
- Are your school and community committed to **safety**?
- Are school and community resources used to **engage** students?

These simple questions can serve as the basis for fruitful discussion among students, staff, parents and community members at the school or district level. This assessment is available online at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10126>. After completing the action form online, you will receive a report card and tips on what you can do with your results.

To learn more about the ASCD Whole Child Initiative, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10127>.

Success

December 2010

Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Damon Asbury, director of legislative services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success.