Volume 9, Issue 1, February 2014

A monthly educational administration e-newsletter, keeping you linked and us green.

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UCEA Connections Editors
Erin Anderson & Amy Reynolds, UCEA Headquarters
Graduate Research Assistants

UCEA Mission Statement

UCEA is a consortium of higher education institutions committed to advancing the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of schools and children.

We fulfill this purpose by:

• Promoting, sponsoring, and disseminating research on the essential problems of schooling and leadership practice;
• Improving the preparation and professional development of educational leaders and professors; and,
• Positively influencing local, state, and national educational policy.
2014 UCEA Convention Call for Proposals

UCEA is pleased to release the 2014 UCEA Convention Call for Proposals. The 28th Annual UCEA Convention theme, "Righting Civil Wrongs: Education for Racial Justice and Human Rights" is intended as an occasion to talk, meet, think, and organize for a renewed vision and renewed coalition-building on the role of education and educational leadership in fostering intentional purpose and action for racial justice and human rights. We encourage proposals addressing P-20 issues of racial justice and human rights that engage scholars attending ASHE and other scholars from areas of study including, but not exclusive to, fields such as social foundations, law, public policy, history, cultural studies, global and international studies, and economics. Please keep in mind that UCEA will be celebrating its 60th anniversary along with other milestones: Brown v. Board of Education (60th), ESEA (50th), Civil Rights Act (50th), Miliken v. Bradley (40th), and Lau v. Nichols (40th).

The 28th Annual UCEA Convention will be held in Washington, D.C. at the Washington Hilton. The Convention will commence on Thursday, November 20th, and will conclude on Sunday, November 23rd. Members of the 2014 UCEA Convention Program Committee are Noelle Witherspoon Arnold (University of Missouri - Columbia), Sarah Diem (University of Missouri - Columbia), Azadeh Osanloo (New Mexico State University), and Michael Dumas (New York University).

The site for submitting your proposals will officially open on April 7th, 2014.

Proposals must be submitted by May 5th, 2014.

All proposals should be submitted electronically at the link provided on the UCEA Convention homepage. Should you find you have trouble submitting your proposal, you must notify UCEA 48 hours in advance of the deadline, or risk not having your proposal submitted. Click Here to view the Call for Proposals in full.

2014 UCEA Graduate Student Summit Call for Proposals

Theme: “The Power of Graduate Students: Tackling Inequities through Educational Leadership”

The 2014 UCEA Graduate Student Summit (GSS) will be held at the Washington Hilton hotel in Washington, District of Columbia. The summit will commence Wednesday, November 19, 2013 at 12 p.m. and will conclude Thursday, November 20, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. The purpose of the 2014 UCEA Graduate Student Summit is to provide graduate students a space to engage in authentic dialogue about their scholarly work. This summit will offer opportunities to meet and network with graduate students and faculty, to present your work and receive feedback on your research. It will include:

• Paper sessions, in which you will share your research and receive constructive feedback;
• Workshop sessions, in which you will get direct feedback on a paper that you would like to publish, a proposal, or your dissertation research plan;
• Networking sessions, where you will have the chance to network with students from other UCEA institutions interested in similar research topics and talk with UCEA Executive Committee members and Plenum representatives.

To access the full Call for Proposals, please visit the following link: http://ucea.org/ucea-gssummit/

We will begin accepting proposals on April 7, 2014. All proposals must be submitted electronically per the directions located at the UCEA GSS site. Proposals must be received by Monday, May 5, 2014.
2014 David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Education Administration and Policy

We are pleased to share that this year there were 106 proposals submitted for the 2014 David L. Clark Seminar, which is a nearly 50% increase from the number received last year. A special thanks to all of our reviewers who have worked diligently to carefully review this year's submissions. Applicants will receive notification of their acceptance status in mid-December, and we will announce the 2014 Clark Scholars publicly in January. The Clark Seminar is co-sponsored by UCEA, Divisions A & L of AERA, and SAGE publications. It brings together promising graduate students and distinguished faculty for two days of generative academic dialogue. This year, it will be held April 2-3, 2014 in Philadelphia, prior to AERA.

This year, distinguished faculty include:

UCEA
• Karen Seashore, University of Minnesota
• Julian Vasquez Heilig, University of Texas, Austin
• Jonathan Supovitz, University of Pennsylvania
• Cindy Reed, Auburn University
• Steve Gross, Temple University

AERA – Division L
• Brian Rowan, University of Michigan
• Geoffrey Borman, University of Wisconsin
• Drew Gitomer, Rutgers University
• Bridget Terry Long, Harvard University
• Laura Desimone, University of Pennsylvania

AERA – Division A
• Alex Bowers, Teachers College Columbia University
• Bonnie Fusarelli, North Carolina State University
• Sonya Horsford, George Mason University
• Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, University of Kentucky

Congratulations to the 2014 Clark Scholars!
Erin Anderson, University of Virginia
Matias Arellano, Florida Atlantic University
Patricia Baumer, Southern Methodist University
Risha Berry, Virginia Commonwealth University
David Brackett, University of Nevada – Reno
Kristina Brezicha, Pennsylvania State University
Joshua Childs, University of Pittsburgh
Wonseok Choi, University of Minnesota
Seenae Chong, University of California – Berkeley
Elizabeth Chu, Teachers College Columbia University
Colleen Cleary, University of Missouri
Kevin Crouse, Rutgers University
Matthew Della Sala, Clemson University
Amanda Dillon, Rutgers University
Jeffrey DiScala, University of Maryland
Anna Egalite, University of Arkansas
Erica Fernández, Indiana University – Bloomington
Lindsay Granger, New York University
Tara Haley, University of North Florida
Christopher Harrison, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
Katie Higginbottom, University of Toronto – OISE
Kirsten Hill, University of Pennsylvania
Anne Hoisington Hutchinson, University of Illinois - Chicago
Marie Hurt, Ohio State University
Tonja Jarrell, University of California - Berkeley
Kala Lougheed, Montana State University
Yanira Madrigal-Garcia, University of California – Davis
Joel Malin, University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign
Monica Mansor, Bowling Green State University
Rebecca Miner, Washington State University
Chase Nordin, University of Washington
Steve Ortiz, California State University – Long Beach
Robert Prybylski, University of Alabama
Robyn Read, University of Toronto - OISE
Kenyae Reese, Clemson University
Kailey Spencer, University of Pennsylvania
Elizabeth Leisy Stosich, Harvard Graduate School of Education
Ruirui Sun, University at Albany - SUNY
Margaret Vecchio-Smith, University of Minnesota
Terry Wilkinson, York University - Toronto
Rebecca Wolf, University of Maryland
P. Brett Xiang, University of Missouri - Columbia
Attention PSRs!: Call for Nominations for the Excellence in Educational Leadership Awards

The Excellence in Educational Leadership Award is an annual recognition for practicing school administrators who have made significant contributions to the improvement of administrator preparation. Each year, the UCEA Executive Committee invites member university faculties to select a distinguished school administrator who has an exemplary record of supporting school administrator preparation efforts. This is an unusual award in that it affords national recognition, but the recipients are selected by individual universities. It provides a unique mechanism for UCEA universities to build good will and recognize the contributions of practitioners to the preparation of junior professionals.

A call for award recipients is requested annually from member universities. UCEA Plenum Representatives should consult her/his colleagues and other constituencies designated by faculty to establish procedures leading to the identification of a worthy recipient at each university. Clearly, universities may choose not to make an award every year.

To nominate a recipient the Plenum Representative or Dean of the College of Education should send by March 15th, 2014 the following packet to UCEA:

- **A Letter of Nomination** including information supporting your university’s selection of this individual and listing specific details about the nominee’s contributions to the professional preparation of school leaders, for which he/she is being honored.
- A completed **Nomination Form**.
- A **brief professional bio** of the nominee - no more than 300 words.

After March 1st, UCEA will provide official certificates of recognition to universities who have designated a recipient. UCEA will publish the names of the award recipients and their sponsoring university in the UCEA Review and place the recipient’s names on the UCEA mailing list for one year. If desired, UCEA also will provide a boilerplate press release for announcing the award recipient to news agencies; however, the university may choose to coordinate this announcement through its public relations office in order to include additional information about the award presentation.

See the full call for more information.

2014 Call for Nominations-Selma Greenberg Outstanding Dissertation Award

**Description of the Award:** This award was named after Dr. Selma Greenberg in 1997, a founding member of the SIG who was a world-class researcher and died in 1997. Before the name of the award was changed, it was the SIG/RWE dissertation award for years dating back to 1980.

- The author must be a member of the Research on Women and Education (RWE) SIG.
- The dissertation must have been completed within two years of the application year. This year’s recipient must have published her/his dissertation in 2011 or later.
- The author is expected to present a summary of his/her dissertation findings at the 2014 RWE Fall Conference.

**Nomination Process and Timeline:**
Please submit your nomination materials (PDF and MS Word), including dissertation electronically to: danachri@nmsu.edu.

Deadline for submission is February 3, by midnight MST.

The author must submit the following in two different electronic submissions:

**A-E is one submission in a PDF:**
(a) A nominating letter from the author’s dissertation chair, major professor, or committee member (the nominator does not need to be a member of RWE).
(b) The author’s vitæ or resume.
(c) Attach a 1-2 page essay that includes the following: how you chose this topic, the date of your oral exam, any on-going work (derived from your dissertation) in which you are currently engaged, and potential research, service, and/or practical work that might extend the dissertation.
(d) A sheet including the author’s name, name of dissertation, institutional affiliation, address, fax, phone, and email.
(e) Attach an Abstract.

**F is second submission in a separate Word document:**
(f) In a separate document, submit one electronic copy of the dissertation without the author’s name, institution, or personal information. This is to allow for blind review. Please include the title of the dissertation on the first page and in the title of the file.
From Partnerships to Professional Learning Communities

UCEA is proud to bring educational leadership faculty a free webinar highlighting the formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for preparation.

Monday, February 3rd
3:00 – 4:00 PM EST

Many educational leadership programs have or are developing partnerships with local schools and districts in an effort to increase the relevancy of their preparation programs to the particular needs of local educational communities. Members of the Wallace Preparation Provider PLC argue that we need more than partnerships, however. They argue that we need professional learning communities.

Join us for a web-based conversation exploring the development of preparation-focused professional learning communities at the local, institutional and national level. Participants will share their work within PLCs at each of the levels and the opportunities provided by such engagement. Participants will include Cheryl King, director and principal investigator for the project; Brad Portin, the University of Washington; Susan Korach, the University of Denver; and Michael Johanek, the University of Pennsylvania.

REGISTER NOW 👈 Click

Scan ➔

http://bit.ly/LsiW0B 🔄 Click or Copy & Paste

This webinar series is funded in part by the Wallace Foundation. The work shared during the webinar was generated through UCEA and Wallace Foundation projects.
Please join us for the 19th Annual Values and Leadership Conference. The Annual Conference of the International Consortium for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education (CSLEE) is hosted this year by Nipissing University. The Conference will be held at the world class Deerhurst Resort in the heart of the Muskoka Lakes District, about 2 hours north of Toronto by car or coach.

We encourage you to help promote the conference by sharing this flyer with all interested colleagues and students. More detailed information about the program, featured presenters, and registration is available on the Conference website: http://cslee19.nipissingu.ca/.

The Call for Papers will be posted on the Conference website in early January 2014. The deadline for proposals will be May 15, 2014. Please submit your proposal or any questions you may have about the conference to the Conference Planning Team at: valuesandleadership@nipissingu.ca.

The Conference theme will be explored through a variety of lenses including:
- The power of emerging media and technology
- The development of participatory cultures
- The juxtaposition of local and global perspectives
- The centrality of relationships and communities
- The pressures from political interests

**Featured Speakers:**
- Dr. Paul Begley, Nipissing University (retired)
- Dr. Charles Burford, Australian Catholic University
- Dr. Steven Jay Gross, Temple University
- Dr. Kathy Hibbert, Western University
- Dr. Pauline Leonard, Louisiana Tech University
- Dr. Anthony Normore, California State University
- Dr. Jackie Stefkovich, Pennsylvania State University
New Titles from UCEA with Routledge

NEW: The New Instructional Leadership ISLLC Standard Two
Edited by Rose M. Ylimaki

Co-published with UCEA, this exciting new textbook is the first to tackle the ISLLC Standard 2—Instructional Leadership. In light of recent curriculum reforms, accountability policies, and changing demographics, today’s leaders must not only have expertise in culture building and supervision skills, but also in adult learning, cultural funds of knowledge, and the role of politics. The New Instructional Leadership helps aspiring school leaders examine their beliefs and practices about instructional leadership in relation to ISLLC Standard 2 and provides the theory, learning experiences, and analytical tools for effective leadership in today’s world. Chapters cover issues of collaboration, curricular programming, motivation, supervision, accountability, capacity building, use of technology, monitoring, and evaluation.

Special Features:
Case Studies—encourage readers to reflect and actively engage with instructional leadership beliefs and practices.
Fieldwork and Extended Reflections—a range of inquiry activities provide students with opportunities to consider problems of practice related to the standard.
Strategies for Leaders—offers students practical and accessible ideas in order to transform their practice to address the complex challenges facing contemporary schools.

Theoretically grounded and research-based, this unique volume will help aspiring and current leaders to understand instructional leadership and help them to sustain strong curricular and instructional programs in their increasingly diverse schools and communities.

PB: 978-0-415-53518-2 - $49.95
HB: 978-0-415-53517-5 - $150.00

For more information on the series visit:
ISLLC Leadership Preparation Series
Edited by Michelle D. Young, Margaret Terry Orr

Forthcoming Title: Political Contexts of Educational Leadership ISLLC Standard Six
Edited by Jane Lindle

Co-published with UCEA, this exciting new textbook is the first to tackle the ISLLC Standard #6—the political context of education. This unique volume helps aspiring school leaders understand the dynamics of educational policy in multiple arenas at the local, state, and federal levels. Leaders are responsible for promoting the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts in which education and learning reside. By presenting problem-posing cases, theoretical grounding, relevant research, and implications for practice, this book provides aspiring leaders with the background, learning experiences, and analytical tools to successfully promote student success in their contexts.

Special features:
Case studies - provide an authentic illustration of the political dynamics that emanate from individual, social, economic, and cultural issues surrounding all schools.
Suggested activities - further aspiring school leaders’ understanding of political issues through experiences
Companion website – includes shared resources relevant to all ISLLC standards, along with particular activities for ISLLC Standard #6

PB: 978-0-415-82382-1 - $49.95 (Available 2/24/14)
HB: 978-0-415-82381-4 - $150.00 (Available 2/24/14)
Negotiating Site-Based Management and Expanded Teacher Decision Making: A Case Study of Six Urban Schools
By Anysia Peni Mayer, Morgaen L. Donaldson, Kimberly LeChasseur, Anjalé D. Welton, & Casey D. Cobb
This article presents findings from a study of six schools in the Together Initiative (TI), which facilitates increased school autonomy from districts and expands teacher decision-making authority. This study aims to understand how TI’s theory of action changed structures, cultures, and agency as the concepts of site-based management and expanded teacher decision making were interpreted and implemented by district and school leaders and teachers.

Carried or Defeated? Examining the Factors Associated With Passing School District Bond Elections in Texas, 1997-2009
By Alex J. Bowers & Jooyoung Lee
Across the United States, a large percentage of school districts are in need of facility improvements to provide safe and adequate buildings to facilitate student learning. To finance new construction, school districts traditionally have put proposals before local voters to fund construction through issuing long-term bonds to finance near-term construction. However, past literature indicates that there are few variables that are associated with bond election outcomes that are under the influence of school administrators. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors most associated with passing or failing a school district capital facility finance bond in the state of Texas from 1997 through 2009.

Addressing Elementary School Teachers’ Professional Stressors: Practical Suggestions for Schools and Administrators
By Sarah D. Stauffer & Erin C. M. Mason
Given the preponderance of education reform since the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), reform efforts have shaped the nature of the work and culture in schools. The emphasis on standardized testing to determine schools’ status and student performance, among other factors, has generated stress, particularly for teachers. Therefore, district and school administrators are encouraged to consider the contextual factors that contribute to teacher stress to address them and to retain high-performing teachers.

Successful Leadership in High-Needs Schools: An Examination of Core Leadership Practices Enacted in Challenging Contexts
By Hans W. Klar & Curtis A. Brewer
The purpose of this study was to examine the ways principals in three high-needs middle schools enacted core leadership practices in concert with their immediate contexts to institutionalize comprehensive school reforms and support student learning.

Principals’ Approaches to Cultivating Teacher Effectiveness: Constraints and Opportunities in Hiring, Assigning, Evaluating, and Developing Teachers
By Morgaen L. Donaldson
How principals hire, assign, evaluate, and provide growth opportunities to teachers likely have major ramifications for teacher effectiveness and student learning. This article reports on the barriers principals encountered when carrying out these functions and variations in the degree to which they identified obstacles and problem-solved to surmount them.
“If I Don’t Use the Word, I Shouldn’t Have to Hear it”: The Surfacing of Racial Tensions in a Leadership Preparation Classroom
By Sarah Diem, Nazneen Ali, and Bradley Carpenter
This case outlines a dilemma encountered by an assistant professor and graduate teaching assistant teaching within an educational leadership preparation program. The case offers a detailed illustration of a race-related conflict occurring in a course focused on preparing school leaders to address issues of social justice within diverse settings. Addressing race-related issues within the classroom are of the utmost importance for today’s leadership preparation programs, as the influx of traditionally marginalized populations within public schools continues to rapidly increase. Implications for the development of school leaders include the purposeful examination of issues related to race, diversity, social justice, positionality, and the facilitation of critically-oriented conversations.

Communication and Trust: Change at the Onset of Appointment to the Superintendency
By Sally Zepeda & R. Stewart Mayers
In this case, a new superintendent has communicated what he perceives as a needed change affecting students and teachers on several campuses and a seemingly short timeline for making the decision to move off a block schedule. The abrupt nature of the announcement, combined with the circumstances surrounding the superintendent’s recent hiring has teachers and building level administrators wondering about his motives.

Academic Success for Students of Color . . . At What Cost?: The Importance of School Context at Birch High School
By Terah T. Venzant Chambers & Lolita Tabron
Kiara, an African American rising freshman, has aspirations to become a medical doctor. She enrolls at Birch High School because of the reputation of the principal, Mr. Brown, whose vision for academic excellence permeates every corner of the school. Kiara graduates from high school with top honors, but realizes her success may have come at a steep price. By using “snapshots” of five critical aspects of the school culture at Birch, this case study invites readers to consider the ways schools may foster academic success for some students of color, but at what cost?

Teacher Evaluation and Collective Bargaining: Resolving Policy at a Local Level
By Mark Paige
This case study analyzes controversial teacher evaluation policies in the context of collective bargaining. Dr. Jill Abrams, a new superintendent in a struggling school district, is at the center of the case. Her school board demands a form of teacher evaluation she finds problematic because it includes value-added modeling. Moreover, the board insists on excluding the union in the process of developing the new evaluation system. This case explores the potential consequences of implementing specific teacher evaluation policies and competing demands of relevant stakeholders in the process. The case weaves rich policy issues that frequently present to school leaders at the local level. Other policy and ethical dilemmas emerge as the case develops.

Teacher Dismissal for Cause
By Brad Allison, Gary Schumacher, & Craig Hammonds
This case presents a discussion of events that led to the dismissal of a teacher for cause. A first year high school principal is confronted with teacher behavior that creates a dangerous situation for students. The decision process to determine the appropriate organizational response involves a number of individuals and systems. The administrative recommendation ignores research on decision making and the result is a negative outcome for the school district and the career of the new principal.

Early Arrival or Trespassing?: Leadership, School Security, and the Right to the School
By Decoteau J. Irby & Christopher Thomas
School leaders are under constant pressure to ensure that schools are safe and to demonstrate that student safety and discipline are priorities. In many districts, schools rely on local law enforcement, school police, or security personnel to assist with promoting and maintaining safe schools. To encourage school leaders to think critically about the role of law enforcement and security personnel in schools, we present a school-level case where a principal is arrested for intervening to stop the arrest of a student. The case is appropriate for school- and district-level leadership courses that examine social, political, and cultural contexts that shape decision making.
Change in University-Based Programs of Educational Leadership: How Responsive Have Programs Been?
By Philip V. Robey & Scott C. Bauer

Much of the literature criticizing university-based school leadership preparation programs concludes that programs are, at best, reluctant to change, a conclusion often based more on anecdotal stories than a more systematic inquiry. This article provides evidence on the extent of change in programs since passage of the Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership in 2002. Chairs at National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education–accredited schools were surveyed to determine the nature and extent of adoption of design elements associated with effective programs. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to demonstrate that there has been wide-ranging change in university programs, and that the extent of this change does not depend on type of university or membership in University Council for Educational Administration.

Addressing English Language Learners in the School Leadership Curriculum: Mapping the Terrain
By Laura Baecher, Marcia Knoll, & Janet Patti

Preparing school administrators to support effective instruction of English language learners (ELLs) is an important dimension of today’s school leadership programs, yet often difficult to enact. This paper reports a comprehensive needs analysis of a school leadership advanced certificate program carried out by Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and school administration faculty. This contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the needs of faculty and candidates in their beliefs and experiences with ELL pedagogy. Implications for collaboration with TESOL faculty to strengthen more effective instruction for ELLs are discussed.

What We've Learned and How We've Used It: Learning Experiences From the Cohort of a High-Quality Principalship Program
By Meagan J. Salazar, Barbara L. Pazey, & Megan K. Zembik

The effectiveness of leadership preparation programs has been contested for a number of years. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the identified components that exist within a “high-quality” principal preparation program through the lenses of the members of a principalship cohort at a university-based leadership development program. Qualitative data were collected via online survey. Social Justice theme and the cohort model were identified as most influential factors on leadership development. Findings from this study may assist educational administration departments, program directors, and researchers when evaluating the effectiveness of their graduate-level administrator preparation programs.

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Members access journals free of charge here:
http://ucea.org/members-only/
TEACHER PREPARATION

Performance-Based Test for Teachers Rolls Out
A new recently piloted performance-based test, known as the edTPA will be used in at least seven states by 2015. The assessment was developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, AACTE, and state officials and includes a portfolio consisting of lesson plans, taped lessons, student assessment, differentiated lessons, and self-reflection. Faculty are divided on the utility of the test as well as the decision to have the for-profit company, Pearson, administer the exam.

There's a Cheaper, More Effective Way to Train Teachers
This article from The Atlantic discusses the benefits of the apprenticeship model for training teachers, explaining in detail the system used at a charter school in Philadelphia. Using this model allows the beginning teacher to receive specific feedback on students that both of the teachers are familiar with. It also provides them with the opportunity to understand the rationale behind decisions made by the master teacher, creating an authentic learning experience.

Training Our Future Leaders: Classroom Management
This report published by NCTQ suggests that teacher preparation programs need to be more purposeful and explicit about teaching classroom management. While research suggests five strategies that are central to classroom management (rules, routines, praise, misbehavior, and engagement), these areas are not always included in teacher preparation programs. The report highlights successful programs but not one school included in the study addressed all five areas of classroom management.

EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

50 Years Later, War on Poverty Yields Mixed Success
Although education was at the heart of the Great Society, there are still around 22% of children under 18 living in poverty. There is evidence that indicates without the programming we have in place that number would be higher. This article goes on to discuss how education reformers may think about poverty in planning for change.

English Language Learners: A Growing Yet Underserved Population
In a recent report by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), they summarize data on ELL students and suggest that one in ten students in a US public school is an English-language learner; however, schools are not adjusting curriculum and instruction to accommodate their student body. Preschool programs are not equipped with services and classroom teachers at all levels are not trained to meet the needs of ELL students. Finally, students who are in ELL programs for the long term, often defined as more than six years, are underperforming academically.

Time to Act: Investing in the Health of Our Children and Communities
In this report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, they provide recommendations for improving the health and well-being of children, all of which are relevant to educators. The three primary suggestions include: 1) Invest in foundations of lifelong physical and mental well-being for our youngest children; 2) Create communities that foster health-promoting behaviors; and 3) Broaden health care to promote health outside of the medical system.
EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Building Pathways: How to Develop the Next Generation of Transformational School Leaders

Global management company, Bain & Co., conducted a research project on 12 districts and 5 charter management organizations, in order to explore the role of school leaders in school improvement and to identify the roadblocks to becoming an effective school leader. Using mostly surveys, they suggest the following problems: 1) School systems do not encourage high-performing educators to pursue leadership roles; 2) Stepping stone roles fail to develop leadership skills; 3) Aspiring leaders receive inadequate coaching and training on key skills; 4) Leadership roles are not managed systematically as a talent pipeline; and 5) The hiring process is disconnected from performance management.

Review of Fixing Classroom Observations

The National Education Policy Center (NEPC) reviewed the TNTP report Fixing Classroom Observation and offered both a summary of the report as well as commentary on the methodological soundness. The report itself makes two primary suggestions: observation rubrics should pay more attention to lesson content and be more focused and clear. This review criticizes the report as an advertisement for the TNTP's that is not based on research. NEPC suggests that the problem may not lie in the rubric but in the training and quality of observers, as well as adequate time for both observations and feedback. To Access the Report Directly: Fixing Classroom Observations: How Common Core Will Change the Way We Look At Teaching

DISTRICTS

District Disruption and Revival

Education Week, as part of the Quality Counts reports for 2014 are focusing on district disruption and revival. Based on the premise that changing times must result in institutional changes for districts, this report looks at shifts in the structure and function of the district. Specifically it:

• Analyzes the experience of Memphis, Tenn., where a struggling big-city system undergoes a radical makeover and tries to retain its identity, even as it cedes significant portions of its autonomy.
• Documents the dramatic rise of charter schools and virtual education, and the competitive challenge these burgeoning school choice models pose to established districts.
• Assesses the political tensions that arise as state and federal officials take an active role in education policy in ways that complicate life at the local level.
• Offers snapshots from five distinctly different school systems—from the urban to the small town—and the ways they are dealing with the unique circumstances that affect education in their communities.

School Systems Shake Up Organizational Model

In this overview, they suggest that districts, both large and small, are looking to make changes in their organizational models. Some issues discussed are school-level autonomy, accountability, and efficiency. You can also view the five featured district snapshots.

Views of a Changing School District Landscape

Using graphs and charts to represent the issues facing districts, they represent the complexity facing districts with the expansion of the charter system, the drivers of change that influence superintendents’ decision-making, and the role school choice plays in changing the district environment. The report also explores the need for change and administrators openness to change.
Districts Bail on Race to the Top in Five States
In Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, and Ohio; all recipients of Race to the Top funds, individual schools and districts have dropped out of the improvement effort. Reasons vary but include concerns over sharing student data with third parties and the nature of teacher evaluations.

State Chiefs to Arne Duncan: We Won't Share Student Data
In related news, school chiefs from at least 34 states have spoken out against sharing individual student data with the third party organizations in charge of common core assessments. PARCC and Smarter Balanced are federally funded organizations that would be responsible for administering assessments. The federal government says that it does not intend to require schools to provide student level data.

Most of NCLB's 'Failing' Schools Were Not Targeted the Following Year
Due to the waivers that allow states flexibility from NCLB, many schools that were once identified as failing were no longer considered in need of improvement based on the new accountability measures. This shift of status is the result of the comparing schools to other schools in the state instead of to a set benchmark of AYP.

See Also:
It's All Relative: How NCLB Waivers Did — And Did Not — Transform School Accountability

Boosts for Head Start, Title I, Special Education in Federal Spending Bill
In this EdWeek blog, they discuss Congress’s plan to restore education spending with a $1.1 trillion dollar bill that will increase Title 1 money and special education grants, restoring the spending to almost pre-sequestration levels. Also the bill provided funding for Race to the Top initiatives which would provide $250 million for grants focused on early learning, as well as $75 million focused on improving higher education through the “First in the World” fund. Head Start received a billion dollars in additional funds, which will be used primarily to expand programming for children age birth to three.

New Federal School Discipline Guidance Addresses Discrimination, Suspensions
Based on the work of the Education Department’s Office of Civil Rights and the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, the federal government has released a set of materials that provide guidance to schools. These materials include a letter that discusses school's obligations to fair and equal policies around discipline, data on the how different racial groups are affected by discipline measures, state and federal level discipline laws and regulations, a directory of resources, and a guide to best practices. To access the federal documents: School Climate and Discipline

Obama Restates Old Education Commitments In 2014 State Of The Union Address
In the president's 2014 State of the Union address, he discusses the focus on federal education policy in the upcoming year, which resemble the education agenda from 2013. He reiterated the importance of focusing on early education by working with states to provide affordable pre-K education to every child. While he continues to work on getting support on from Republican members of Congress to fund preschool for our nations’ poorest, he plans to continue working at the local level. He also discussed the need to ensure that every school has access to internet through the expanding the E rate program. Additionally, he intends to continue his focus on a competitive model to reform high schools so that they more closely align with the current job market. Finally, the government plans to continue the work around higher college completion rates, particularly for young men of color.
Do States Need a 'Shift in Thinking' to Provide Better Help to Struggling Schools?

A new report from the Center for Reinventing Public Education looks at the role that state education departments play in school improvement. They make several suggestions as to how to support schools more effectively; including being transparent about the use of financial resources, seeking flexibility in how resources and staff can be used, developing a talent pipeline, recognizing the limits of formal reorganizations, and differentiating relationships with districts based on capacity. To access the report directly: The Capacity Challenge: What It Takes for State Education Agencies to Support School Improvement.

Chiefs for Change Confronts Political, Policy Tests

A group of state chiefs that once had nine members has shrunk to six. The group has been a proponent of increasing school choice, tying teacher evaluations closely to student achievement scores, and A-F school accountability. As those policies make their way into the federal reform platform, the group is shifting their focus to implementation from advocacy.

New Orleans, New York City Top List of Friendliest Cities for School Choice

The Brookings Institute releases a report that evaluated each states school choice policies. They used indicators such as the types of school choice available, the application process for students, the existence of virtual schools, the funding model for schools, and process of assigning students. New York and New Orleans scored the highest on the index, suggesting their willingness to offer choice. To Access the Report Directly: The 2013 Education Choice and Competition Index.

Report: Despite Some Gains, Most States Don't Pass Education Policy Evaluation

In a recently released report, StudentFirst used a set of indicators they feel represent sound education policy to evaluate all 50 states and grade them accordingly. The report evaluated policies on attracting and retaining teachers, providing student data to parents, and allocating funds to students and teachers. No states received an A and the majority of states were assigned D’s and F’s. To Access the Report Directly: StudentsFirst State Policy Report Card 2014.

Track News & Policy State-by-State using…

EdWeek State News

Click on the state of interest on the interactive map to see current state education news.

Education Commission of the States, 2013 State Policy Database

An up-to-date collection of state policies and activities enacted in 2013, sorted by topic.
California

**Big changes to California's school-funding rules are approved**

California passed a new bill requiring districts to allocate a significant portion of their funds for schools in need of improvement based on student achievement measures. They are also placing a greater onus of the decision-making at the local level, assuming they assure that the students most in need are receiving a greater portion of the funds. Each school will receive a base of $7,643 per pupil, with an extra 20% boost for each disadvantaged student. Furthermore, there will be additional funds for those who attend schools where at least 55% of students are low-income, learning English or in foster care.

New York

**Final Report From The New NY Education Reform Commission to Continue to Transform New York's Schools**

The governor of New York and his commission on education reform recently released their policy recommendations for the state. They include: 1) expanding early education; 2) expanding the use of technology; 3) rewarding the best and brightest educators; 4) replicate programs connecting high school to college; 5) investing in higher education and 6) reinvesting administrative savings into the classroom.

**New Schools Chief May Take N.Y.C. in Different Direction**

New mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio has chosen Carmen Fariña to take the helm of New York City public schools as chancellor. Fariña is a 40 year veteran of the city public schools working as a teacher, principal, and regional superintendent. This decision marks the likelihood of a distinct departure from the previous administration's educational policies.

Virginia

**100 Va. school boards oppose state takeover board**

Virginia passed a law establishing a state board that would take over failing schools and operate them under the Opportunity Educational Institution. One hundred schools boards, representing 75% of the districts in the state, have signed resolutions to join a lawsuit against the takeover board.

Washington, D.C.

**D.C. schools change IMPACT evaluations for principals**

After backlash from principals, DC decided to reevaluate their principal evaluation system, which relied heavily on student test scores, resulting in 50% of principals being rated as developing with another 8% labeled as ineffective. In addition, they abandoned a plan to freeze pay for those administrators. The new evaluation system counts student achievement measures as 50% of the overall score.

**Student turnover now part of D.C. schools report on data to assist comparisons**

In an effort to capture information about public and charter schools, D.C. has been producing “equity reports” that provide data on individual schools to help provide a richer assessment of the schools. This year they have decided to include mobility data to help capture the role stability plays in charter schools versus traditional schools. **To Access the Equity Reports Directly:**

**D.C. School Equity Reports**
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