

YOUR ACCESS TO THE REGION



August 2010

Vol. 5, No. 4

WELCOME!

Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, Assessment Consortia, oh my! Life in the world of education and state education agencies, in particular, has never been so full of pressure-driven decisions. For our readers who do not work in a state education agency, we hope that this issue of *Your ACCESS to the Region* helps you develop a deeper understanding of the new educational landscape. For our state education staff, we hope that this issue helps you see the bigger picture in education and where your work and that of your sister state in the Great Lakes West region fit into the picture.

With the pressure on, our states are requesting more information, research, and resources. The challenge is to give information at the depth needed to individuals who do not have time to take a deep breath, let alone read a stack of materials no matter how insightful they are. We believe the best way to address this challenge is to work side by side with the state staff and provide information on a just-in-time basis. Our work with the Illinois Pacesetter Academy and the Wisconsin Response to Intervention teams is a good example of how we work to improve our states' access to information and help them grow in their understanding of an ever-changing landscape. It is clear that the pressure will not go away anytime soon, so Great Lakes West is gearing up. We received official word that our contract as a comprehensive center has been continued for the 2010–11 school year. We are looking forward to continuing our current work and to the opportunities for providing support in new areas.

Linda Miller, Director
Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center
and Great Lakes West staff members

IN THIS ISSUE

Highlights of the Quarter	2
Read about the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center.	
Focus on States	4
Hear about ongoing work and focus areas in Illinois and Wisconsin.	
Feature Article	6
Read an overview about assessment consortia and the next generation of summative assessments.	
In the News	7
Read select news from Illinois, Wisconsin, and the country.	
Resources	12
Learn about current topics in education.	
Upcoming Events	15
Get enriched and renewed by participating in these events.	

This quarterly e-newsletter delivers information related to federal priorities to educators in the two states of the Great Lakes West region: Illinois and Wisconsin.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER

Great Lakes West Welcomes New State Managers!

In February 2010, Illinois State Manager Monique Chism, Ph.D., moved to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) as the new District Administrator for Innovation and Improvement. The resignation of Dr. Chism was recently followed by the retirement of Wisconsin State Manager Al Hovey. Hovey has been with Learning Point Associates for nine years and served as the Wisconsin State Manager for four years. Great Lakes West staff will greatly miss Al's depth of understanding as a Wisconsin native and his breadth of knowledge of national science initiatives and perspectives, and he was a great colleague. As we wish Al luck in his future endeavors, sure to involve many photography and science experiments with his grandchildren, we welcome two new leaders within the Great Lakes West team.

At the May Advisory Meeting, Great Lakes West Director Linda Miller introduced Great Lakes West senior staff member Nick Pinchok as the new Illinois State Manager and Great Lakes West senior staff member Anna Koelln as the new Wisconsin State Manager. Together, Koelln and Pinchok will continue the current work of Great Lakes West and lead new work to meet the priorities and goals of the state education agencies in Illinois and Wisconsin.



Nick Pinchok

Nick Pinchok
Illinois State Manager

Pinchok leads the work of Great Lakes West's priority areas in Illinois. As the Illinois State Manager, Pinchok will shine a light on ISBE's organizational and statewide strengths and successes; optimize existing and identify new partnerships; leverage and align Great Lakes West strengths and services to ISBE's needs; provide excellent service and support for ISBE staff and stakeholders for their most important priorities and initiatives; and explore bold and innovative ideas, approaches, and strategies to improve processes, teaching, and learning across the state. Pinchok provides assessment expertise and team leadership to the state work in Illinois and Wisconsin. He brings a comprehensive understanding of assessment systems to Great Lakes West's work, from assessment development to district administration.

Anna Koelln
Wisconsin State Manager

Koelln leads the work of Great Lakes West's priority areas in Wisconsin. The ability of Great Lakes West to work collaboratively and effectively with Wisconsin is due to her support to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in developing a strategic approach to the department's work. As the Wisconsin State Manager, she will work to build connections between DPI projects and across state stakeholders to strengthen the work of DPI. She brings experience in school support as a former adequate yearly progress coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Education to the work of providing project leadership and support in Wisconsin. Koelln continues to expand the Great Lakes West network by identifying key stakeholders and partners to support the work.



Anna Koelln

Annual Advisory Meeting Focused on Leading Through Innovation

On May 20–21, 2010, the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center and the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center held their annual joint Advisory Meeting in Rosemont, Illinois. Both centers bring together their Advisory Board/Council members each year to review the portfolio of work in the five states and increase understanding of collaborative work with state education agencies (SEAs).

This year, advisory members explored the topic of leadership and innovation. How can educators lead effectively in today's world of rapid change and high accountability? During the two days, participants engaged in state-specific conversations as well as networking activities and building understanding of key topics identified in [A Blueprint for Reform](#). The highlight of the meeting included the keynote presentation "State Leadership and Innovation" by Paul Kimmelman, Ed.D., senior advisor at Learning Point Associates. Drawing upon his recent book, [The School Leadership Triangle: From Compliance to Innovation](#), Dr. Kimmelman engaged participants in thinking innovatively about their work and reflecting on their leadership roles and compliance. The keynote address was followed by a panel of state, regional, and local representatives discussing the topic of leadership in education.

ESEA Reauthorization Hearings Cover a Range of Critical Topics

By Trish Brennan-Gac, Counsel and Policy Advisor, Learning Point Associates

During a three-month period from March through May 2010, the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) conducted [a series of eight hearings and roundtable discussions](#) to explore specific topics related to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Almost every hearing featured a variety of education stakeholders including students, teachers, principals, district leaders, researchers, and leaders from business and nonprofit organizations.

Each speaker's remarks focused on his or her organization's work and the lessons learned through its efforts to improve our nation's schools. Many speakers offered specific recommendations for the ESEA reauthorization. Although each hearing concentrated on a particular theme, it is no surprise that many individual testimonies covered multiple issues such as a focus on teachers and leaders and the use of data to improve instruction. This natural convergence of common themes stresses integration of programs and approaches and shows flexibility in the use of funds.

One area in which policymakers are clearly struggling is the topic of meeting the needs of students and schools in rural communities. In the Great Lakes West region, there are large rural communities where many initiatives and approaches are working successfully. We encourage you to [share with us](#) any successful strategies you and your education leaders are employing in your states.

Following are the topics listed for each hearing with a link to the HELP Committee's Web page where you can watch a recording of the hearing or download a particular speaker's testimony. In addition, a Key Remarks page is provided for each hearing, which highlights particular quotes from each speaker to help you identify which testimonies you may want to read in their entirety.

Date of Hearing	Topic	Selected Statements	Full Hearing
March 9, 2010	The Importance of World-Class K–12 Education for Our Economic Success	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies
March 17, 2010	The Obama Administration’s Reauthorization Priorities	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimony and video
April 13, 2010	School Turnaround	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies and video
April 15, 2010	Teachers and Leaders	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies and video
April 22, 2010	Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies and video
April 28, 2010	Standards and Assessments	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies and video
April 29, 2010	Meeting the Needs of Special Populations	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies and video
May 4, 2010	Improving America’s Secondary Schools	Key Remarks (PDF)	Full testimonies and video

FOCUS ON STATES

In this section, our state managers provide updates about current plans undertaken by each state to focus efforts on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) implementation. E-mail addresses of state managers are included.

ILLINOIS

Illinois Pacesetter Team and Statewide Systems of Support

State Manager: Nick Pinchok
E-Mail: nick.pinchok@learningpt.org



The Pacesetter Academy was a huge success. The capstone event of a yearlong effort to redesign the Illinois statewide system of support (SSOS) took place on June 14–17 in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Illinois presented information about their statewide system of support redesign. The story began with a video that featured Abraham Lincoln (played by Fritz Klein) interviewing State Superintendent Chris Koch and Deputy Superintendent Susie Morrison. The team shared their biggest success, the impact the Pacesetter team has on the statewide system of support, how the Pacesetter work prepared them for the Race to the Top and 1003g School Improvement Grant applications, progress on the SSOS operational manual, and next steps for the state. The primary outcome of the Pacesetter work has been an operational manual, a continued work in progress, created by the cross-divisional team with assistance from Great Lakes West and intended to outline the revised Illinois SSOS.

The Academy of Pacesetter States was a yearlong initiative sponsored by the Center on Innovation & Improvement and designed to help states ramp up their systems of support by developing skilled experts in three areas: leadership, change, and instruction. It began with a five-day Academy last summer and continued with monthly distance learning and team conference calls with their comprehensive center representatives. The Academy of Pacesetter States included nine states from seven regional comprehensive centers. Illinois was one of the nine states along with Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, Oklahoma, and Virginia.

WISCONSIN

Response to Intervention

State Manager: Anna Koelln
E-Mail: anna.koelln@learningpt.org



The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has identified additional support in response to the Wisconsin RTI Communication Council Meeting facilitated by Great Lakes West in March 2010. The purpose of the March meeting was for DPI and response to intervention (RTI) stakeholders to start synchronizing messages about RTI in the state. Great Lakes West is providing continued support to DPI in collaboration with the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) on how to continue to develop a common vision of RTI across the state.

Great Lakes West facilitated a two-day working meeting in partnership with NCRTI on June 15–16 in Madison, Wisconsin. The goal of the meeting was to work on creating a DPI RTI guidance document so that a synchronization of messages from other educational organizations, including the newly funded Wisconsin RTI Center, within Wisconsin could occur, based upon the guidance document. DPI staff will continue to refine the guidance document throughout the summer before finalization.

Great Lakes West also is supporting DPI with a project to develop RTI instructional videos with the Educational Communications Board. A visioning meeting occurred on July 19–20 in Madison, Wisconsin, in order to set up a timeline, goals, and content of the videos for the upcoming school year. Great Lakes West staff attended the meeting to support DPI staff in creating a vision on how to use the video segments to support district staff, building leadership and classroom instructional teachers as part of the advisory board for the project. DPI asked Great Lakes West to continue working as a part of the RTI team for this project as a result of the successful previous RTI work such as the Communication Council Meeting held earlier this year.

Assessment Team

Great Lakes West and the DPI assessment team identified specific next steps to support the assessment work for the 2010–11 school year. Currently, Great Lakes West is helping to plan a visit to the Oregon Department of Education to support DPI as they transition from the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination to a new online testing system within the next four years to be ready for implementation during the 2013–14 school year.

Great Lakes West also will be facilitating an internal cross-department collaboration meeting between the DPI assessment team and the RTI team in August in order to discuss the connections between a balanced assessment system, including formative assessment, and RTI so that districts can be supported in both areas moving forward into the next school year. Once DPI staff has identified connections between balanced assessment and RTI, these ideas and concepts also can be incorporated into the DPI guidance document on RTI.

Supporting Wisconsin's New Standards

Since Wisconsin adopted the Common Core in June, DPI has been preparing and planning to determine how to best implement these new standards for Wisconsin districts. Great Lakes West will support DPI and help them plan for implementation in the upcoming school year.

Forum on Advancing Educator Effectiveness

Great Lakes West and the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) continue to facilitate the collaborative Wisconsin group, the Forum on Advancing Educator Effectiveness. Great Lakes West and the TQ Center currently are preparing a teacher effectiveness and a principal effectiveness document, both of which will be reviewed by the Forum group to provide feedback. DPI staff will review the documents to ensure that they align with guidance that DPI is developing on teacher and principal effectiveness in Wisconsin. The Forum work will conclude this month and will be followed by a series of stakeholder engagement activities at statewide conferences this fall.

FEATURE ARTICLE

An Overview of Assessment Consortia

By Nick Pinchok, Illinois State Manager

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Education released the “Race to the Top Assessment Program” application. As part of the larger American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, this additional Race to the Top (RTTT) grant makes \$350 million available and seeks to fund a minimum of three assessment consortia to help develop the next generation of summative assessments. In the grant, the U.S. Department of Education is asking that consortia develop both “Comprehensive Assessment Systems” (up to two grants worth \$160 million each will be awarded for this category) and “High School Course Assessment Programs” (one award worth \$30 million will be awarded in this category) that “are valid, support and inform instruction, provide accurate information about what students know and can do, and measure student achievement against standards designed to ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and the workplace” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

These requirements pose a very interesting and complex challenge to the testing community and other key stakeholders to quickly improve the types of assessments that are used in an accountability system, aligned to new standards that have just been released (in English/language arts and mathematics), the types and quality of decisions that will be made using these next generation of assessments, and to maintain and ensure psychometric quality and rigor.

[Read More](#)

IN THE NEWS

The following articles were selected to provide easy access to news and resources addressing the key NCLB-related topics within Great Lakes West states and across the country during the past quarter.

ILLINOIS

State Board Nixes Writing Tests in Grade Schools; Will It Hurt Students Down the Road?—BND.com, July 5, 2010

<http://www.bnd.com/2010/07/05/1318729/state-testing-scaled-down-in-grade.html>

“The Illinois State Board of Education announced on its website that due to ‘the historic budget crisis’ in the state, it will not administer writing assessments on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, or the ISAT, and the Illinois Alternative Assessment, or IAA, which students take in the third, fifth, sixth and eighth grades.”

Illinois Board Votes to Require Bilingual Ed. in Preschool—EdWeek, June 25, 2010

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2010/06/illinois_board_votes_to_requir.html

“The Illinois State Board of Education yesterday unanimously adopted regulations that will require all public preschools in the state to identify any children who have limited proficiency in English and provide transitional bilingual education for them.”

Illinois Backs Common Standards for Math, Reading—Chicago Tribune, June 24, 2010

http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/education/ct-met-common-standards-0625-20100624,0,5582007_story

“Illinois education leaders on Thursday unanimously backed a new set of expectations for what every public school student should know when they graduate high school, joining an effort to create a single standard for reading and math instruction across the country.”

Illinois Gets \$11.9M to Track Student Progress—Chicago Defender, May 24, 2010

[http://www.chicagodefender.com/article-7826-illinois-gets-\\$119m-to-track-student-progress.html](http://www.chicagodefender.com/article-7826-illinois-gets-$119m-to-track-student-progress.html)

“Illinois is getting \$11.9 million in federal stimulus money to create and use a data system that's designed to track student progress.”

WISCONSIN

Schools Receive Preliminary Progress Reports—Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, June 8, 2010

http://dpi.state.wi.us/eis/pdf/dpinr2010_74.pdf

“The Department of Public Instruction’s annual review of school progress, required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, found 145 schools and four districts that missed one or more adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets and 89 schools and two districts identified for improvement. Schools and districts identified for improvement missed the same AYP objective for two or more years.”

Wisconsin Schools Commit to Common Core State Standards—Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 3, 2010

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/95479234.html>

“To help make sure schoolchildren around the country are learning the same grade-by-grade information necessary for

success in college and life after high school, Wisconsin's schools chief formally committed the state to adopting a set of national education standards. The final version of the Common Core State Standards for English and math was released Wednesday. Wisconsin already had pledged to support the common standards."

Wisconsin Submits Round Two Race to the Top Application—Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, June 1, 2010

http://dpi.state.wi.us/eis/pdf/dpinr2010_72.pdf

"State Superintendent Tony Evers stated that Wisconsin's Race to the Top application is stronger for the second round of competitive grants. More than \$3.1 billion is left in the Race to the Top fund created under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to provide incentives to states to implement large-scale, system-changing education reforms."

Wisconsin Wins \$13.8 Million Grant to Support Accountability—Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, May 21, 2010

http://dpi.state.wi.us/eis/pdf/dpinr2010_71.pdf

"State Superintendent Tony Evers issued a statement today on the \$13.8 million, four-year longitudinal data system (LDS) grant Wisconsin won to support accountability. Wisconsin was among 20 states sharing \$250 million in competitive funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009."

Governor Doyle Signs Education Reform Bill—Office of the Governor Press Release, April 29, 2010

http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal_media_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=5096

"Governor Jim Doyle today signed into law Senate Bill 437 – education reform legislation that will help turn around struggling schools in Wisconsin, particularly in Milwaukee."

Wisconsin Takes Leadership Role in Assessment Development—Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, April 21, 2010

http://dpi.state.wi.us/eis/pdf/dpinr2010_52.pdf

"State Superintendent Tony Evers today announced that Wisconsin will be a leading state in the SMARTER/Balanced Assessment Consortium, which is developing a grant proposal for Race to the Top (RTTT) assessment funding."

New Data Shows Similar Academic Results Between Voucher and MPS Students—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 9, 2010

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/90169302.html>

"The new results come from a series of reports released Wednesday by researchers working under the umbrella of the School Choice Demonstration Project, a national research organization that randomly selected 800 kids in the Milwaukee Parental Choice (voucher) Program in the 2005-'06 school year and matched them to 800 peers in MPS, with the goal of following them through the 2011-'12 school year. "

For the Full Report: http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Milwaukee_Research.html



ELSEWHERE IN THE NATION

Following are news articles related to the topics of assessment and accountability, instruction, innovation and improvement, national policies and initiatives, and teacher quality.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

States Work Together to Create New Academic Tests—Associated Press, June 23, 2010

<http://www.parentdish.com/2010/06/24/states-work-together-to-create-new-academic-tests/>

“Two big coalitions of states are competing for federal dollars to create a series of new national academic tests to replace the current patchwork system.”

Some Schools Grouping Students by Skill, Not Grade Level—*USA Today*, July 5, 2010

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-07-05-grade-held-back_N.htm

“Instead of simply moving kids from one grade to the next as they get older, some districts are grouping students by ability. Once they master a subject, they move up a level. This practice has been around for decades, but was generally used on a smaller scale, in individual grades, subjects or schools. Now, in the latest effort to transform the bedraggled Kansas City, Mo. schools, the district is about to become the largest one to try the approach. Starting this fall officials will begin switching 17,000 students to the new system to turnaround trailing schools and increase abysmal tests scores.”

INSTRUCTION

Some Educators Question If Whiteboards, Other High-Tech Tools Raise Achievement—*Washington Post*, June 11, 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/10/AR2010061005522.html>

“Under enormous pressure to reform, the nation's public schools are spending millions of dollars each year on gadgets from text-messaging devices to interactive whiteboards that technology companies promise can raise student performance.”

Group Links 4th-Grade Reading Proficiency, National Success—*USA Today*, May 18, 2010

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-05-18-dropouts18_st_N.htm

“If educators want to shrink the number of students who drop out of high school each year, they must greatly increase the number who can read proficiently by the time they're in fourth grade, a key non-profit children's advocacy group says in a new report.”

E-Curriculum Builders Seek a Personalized Approach—*EdWeek*, April 28, 2010

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/04/28/30edtech_21century.h29.html?tkn=ZNPCX2X8XQz8eLuBeWL%2BPCd30HxDOEx77MH8&cmp=clp-sb-ascd

“With a wealth of online courses for school districts to choose from, plus an abundance of interactive activities, videos, and digital information to sift through to design such courses, school leaders are embracing a variety of approaches to build online curricula.”

INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The Trouble With Charter Schools—*Chicago Tribune*, June 30, 2010

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/ct-oped-0630-page-20100630,0,2704150.column>

“Charter schools receive a lot of well-deserved attention this time of year when they appear to be performing miracles. But what about the ones that don't?”

School 'Turnarounds' a National Trend—*Chicago Tribune*, July 5, 2010

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/education/ct-met-turnaround-trend-20100705,0,5078603.story>

“U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has set aside some \$3.5 billion to overhaul or close the lowest-performing schools across the country, an effort to stem the loss of students from what he calls the nation's "dropout factories." These are the schools that by state standards are in the lowest 5 percent by test scores and have abysmal graduation rates.”

Bill Gates Touts Importance of Charter Schools on American Education Landscape—WBEZ, June 29, 2010

<http://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=42918>

“Bill Gates addressed charter school operators and advocates from all over the country who are in Chicago for an annual conference. The philanthropist told them they have a historic opportunity to improve education.”

Understanding Charter Schools—*Newsweek*, June 13, 2010

<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/06/13/understanding-charter-schools.html>

“Some 15 of NEWSWEEK's top 100 public high schools are charter schools. Since charter schools amount to only about 4 percent of all public schools, that would seem to suggest that charter schools are a runaway success story, right?”

Charter Schools Face Fight—*Star Tribune*, June 4, 2010

<http://www.startribune.com/local/east/95583359.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP4O:DW3ckUiD3aPc: Yyc:aUUr>

“An expanding network of virtual public schools are a manifestation of the charter school movement. Proponents say the virtual schools give students the intimacy of home schooling while maintaining the structure of a public school. Nationally, there are an estimated 200,000 full-time virtual charter school students. There is, however, a host of unanswered questions about a system that seemingly requires little overhead. There are no libraries, cafeterias, coaches, janitors, nurses or bus drivers - but can cost taxpayers per student as much as or more than traditional schools.”

NATIONAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Funds for Race to the Top May Be Cut—*New York Times*, June 30, 2010

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/01/education/01brfs-FUNDSFORRACE_BRF.html?_r=1

“House Democrats have attached a provision to a war financing bill that would spend \$10 billion to help school districts avoid teacher layoffs, paying for it, in part, with cuts to Education Department programs previously financed by last year’s stimulus bill. One program facing trims would be Race to the Top, the competition that rewards states promising to create more charter schools and carry out other initiatives. The department has been planning to give \$3.4 billion to winners this year, but the jobs provision would reduce that to \$2.9 billion.”

Supreme Court Declines to Hear NEA's Challenge to NCLB—*EdWeek*, June 7, 2010

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/school_law/2010/06/supreme_court_declines_to_hear_7.html

“The U.S. Supreme Court today refused to hear the appeal of the NEA and nine school districts in Michigan, Texas, and Vermont in a suit that challenged the federal education law as an unfunded mandate.”

How Race to the Top Is Recasting Education Reform in America—*Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2010

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2010/0601/How-Race-to-the-Top-is-recasting-education-reform-in-America>

“As states submit their applications Tuesday for Round 2 of the Obama administration’s Race to the Top education grants, several states have taken major actions to try to be more competitive. At the same time, a handful have dropped out, either over disagreement about the framework of the competition or after a failure to get the reforms needed to have a shot at a piece of the \$4.3 billion pot of federal money.”

Push to Renew ESEA Faces Steep Policy, Political Hurdles—*EdWeek*, May 17, 2010

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/05/19/32esea-prospects_ep.h29.html?tkn=YLvChs9sB7ORVlHvY2cXDhIGIVzAz7AaVMS&cmp=clp-sb-ascd

“Efforts to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have been stalled since 2007 and some say legislative and political hurdles may complicate significant advancements this year. A lack of consensus, a full legislative agenda, and an election year are among the obstacles to revising the law, also known as No Child Left Behind, which was signed in 2002. The revision of ESEA has been a stated priority of the Obama administration, which remains hopeful of action on the legislation this year.”

12 Major Foundations Commit \$500 Million to Education Innovation in Concert with U.S. Education Department's \$650 Million "Investing In Innovation" Fund—U.S. Department of Education, April 28, 2010

<http://www2.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2010/04/04292010a.html>

“To dramatically improve student learning outcomes, 12 national foundations have committed \$500 million in 2010 funds to leverage the U.S. Department of Education’s \$650 million Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund aimed at similarly aligned investments, making more than \$1 billion available to help expand promising innovations in education that support teachers, administrators, technology tools, and school design across all K-12 schools—public, private and public charter.”

TEACHER QUALITY

The Right Way to Assess Teachers' Performance—*Washington Post*, June 18, 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/17/AR2010061704565.html>

"I believe I speak for many teachers when I say I'm willing to be tested on student performance, provided certain conditions are met."

Making Merit Pay for Teachers Work—*The Atlantic*, June 9, 2010

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2010/06/making-merit-pay-for-teachers-work/57937/>

"Incentive works. Want people to do something better? Offer to give them something they want, like money. This simple theory has driven the American economic engine for centuries. In fact, the financial crisis was partially triggered by incentives becoming misaligned with long-term risk. They matter. One industry where incentive is clearly absent, however, is education. Recently, people have begun realizing this, and merit pay for teachers has become a heated debate."

Blaming Teachers Is Easy, But Is It Fair?—National Public Radio, May 10, 2010

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126646883>

"When schools are failing and students aren't learning, who is responsible? The answer these days seems to be teachers. When it comes to education reform, most of the current focus is on making teachers accountable for their students' performance. But is it fair to assign so much of the burden for the success or failure of schools to teachers?"

RESOURCES

This section emphasizes current topics at RCCs, national content centers, and other technical assistance providers.

Challenges in Evaluating Special Education Teachers and English Language Learner Specialists—

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, July 2010

<http://www.tqsource.org/publications/July2010Brief.pdf>

Current emphasis on teacher effectiveness in educational policy poses a challenge for the evaluation of special education teachers and ELL specialists. This brief offers policy and practice recommendations for regions, states, and districts to help them create evaluation systems that reflect the measurement of academic achievement growth for their students and how to connect that growth to teacher effects.

Evaluating School Principals—National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, July 2010

http://www.tqsource.org/publications/KeyIssue_PrincipalAssessments.pdf

This Key Issue describes available strategies and resources for evaluating school principals.

School Restructuring: What Works When—A Guide for Education Leaders—Learning Point Associates, June 2010

http://www.learningpt.org/pdfs/School_Restructuring_Guide.pdf

This guide was funded by the U.S. Department of Education and provides information for school and district leaders to choose the intervention model that will work best for their schools. The June 2010 edition includes chapters on each of the four School Improvement Grant models: turnaround, transformation, restart, and closure. The chapter on each intervention model includes sections on the key factors influencing success or failure, highlighting specific areas: governance, leadership, organization, and environment. Case studies detail the experiences of schools or districts with the specific intervention model.

Diplomas Count 2010: Graduation by the Numbers—*EdWeek*, June 2010

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2010/06/10/index.html>

This year's *Diplomas Count* explores the graduation-rate challenges facing many students and districts and looks at how schools are using data to help students finish high school and earn diplomas.

Critical Decisions Guide: Building Teacher Effectiveness Systems—National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, June 2010

<http://www.tgsource.org/criticalDecisions/>

The *Critical Decisions Guide: Building Teacher Effectiveness Systems* leads users through a series of steps to ensure that they make thoughtful decisions based on evidence and experience that result in a robust, sustainable, and comprehensive teacher evaluation system.

RTI CTRL: Response to Intervention Classification Tool and Resource Locator—Center on Instruction, June 2010

<http://www.rtictrl.org/>

This resource from the Center on Instruction contains both a Web-based self-assessment and resource-filtering tool that SEAs can use to determine their level of RTI implementation and find resources that are relevant to their needs.

Bringing Literacy Strategies into Content Instruction—Center on Instruction, June 2010

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Bringing%20Literacy%20Strategies%20into%20Content%20Instruction.pdf>

This document, developed by the Center on Instruction, provides research-based guidance on academic literacy instruction in the content areas, specifically focusing on the effective use of text in content areas. It reviews the research evidence about content-area literacy instruction for adolescents and suggests ways teachers can use content-area texts to enable students to understand the vocabulary and concepts they contain.

Tiered Interventions in High School—National High School Center, May 2010

http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/HSTII_LessonsLearned.pdf

In response to the high school practitioners' need for information and guidance, this report—the initial work of the High School Tiered Interventions Initiative (HSTII), a collaborative project of three federally funded technical assistance centers—summarizes what we have learned thus far and how those lessons learned can advance the ongoing discussion about effective RTI implementation in high schools. This report is grounded in available research and the professional wisdom of leading researchers and practitioners, including staff members from eight high schools implementing tiered interventions.

Online Discussion: Exploring Human Capital Issues in Successful School Turnarounds—Education Sector, May 2010

http://www.educationsector.org/events/events_show.htm?doc_id=1236095

The transcript of an online discussion with Donald Feinstein from the Academy for Urban School Leadership, LeAnn Buntrock from the Partnership for Leaders in Education at the University of Virginia, Justin Cohen from Mass Insight, and Senior Policy Analyst Rob Manwaring explores the teacher and leader challenges surrounding the school turnaround issue.

Investing Wisely and Quickly: Use of ARRA Funds in America's Great City Schools—Council of the Great City Schools, May 2010

http://www.cgcs.org/Pubs/Stimulus_Report.pdf

The stimulus program was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in February 2009, and there is now sufficient data from the first full school year of the program to draw some broad conclusions about what the program has and has not accomplished in the nation's major urban public school systems. Data are also emerging on what the upcoming school year is likely to bring under the second year of the stimulus program, and the new data suggests necessary next steps for addressing growing financial threats to these and other schools across the country.

The Condition of Education—Institute of Education Sciences, May 2010

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>

This website is an integrated collection of the indicators and analyses published in *The Condition of Education 2000–2010*. Some indicators may have been updated since they appeared in print.

Effective Practices for English Language Learners: Principals from Five States Speak—Center on Instruction, April 2010

<http://centeroninstruction.org/files/Effective%20Practices%20for%20ELLs.pdf>

Effective Practices for English Language Learners: Principals from Five States Speak examines key practices of principals from 49 schools that have achieved excellent academic success. This resource has taken on the challenging task of describing both research and successful practices and the connections between the two.

Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well—National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, April 2010

<http://www.tqsource.org/publications/JEPD%20Issue%20Brief.pdf>

This Issue Brief describes the research on job-embedded professional development, provides several descriptive examples, and details the conditions necessary for successful implementation. It also provides recommendations for how states, districts, and schools can support high-quality, job-embedded professional development to advance teaching and learning in all schools.

The Progress of Education Reform: End-of-Course Exams—ECS, April 2010

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/85/33/8533.pdf>

In recent years, criticism of high school graduates' lack of readiness for college and work has led a number of states to raise high school graduation requirements—particularly in terms of the number and rigor of courses students must pass. Yet states have found that without a common end-of-course measure, it is impossible to ensure that a course labeled "Algebra I" holds students to the same expectations statewide. At the same time, states with exit exams have evaluated these high-stakes assessments, wondering if new approaches such as end-of-course exams might provide fairer and more accurate accountability measures for students, schools, and the state as a whole.

Essential Components of RTI – A Closer Look at Response to Intervention—National Center on Response to Intervention, April 2010

http://www.rti4success.org/images/stories/pdfs/rtiessentialcomponents_042710.pdf

To assist states and local districts with planning for RTI, the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) has developed this information brief, *Essential Components of RTI – A Closer Look at Response to Intervention*. This brief provides a definition of RTI, reviews essential RTI components, and responds to frequently asked questions. The information presented is intended to provide educators with guidance for RTI implementation that reflects research and evidence-based practices and supports the implementation of a comprehensive RTI framework.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For additional listings, visit the Great Lakes West website to access the [Calendar of Events](#).

August 2010

Dates: August 18–19	Topic: RESPRO Coaches Summer Meeting (invitation only)
Location: Tinley Park, IL	Audience: RESPRO coordinators and coaches
Format: Conference	Sponsors: ISBE and Great Lakes West

Dates: August 3, 2:00–3:30 EST	Topic: Using Data to Improve College Success
Location: Online	Audience: State education agencies, college and university staff
Format: Webinar	Sponsor: Data Quality Campaign

Dates: August 18–20	Topic: 2010 ECS National Forum on Education Policy
Location: Portland, OR	Audience: State policy leaders and educators
Format: Conference	Sponsor: Education Commission of the States

September 2010

Dates: September 15–17	Topic: Fall Superintendents Conference
Location: Madison, WI	Audience: Wisconsin district superintendents
Format: Conference	Sponsors: Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dates: October 7–8	Topic: RTI Innovations Conference 2010: RTI Unplugged
Location: Salt Lake City, UT	Audience: Principals, general education teachers, special education teachers, RTI coaches, school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, reading specialists, speech and language pathologists, educational consultants, central office administrators, state department personnel, professional development coordinators, higher education personnel
Format: Conference	Sponsor: RTI Innovations Committee
Dates: October 14–15	Topic: 2010 National PBIS Leadership Forum
Location: Rosemont, IL	Audience: State, district or regional leadership teams adopting and implementing schoolwide PBIS
Format: Forum	Sponsors: OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports with support from the Illinois PBIS Network
Dates: October 27–29	Topic: AWSA Annual Conference
Location: Wisconsin Dells, WI	Audience: Wisconsin school administrators
Format: Conference	Sponsor: Association of Wisconsin School Administrators*
Dates: October 28–29	Topic: WEAC 2010 Convention
Location: Milwaukee, WI	Audience: Wisconsin teachers and WEAC members
Format: Convention	Sponsor: Wisconsin Education Association Council*
Dates: November 3–6	Topic: Midwest Regional Conference on Closing the Achievement Gap
Location: Chicago, IL	Audience: Educators, superintendents, student services support staff, and Title I teachers and leaders
Format: Conference	Sponsor: University of Wisconsin–Green Bay

*Denotes event with presentation from Wisconsin Teacher Quality Forum

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B060001. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

Great Lakes West is one of the 16 regional comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and its work is administered by Learning Point Associates.

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