

**AERA Special Interest Group (SIG:SIPA) on
School Indicators, Profiles and Accountability**

NEWSLETTER

March 2007

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Greetings from the SIG:SIPA Chair

Rolf Blank, Interim Chair

Council of Chief State School Officers

Our SIG:SIPA sessions at AERA need your attendance and your attention. The SIG Business Meeting presents an excellent opportunity for educators to move forward on policy and procedures that will improve the NCLB and state accountability systems. The SIG-sponsored paper session promises a rich reward with respect to accountability and technological applications. If you attend AERA, please attend our business meeting and introduce yourself. Your contribution—attending our SIG meeting, sending a news item to our newsletter editor, submitting a paper for next year’s conference, or volunteering as a paper reviewer—will help. Enjoy Chicago. I look forward to seeing you.

You will have noticed that the SIG changed its name over the past 12 months. We added the word *accountability*. This is appropriate since the school indicators, profiles, report cards now by and large serve explicit accountability purposes as much as general reporting purposes.

The SIG:SIPA web page continues to reside at <http://www.learningpt.org/sipsig/index.html>, courtesy of Learning Point Associates. Check the page periodically as the resources there are augmented. However, we are planning to move the web page to the AERA servers sometime in 2007. When we started our web page, AERA did not provide hosting services to SIGs. We were, as usual, frontrunners. AERA now has the necessary hosting capacity and maintaining our

web page with AERA support will make things simpler. Thank you Learning Point Associates, and before that staff at the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER).

**A Special Thank You to Reviewers, Discussants, and Chairs;
and a Bit of SIG:SIPA History, with an Eye to the Future**

*Arie van der Ploeg, SIG:SIPA Program Chair
Learning Point Associates*

First, a sincere **Thank You** to those who willingly served as reviewers for the papers submitted to SIG:SIPA, and will support the SIG:SIPA in Chicago by serving as chairs, discussants, and discussion leaders. Your expertise and you dedication are greatly appreciated, and substantially contributes to our success. Thank you all for a great job.

Today, as NCLB nears the end of its first cycle and awaits reauthorization, it is striking how focused we all are on report cards about school performance. This stands in considerable contrast to the situation at the time of this SIG’s first AERA, 1995. Educational indicators were in their infancy, especially in terms of systematic reports enabling between-school comparisons. But interest was building.

The 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments, a forerunner of NCLB, authorized the U.S. Department of Education to create a study panel on school indicators. Taking as its starting point the national education goals set out in *America 2000*, announced by the first President Bush in 1991, the 13-member panel argued that indicators would “focus attention on critical issues” and thereby become “levers for change.” The panel outlined a program of numerous indicators “disciplined by a framework of enduring issues,” with regularly scheduled data refreshes and interpretive reports to place data and analysis into context. The panel’s framework structured the indicators into six issue areas: learner outcomes, quality of educational institutions, school readiness, societal support for learning, education and economic productivity, and equity. The panel concluded its argument as follows:

The complexity of education requires—requires absolutely—that indicators be grounded not solely in the instrumental ends of schooling or today’s goals but in larger enduring issues of teaching and learning. An effective indicator system should be focused not only on today’s problems but also on tomorrow’s and those that lie over the horizon.

Our data systems now are orders of magnitude more capable than the data systems of 1990 or 1995. Our capacity to deliver data timely and broadly has also grown by leaps and bounds. Every state has a school report card. Several systems of national reach provide additional functionality using these data. NCLB’s focus on measuring only a few outcomes, several gaps, and defining the future as 2014 seems less informative somehow than the expectations for data and indicator systems raised by the Panel’s report, *Education Counts* (NCES 91-634, no available online).

I wrote the last several paragraphs because, as SIG:SIPA program chair, I have seen the number of submissions drop, as has membership. In the late 1990s there were 100-plus dues-paying members. Today, we are 45. This year, SIG:SIPA received just eight proposals. Two were not accepted. Four papers were submitted as one symposium; these authors agreed to present their work as one joint paper. The result is that the SIG:SIPA this year sponsors just one paper session (see below). Fortunately, they are interesting papers, so do attend.

These declines make me wonder, Is the current proliferation of data in schools simultaneous with realizations of the impotence of data in schools? If so, we should begin to correct that perception. One of the first steps would be to encourage yourself and your colleagues to submit papers to SIG:SIPA for next year's AERA conference. AERA allocates conference sessions to SIGs based on proposal submissions, not membership: the more proposals, the more sessions. And, with the proliferation of data about schools, of report cards and their uses, of schools using these data and indicators in new and better ways, there is much to investigate and to report. Write it up, send it in.

Chicago Line-Up -- School Indicators, Profiles, and Accountability

SIG Business Meeting -- School Indicators, Profiles, and Accountability

Monday, April 9, 6:15 - 7:45pm, at the Marriott, sixth floor, Iowa

Agenda:

Brief SIG business meeting and election of officers.

Open discussion of the topic: *How should the school accountability provisions of NCLB be improved?* Leaders (see below) will initiate the conversation; however, the opinions and perspectives of SIG members and other AERA-ers will produce the most value.

Leaders:

Rolf Blank, Director of Education Indicator Programs, CCSSO, Washington DC

Mitchell Chester, Senior Associate Superintendent for Policy and Accountability, Ohio
Department of Education, Columbus OH

David Chizsar, Director of Assessment, Community School District 203, Naperville, IL

Jennifer Dunn, Associate, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment,
Dover NH;

Ellen Forte, edCount LLC, Washington D.C.

Kevin Matter, Director, Assessment & Evaluation, Cherry Creek School District 5, Greenwood
Village CO.

Moderator:

Arie van der Ploeg, Learning Point Associates, SIG:SIPA program chair

Paper Session -- Perspectives on School Indicators: Scorecards, Climate Surveys, Technology

Tuesday, April 10, 8:15 - 9:45am at the Marriott, fifth floor, Section H of the Chicago Ballroom

Chair: Kevin Matter (Cherry Creek Schools, CO)

System for Accountability and Rigor Survey: The Status Quo of Technology Integration in Florida Schools. Tina N. Hohlfeld (University of South Florida), Albert Dieter Ritzhaupt (University of South Florida), Kate J. Kemker (University of South Florida), J. Christine Harmes (James Madison University), & Ann E. Barron (University of South Florida)

Summary: In response to NCLB, the Florida Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, made major revisions to its technology survey to collect more meaningful information about technology integration from schools. We present background on the survey's development, detailed results from the 2005-06 administration (N = 2,667), and reliability evidence.

Using School Climate Surveys to Categorize Schools and Examine Relationships With School Achievement. Christine DiStefano (University of South Carolina), Diane M. Monrad (University of South Carolina), John May (University of South Carolina), Patricia L. McGuiness (University of South Carolina), & Tammiee S. Dickenson (University of South Carolina - Columbia)

Summary: While NCLB requires school report cards, school climate has received only passing interest from policy makers. Many researchers recognize a positive relationship between school climate and achievement. This study identifies factors underlying school climate, in surveys administered to students and teachers state-wide, and uses factor scores to create clusters of schools that vary on dimensions of school climate. Relationships between clusters and outcomes (student test scores, achievement growth, and NCLB student progress goals) are investigated.

Developing an Indicator System for Charter Schools: A Balanced Scorecard Approach. Richard S. Brown (University of Southern California), Priscilla Wohlstetter (University of Southern California), & Chuan Kuzin (University of Southern California)

Summary: From 2003-2005, a group of charter schools in Los Angeles collaborated with a research team to develop a performance evaluation system with applicability to all public schools statewide. Indicators were developed in six areas: 1) financial resources and investment; 2) learning environment; 3) teacher qualification; 4) language learner re-classification; 5) academic achievement; and 6) school productivity. Selecting, calculating, and validating meaningful indicators of performance is described. Lessons learned provide valuable insights to those engaged in performance measurement endeavors and the design of accountability systems.

Identifying Effective Schools for Accountability Purposes Using a Value-Added Approach. Fen Yu (Louisiana State University), Eugene Kennedy (Louisiana State University), Charles B. Teddlie (Louisiana State University), & Mindy L. Crain-Dorough (Louisiana Department of Education)

Summary: Under NCLB schools failing to make AYP for consecutive years are subjected to serious consequences. However, AYP is a crude measurement. More and more states have started to consider value-added approaches to accountability. This study describes the specification of a value-added model for identifying effective and ineffective schools in Louisiana. Five years of test scores beginning with the 2000-2001 school year are used. Multiple cohorts of students are tracked, and high performing schools are those that have higher growth rates with each succeeding cohort.

Discussant: Rolf K. Blank (Council of Chief State School Officers)

From inside the Beltway

Rolf Blank

Director of Education Indicators

Council of Chief State School Officers

ESEA Reauthorization recommendations. CCSSO released in January its recommendations for Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization. The policy statement reflects the core principles CCSSO believes should guide the reauthorization of ESEA. The document urges Congress to promote meaningful accountability along with greater support for innovation to improve student achievement.

http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/ESEA_rec_final.pdf

Congressional Hearings on reauthorization are underway as of March 2007 with an initial focus on assessment and accountability provisions of NCLB. Many professional education organizations have taken positions or provided recommendations on many aspects of reauthorization. The U.S. Department of Education has received a lot of press and comment on their paper outlining recommendations from the administration.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/nclb/buildingonresults.pdf>

State Accountability System Profiles. CCSSO's Profiles of State Accountability Systems password-protected website can now be viewed online. This resource tracks state accountability systems across the 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The site has a focus on accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and provides annual statewide information on a number of issues: accountability outcomes, adequate yearly progress (AYP) definitions, determinations, and inclusion practices, assessment, content standards, goals reporting and measurement systems.

http://www.ccsso.org/projects/Accountability_Systems/

The updated website provides information for the past four school years (2002-03 to 2005-06) and allows users to view state profiles in three ways: by individual state, accountability indicator, or one or more states with one accountability indicator. All of the information in the state profiles was provided by state education agencies through the NCLB Accountability Workbook, state websites, and/or staff additions and edits. While most states have updated their information, there are still a few states that may be checking the information provided in their respective profiles, so please note that some information is still subject to change. In addition, the resources section of the website has been updated to include links to state report cards and AYP reporting. Lastly, CCSSO prepared a table showing the types of state accountability systems found across the 50 states (integrated, separate, or only AYP reporting).

To obtain a password, please contact at CCSSO Nina de las Alas at ninaa@ccsso.org or 202-312-6863 or Rolf Blank, CCSSO director of education indicators, at rolfb@ccsso.org.

Council Releases 50 State Analysis on State Accountability Systems. CCSSO is pleased to announce the release of Statewide Educational Accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act-A Report on 2006 Amendments to State Plans. The new report summarizes requests submitted by states in 2005-2006 to amend their educational accountability plans under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 as well as the related decisions of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). This is the fourth in a series of papers from CCSSO describing the development and amendment of state accountability plans.

The 2006 report was commissioned by the Accountability Systems and Reporting State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (ASR-SCASS), a project managed by CCSSO. The ASR state collaborative is a voluntary project supported by 28 states in which members share strategies and effective practices and work together to use research and technical expertise to assist states with the development and improvement of accountability systems and use of accountability data.

Web links for the school report cards from each of the 50 states for 2005-06 are available as a single-page PDF at

http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/State%20Report%20Card%20Websites%202005_06.pdf.

This page is also accessible at the SIG:SIPA home page, <http://www.learningpt.org/sipsig/>.

Division H 2006 Outstanding Reports Awards

As you know, AERA Division H each year hosts a competition for Outstanding Publications. This includes categories for report cards, indicator reports, and analytic uses of data. Don't forget to visit this year's Awards Display at the Division H booth in the Exhibits Room where you may inspect all the entries. The winning entries will be identified with ribbons on Thursday. If you did not visit the display last year in San Francisco, the 2006 winning entries are described beginning on page 12 of the Division H spring 2006 newsletter, *Reality Test*, online at:

[http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/Divisions/School_Evaluation_and_Program_Development_\(H\)/Newsletters/rt31_spring06.pdf](http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/Divisions/School_Evaluation_and_Program_Development_(H)/Newsletters/rt31_spring06.pdf).

SIG:SIPA Officers, 2007

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Our Purpose

The Special Interest Group on School Indicators, Profiles, and Accountability was founded in 1994 to bring together educators, researchers, managers, and analysts concerned with the development, reporting, and interpretation of school indicators and report cards used for informing various audiences and for purposes of accountability. The SIG:SIPA values investigations into, among others, meaningful measurement and assessment, data quality and fidelity, useful display and valid interpretation of indicators and data, and the relationship between accountability requirements and school improvement. Indicators include student outcomes, curriculum, staff, school climate and conditions, demographics, finance, and the relationship of indicators to accountability. The SIG is a forum for:

1. Integration of theoretical and empirical studies of school indicator systems, including the impact on schools;
2. Exchange of information and discussion of state, national, and international efforts toward developing, refining, and monitoring indicator and accountability systems;
3. Exploration of innovative methods for collecting and reporting school indicators; and
4. Assessing implications of research for school indicator and accountability policy at local, state, national, and international levels.

We invite all AERA members with an interest in education indicators and accountability systems to join us.