

**Subject:** [Cpre-news] CPRE In-Sites, December 2008  
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## CPRE News and Recent Publications

### CPRE-TC Co-Director Tom Corcoran designs and evaluates an innovative science education program in Thailand.

MSD-Thailand, an affiliate of Merck & Co., is funding an ambitious science education program for lower secondary schools in southern Thailand. The program, known as the Inquiry Based Science and Technology Education Program (IN STEP), is a public-private partnership among Kenan Institute Asia, the Ministry of Education, the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science & Technology, the Merck Institute for Science Education, and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at Teachers College. The program, now in its second year, trains educators to use guided investigations in the teaching of key concepts in the biological, physical, and earth sciences in grades 7, 8, and 9. The initiative also includes activities such as annual science days and science camps to spark student and community interest in science. CPRE-TC leads the design and evaluation of IN-STEP, is providing training for Thai evaluators, and is assisting with training for mentors and school principals. CPRE's work in Thailand is directed by Senior Researcher Tom Corcoran.

The First-Year Evaluation report is available for free download on [CPRE's website](#).

### CPRE-Penn Senior Researcher Elliot Weinbaum and Researcher Matthew Riggan have been awarded funding from the Benwood Foundation to evaluate school improvement efforts in Hamilton County, Tennessee.

The Benwood Foundation has established a track record of success in its support of eight elementary schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Foundation is continuing that work and through this grant is simultaneously looking to evaluate the extent to which lessons learned in its successful local improvement efforts are being used to improve the function of the central office and its support to schools. Weinbaum and Riggan have designed an evaluation that focuses on the five core principles of the system's earlier improvement efforts. This evaluation, to be conducted over four years, will examine the systemwide establishment of clear expectations, quality of professional development for teachers and administrators, use of data, and development of internal and external accountability in the district.

### Strategic Management of Human Capital (SMHC) project publishes case studies on effective practices in seven districts and three organizations.

The SMHC case studies were released at the first Strategic Management of Human Capital (SMHC) National Conference, which took place Nov. 18-19, 2008, in Washington, DC. Together, the case studies identify successful school districts and programs that use talent management practices and the specific steps they took to implement them.

The districts and programs reviewed were Boston, Chicago, Fairfax County, Long Beach, New York City, Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, New Leaders for New Schools and the State of Minnesota's Q Comp program. Visit <http://www.smhc-cpre.org/resources/> to read these case studies, as well as a **cross-case analysis that identifies common threads across the five districts**, including that urban districts can recruit top quality teachers and principals by deploying a multifaceted human resources strategy. The cross-case analysis and the specific cases provide many details behind these significant overall findings. The cross-case analysis can be accessed at <http://www.smhc-cpre.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/smhc-cross-case-analysis.pdf>.

All SMHC National Conference presentations are available at [www.smhc-cpre.org](http://www.smhc-cpre.org).

According to Allan Odden and Jim Kelly, Co-Directors of SMHC, **the plan for 2009 is to create a nationwide effort to induce more urban districts to engage in multiple strategies to enhance the talent and effectiveness of teachers, principals and central office HR staff**. SMHC also hopes to create new urban district partnerships with degree-granter and talent-provider organizations to produce more talented teachers and principals with the skills needed to be effective in urban districts. In addition, SMHC will work on issues related to teacher and principal development and evaluation.

SMHC also intends to address the issue of retention and rewards and has produced **five papers on new approaches to teacher compensation** that can be used by districts and states who want to work on this issue. These papers can be accessed at the resources section of the SMHC website: [www.smhc-cpre.org](http://www.smhc-cpre.org).

Odden also was quoted in The New York Times (Nov. 12, 2008) in a Page One story on efforts by Michelle Rhee, chancellor of the Washington, DC, public schools, to get teachers to give up tenure. To read the story: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/13/education/13tenure.html?\\_r=1&hp&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/13/education/13tenure.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin)

## **CPRE Founder and TC President Susan Fuhrman signs letter of intent for TC to partner with the Dominican Republic.**

Teachers College has taken a major step in developing closer ties with the Dominican Republic. On Dec. 2, President Susan Fuhrman signed a letter of intent with Melanio Paredes, the Dominican Republic's Secretary of Education, which paves the way for TC and Dominican education officials to develop a partnership that will assist the Caribbean country in improving its educational system.

## **With Nancy W. Streim, Associate Vice President of TC, Fuhrman authored a commentary in the Nov. 12, 2008, edition of *Education Week* titled "Universities and Public Schools: A Partnership Whose Time Has Come."**

Their essay discussed an essential quid pro quo: "There must be genuine, agreed-upon benefits for both partners. The university that sends its researchers into a public school merely to obtain data will generate little more than resentment. Instead, universities must approach partnerships with the stated aim of improving student outcomes—and then take accountability for the results. They must also be willing to provide tangible benefits, such as professional-development opportunities for teachers, the assignment of on-site specialists and interns to decrease students-to-teacher ratios, and access to campus resources.

"At the same time, the public school that looks merely for a handout will soon alienate its academic partner. Instead, the school must commit to a climate conducive to both research and change, with buy-in starting at the top and emanating across staff members, parents, and other stakeholders. All of this must result from careful assessment—both beforehand and ongoing—of where common ground lies and where the impact will be greatest. Technology? The arts? Mathematics? The answers depend on a painstaking effort to address the range of supports needed to ensure that all students reap the desired academic and social benefits of the partnership."

Read the commentary at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/news/article.htm?id=6753>.

## **ETS posts policy notes from its forum "School Finance and the Achievement Gap: Funding Programs That Work."**

CPRE-Penn Co-Director Margaret Goertz participated in the May, 2008, conference in Princeton, on the topic, "From Equity to Adequacy, 40 Years of School Funding Litigation."

ETS sponsored and hosted the event, with coconveners CPRE and the Education Law Center. Topics included

- Framing and understanding the achievement and resource gaps
- Moving from "equity" to "adequacy"
- Promising practices and challenging issues in resource allocation and accountability
- Effective programs to close the achievement gap and what they cost
- Policy, legislative, state and local perspectives on delivering programs that work

To read the report published by the ETS Policy Information Center, go to

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICPN163.pdf>

### **CPRE-Penn Senior Researcher Leslie Nabors Oláh discusses the future of special education policy.**

Leslie Nabors Oláh participated in the panel, "Special Education Policy: Future Trends and Challenges," aired Nov. 10, 2008, by WHYY public radio in Philadelphia. Panelists discussed the goals of special education in the United States, educational opportunities for children with disabilities, and the current state of research on special education.

Oláh also was interviewed by The Washington Post for a story on how the debate over vouchers has put a focus on school reform efforts in Washington, DC. To read the story, published Oct. 17, 2008: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/16/AR2008101603642.html?sid=ST200810170084>

### **In an essay on Huffington Post, CPRE-Stanford Senior Researcher Martin Carnoy weighs in on the next Education Secretary.**

In the essay, Carnoy says that, "For the first time since the early 1970s, we may have an opportunity to improve the educational system where it is now least effective, in large urban and poor rural and semi-rural school districts." To read the essay, go to

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/martin-carnoy/whom-will-he-choose\\_b\\_148988.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/martin-carnoy/whom-will-he-choose_b_148988.html)

### **CPRE-Stanford Senior Researcher Mike Kirst blogs on college admission topics to aid students, parents, and school counselors.**

Kirst discusses the important and complex subjects of **college completion**, **college success**, student risk factors (for failing), **college readiness**, and academic preparation. He explores the pieces of the college puzzle that heavily influence, if not determine, college success rates.

Go to <http://thecollegepuzzle.blogspot.com/>

### **Update on CPRE's Center on Continuous Instructional Improvement (CCII)**

In 2008, CCII held two meetings on Learning Progressions in Science, with researchers from several institutions presenting their work on developing learning progressions in different content areas, with ensuing discussions on

the theoretical underpinnings of LPs,  
identifying useful LP structures and criteria,  
testing and validating LPs,  
connecting the work already conducted in different content areas and at different levels of development,  
discussing ways LPs can be used in the field to support teaching and learning, and  
locating gaps in the existing work and advancing the development of a R&D agenda.

To visit CCII's website, go to <http://www.cci-cpre.org>

## **CPRE-Michigan Senior Researcher Deborah Loewenberg Ball publishes on mathematics and on content knowledge for teaching.**

**Newly published chapter in the 2008 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: The role of mathematics in education for democracy**—Deborah Ball, who is Dean of Michigan's School of Education, has published, with Hyman Bass, a chapter in the 2008 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE). "The role of mathematics in education for democracy" addresses how to relate meaningful classroom experiences to greater public purposes, specifically in mathematics classrooms. They argue that mathematics instruction can embrace, uphold, and promote the norms, skills, and dispositions of democracy..

[go to the publication listing for this chapter »](#)

### **New publication in Journal of Teacher Education—Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special?**

Deborah Ball, Mark Thames, and Geoffrey Phelps have authored an article in the November/December 2008 issue of the Journal of Teacher Education, reporting on their efforts to develop a practice-based theory of content knowledge for teaching built on Shulman's notion of pedagogical content knowledge. Their research uncovers an important subdomain of "pure" content knowledge unique to the work of teaching—*specialized content knowledge*—that is distinct from the content knowledge needed in other mathematically-intense occupations.

[go to the SAGE website to download this paper »](#)

In addition, The Washington Post interviewed Deborah Ball for a piece that appeared on November 6 entitled, "An Addition to the classroom: With untrained elementary teachers, more schools turn to specialists." She also was interviewed by CBS Radio on the issue.

[go to the Washington Post article »](#)

In October, she delivered a presentation at the National Mathematics Panel Forum. To [download Ball's presentation from the Panel Forum: Teachers and teacher education \(PDF\)](#)  
[go to the National Math Panel Forum website »](#)

In September, she addressed congressional staff on the issue of teacher quality at a briefing on Capital Hill. The presentation was part of the larger Learning and Education Academic Research Network (LEARN) Congressional Briefing, *Teacher Quality: Research on the Science of Teaching and Learning*. LEARN is a coalition of 17 deans from the nation's leading research schools of education who inform policymakers on new research and the importance of education science to education practice.

## **CPRE on the World Wide Web**

For more information about CPRE research, check out our websites:

[CPRE-University of Pennsylvania website](#)

[Center on Continuous Instructional Improvement \(CCII\)](#)

[Study of School Leadership](#)

[\(CPRE-Michigan\) Study of Instructional Improvement \(SII\)](#)

[\(CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison\) Strategic Management of Human Capital Project \(SMHC\)](#)

[CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison website](#) (School Finance)

[CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison website](#) (Teacher Compensation)

## Editors' Notes

We appreciate your interest in CPRE research and welcome any comments or questions. Please e-mail us at [insites@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:insites@gse.upenn.edu).

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With the growing use of antispam filters, we have seen an increase in the number of returned e-mails when we send out this newsletter. If you think that you may have missed an issue of *CPRE In-Sites*, you can view previous newsletters on our website by [clicking here](#). If you have a colleague who you think would be interested in this issue of *CPRE In-Sites*, please pass it along!

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