

Subject: CPRE In-Sites, Issue 31 (April 2005)
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Date: Wed, 06 Apr 2005 17:11:16 -0400
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New Publications

CPRE recently released findings from a current study examining how high schools of different performance levels and contexts, residing in states with different forms of high-stakes accountability and support systems, identify, understand, and respond to the gap between their current levels of performance and external expectations for their performance. The study, known as the Study of High School Strategies for Instructional Improvement, examines how 48 low-performing high schools located in 34 school districts across six states respond to state accountability policies.

CPRE has published findings from the study in two formats: a short policy brief and a full report. Below is a brief description of both publications bearing the same title:

Holding High Hopes: How High Schools Respond to State Accountability Policies

The recently released policy brief, written by Margaret Goertz and Diane Massell, reviews the study's key findings regarding school responses to accountability, school response processes and use of external resources, and the role of district intervention and school resistance. It concludes with a discussion of implications of the findings for policymakers.

Copies of this policy brief are available free of charge at <http://www.cpre.org/Publications/rb42.pdf>.

The research report, edited by Betheny Gross and Margaret Goertz, is comprised of a series of six chapters examining issues related to the interpretation of accountability policies and the response of high schools and districts. The chapters, written by a team of CPRE researchers, draw on the same sources of data, but each one brings a unique perspective to these data and also differs in the level of the educational establishment it brings to focus. The report concludes with a discussion of the themes of states' influence on local agents through accountability policy, the consequences of this influence, and policy directions states should consider as this policy is further developed.

This report will soon be available for download on CPRE's website, www.cpre.org.

Dashboard Lights: Monitoring Implementation of District Instructional Reform Strategies

This report, written by Jonathan Supovitz and John Weathers, describes a system implemented by education leaders in the Duval County Public Schools, Florida, designed to monitor the district's instructional reform efforts and the influences of the system on teachers, schools, and district leaders. The system is called the Standards Implementation Snapshot System, and it is designed to take a picture, or "snapshot," at a particular point in time of the depth to which schools in Duval County are implementing key elements of the district's reform vision. The report outlines how the snapshot system works and describes the effects of the system on district efforts, as reported by principals and district administrators. The authors conclude with a discussion of the system's implications for district reform efforts.

This report is available for download at <http://www.cpre.org/Publications/pdf/snapshotstudy.pdf>.

Implementing the *No Child Left Behind Act*: Challenges for the States

This article, written by Margaret Goertz, and soon to be published in *The Peabody Journal of Education*, examines the challenges facing states as they implement the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB). In this article, Goertz addresses the role federal policy has played in supporting standards-based reform since the early 1990s and the evolution of the NCLB Act as a means to align state policy and set more ambitious and uniform improvement goals for schools throughout the nation. The article outlines the major consequences that NCLB will have on how states and school districts hold schools accountable for student performance, and concludes that its success depends on the willingness and capacity of states and localities to enact its more stringent provision given that most states and schools lack the human and fiscal resources to support such ambitious improvement efforts.

This article will appear in the upcoming issue, Volume 80, Issue 2, which is to be released in mid-to-late April. To request a carbon copy of this article in advance, please email insites@gse.upenn.edu, or visit the publisher's website to download a copy upon release: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabodyjournal/issues.html>.

Recent Publications

Catching Up With the Vaughn Express: Six Years of Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation and Performance Pay

This article, written by Eileen Kellor and soon to be published in the *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, describes the longstanding traditional methods of paying and evaluating teachers in the United States and addresses the increasingly common discussions about changing these systems to support teacher quality and student achievement goals. The study reveals that efforts to make significant changes to these programs can be difficult and take many years to design, gain approval, and implement; thus, few examples of alternative teacher compensation and evaluation systems exist. In contrast, Kellor notes, relieved from many of the restrictions and requirements associated with most traditional public school systems, charter schools often are better positioned to implement changes more quickly than a traditional school. Yet their experiences can provide useful information for others who are engaging in similar activities. Thus, the experience of a large urban charter school that designed and implemented an innovative teacher compensation system and a standards-based teacher evaluation system that has been in place for six years offers important lessons in designing, implementing, evaluating, and refining these systems.

To order a copy of this article, please e-mail insites@gse.upenn.edu, or visit the *Education Policy Analysis Archives* at <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/>.

Developing Measures of Content Knowledge for Teaching Reading

In this article appearing in *The Elementary School Journal*, authors Geoffrey Phelps and Stephen Schilling explore the unexplored territory of what teachers need to know about reading to teach it effectively—also known as pedagogical content knowledge. This article presents results from a project to develop survey measures of the content knowledge teachers need to teach elementary reading effectively. Findings reveal that teachers need to develop knowledge across multiple content knowledge dimensions, not simply to acquire general areas of knowledge or general reading ability.

To order a copy of this article, please e-mail insites@gse.upenn.edu.

Experimenting With Teacher Compensation

This article, written by Allan Odden and Marc Wallace and published in *The School Administrator*, explores the variations in how far districts are willing to go in terms of changing the pay structure and defining and assessing teacher performance in order to improve student achievement. The authors highlight states and local districts throughout the United States that have adopted new approaches to teacher compensation and offer recommendations for creating fair and effective compensation plans that encourage and support the highly qualified teachers that all schools demand in pursuit of improved student learning gains.

To order a copy of this article, please e-mail us at insites@gse.upenn.edu.

From Whole School to Whole School Reform

This report, written by Monica Martinez and James Harvey of the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR), is based on proceedings from a working conference convened to critically review the history of whole school reform. NCCSR organized the conference in partnership with CPRE, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and the New American Schools. The resulting report highlights proceedings from the meeting that provide strategies and policy recommendations at the federal, state, and district levels for the support of improved, whole school reform initiatives in the future.

Please note that NCCSR has discontinued operation as of November 2004. The new clearinghouse is the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (www.csrclearinghouse.com).

To order a copy of this report, please e-mail insites@gse.upenn.edu.

Implementing Teacher Evaluation Systems: How Principals Make Sense of Complex Artifacts to Shape Local Instructional Practice

This study examining how local school district leaders make sense of complex programs designed to evaluate teachers and teaching recently appeared in a book in the series entitled *Research and Theory in Educational Administration*. The authors, Richard Halverson, Carolyn Kelley, and Steven Kimball, examine the ways in which schools and district leaders emphasize and select from the many features of a teacher evaluation framework in the implementation process.

To order a copy of this chapter, please e-mail us at insites@gse.upenn.edu.

For more information about the book, *Educational Administration, Policy, and Reform: Research and Measurement*, contact Information Age Publishing, Inc. at <http://www.infoagepub.com/www/ordering.html>.

Using Instructional Logs to Study Mathematics Curriculum and Teaching in the Early Grades

Authors Brian Rowan, Delena M. Harrison, and Andrew Hayes address the shortcomings in previous survey research on instruction by presenting new survey data on mathematics education using data from teacher logs. Their findings were published recently in *The Elementary School Journal* and describe the mathematics curriculum and teaching practices in a selection of high-poverty elementary schools working with three of the most widely disseminated comprehensive school reform programs in the United States—the Accelerated Schools Program, America's Choice, and Success for All.

To order a copy of this article, please e-mail insites@gse.upenn.edu.

Using Teacher Logs to Measure the Enacted Curriculum: A Study of Literacy Teaching in Third-Grade Classrooms

In this article featured recently in *The Elementary School Journal*, authors Brian Rowan, Eric Camburn, and Richard Correnti examine methodological and conceptual issues that emerge when researchers measure the enacted curriculum in schools. The authors discuss how a specific approach to measuring the enacted curriculum—instructional logs (or time diaries)—can address the challenges many researchers face in attempting to use current procedures such as large-scale surveys (typically administered annually) and qualitative studies of instruction (typically a few observations are conducted each year). Both methods raise questions about how completely curriculum coverage is sampled over a given school year and call for more attention to the theoretical foundations of research.

To order a copy of this article, please e-mail insites@gse.upenn.edu.

Why Do High-Poverty Schools Have Difficulty Staffing Their Classrooms With Qualified Teachers?

This report, written by Richard Ingersoll and prepared for *Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future: A National*

Task Force on Public Education, highlights findings from Ingersoll's study investigating the possibility that factors such as the characteristics and conditions of schools are behind the teacher shortage crisis. Unlike earlier research, this analysis focuses on those kinds of schools deemed most disadvantaged and most needy—those serving rural and urban, low-income communities. The findings show that school staffing problems are primarily due to a “revolving door”—where large numbers of qualified teachers depart from their jobs long before retirement—contrary to the previous belief that staffing problems were due to an insufficient supply of qualified teachers.

To obtain copies, visit the Center for American Progress website,
<http://www.americanprogress.org/atf/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/Ingersoll-FINAL.pdf>.

Books by CPRE Researchers

School Reform From the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance

Richard F. Elmore

In *School Reform From the Inside Out*, Richard Elmore tackles issues ranging from teacher development to testing to “failing” schools. The essays in this book embody a particular stance that is expressed by the thesis that “the problems of the system are the problems of the smallest unit.” As Elmore aptly notes, successful school reform begins “from the inside out” with teachers, administrators, and school staff, not with external mandates or standards. This collection of essays is intended for any school leader, education reformer, policymaker, or citizen interested in the forces that promote real school change.

To order copies of this book, visit the Harvard Education Publishing Group's website,
<https://secure.edletter.org/orderbooks/>

From High School to College: Improving Opportunities for Success in Postsecondary Education

Michael W. Kirst and Andrea Venezia (Eds.)

This recently released book presents findings of a major research project that examined the fit between high-school-level policies regarding college preparation and what colleges considered when admitting first-year students and placing them into college-level courses. Edited by Michael W. Kirst and Andrea Venezia, this study reveals the fragmentation of current K-12 and postsecondary education systems that results in unnecessary barriers for students and sends students and parents inaccurate messages about what is expected at the postsecondary level. The book offers recommendations for changes in several policy areas—including curriculum development and assessment—that could result in improved opportunities for all students to succeed at the postsecondary level.

Copies of this book can be ordered directly through John Wiley and Sons, Inc. at
<http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-078797062X.html>.

CPRE In The News

Jonathan Supovitz, CPRE Senior Researcher, recently appeared on Radio Times on WHYY 91-FM as a guest participating in a discussion about what's wrong with high schools today and the current nationwide interest in reinventing high schools. Supovitz talked mostly about CPRE's recent study, highlighted in the New Publications section of this issue, examining a stratified random sample of 48 below-average-performing high schools, their awareness of and response to their state's accountability system, and their search for ways to improve their performance. Supovitz highlighted findings from the study. He said, summarizing, “in the study, we found that regardless of state context, school leaders were generally aware of their state accountability system. Further, efforts to improve were wide-ranging, including aligning curriculum to state standards, adding basic skills or advanced academic courses, and tutoring and test preparation programs. Efforts to improve the reading skills of high school students were particularly prevalent. However, the decision-making and search processes in most of the high schools in the sample were often haphazard and left up to individual teachers acting on their own initiative. Additionally, we found that departments, often considered the core academic unit within high schools, played almost no role in the search for academic responses to low performance. In sum, while we found a generally higher level of activity in high-stakes systems, state accountability systems were not sufficient in and of themselves to motivate action consistently across districts or schools. Even staff in the lowest performing schools in the high-accountability states felt little press, and

reacted only minimally.”

Upcoming Meetings

American Educational Research Association to Host Annual Meeting in Montréal, Canada

The annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) will take place from Monday, April 11, to Friday, April 15, in Montréal, Canada. The theme for this year’s meeting will be “Demography and Democracy in the Era of Accountability.”

CPRE Communications will host a booth in the conference’s exhibit hall, located in the Exhibit Hall of the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Montréal. Publications will be available free of charge, and representatives will be available to answer questions about CPRE research. Please stop by booth #1019 and visit us!

For more information, please visit the [AERA annual meeting website](#).

CPRE-Wisconsin Listserv

CPRE’s office at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) sponsors a listserv for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers with an interest in school finance and teacher compensation. By subscribing to the listserv, you will be able to get the most up-to-date information on upcoming events, publications, research projects, and other related items of interest. Please go to the [CPRE-UW website](#) to subscribe or to see previous issues of the newsletter.

CPRE on the World Wide Web

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

[CPRE-University of Pennsylvania website](#)

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

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

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

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

Editors' Notes

CPRE In-Sites is now published on a bimonthly basis. As always, we appreciate your interest in CPRE research and welcome any comments or questions. Please e-mail us at insites@gse.upenn.edu.

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If you have a colleague who you think would be interested in this issue of *CPRE In-Sites*, please pass it along!

CPRE In-Sites

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