



## April 2006 In-Sites

### New From CPRE Researchers

#### Scaling Up Instructional Improvement Through Teacher Professional Development: Insights From the Local Systemic Change Initiative

A new CPRE Policy Brief by Iris R. Weiss and Joan D. Pasley of Horizon Research, Inc. summarizes the findings of Horizon's evaluation of a major professional development program funded by the National Science Foundation: Local Systemic Change Through Teacher Enhancement. Now in its final stage, this program has trained 70,000 teachers working with an estimated two million students, mostly at the K-8 level, since its establishment in 1995. The brief examines the design, impact, and systemic support components of the initiative and discusses key challenges and successes. Although the impact on improving teachers' understanding of mathematics and science content was generally modest, the program succeeded in providing a large number of teachers with more high-quality professional development around mathematics and science than is typical, and individual local projects built considerable stakeholder and policy support for ongoing work in accordance with the program's vision.

To download a copy of this brief, click [here](#).

#### The Black-White Achievement Gap: Do State Policies Matter?

This article by Henry I. Braun, Aubrey Wang, Frank Jenkins, and Elliot Weinbaum, published recently in *Education Policy Analysis Archives* (Vol. 14, No. 8), addresses a longstanding issue in American education, the gap in academic achievement between majority and minority students. The article accumulates and evaluates evidence on the relationship between state education policies and changes in the gap, while addressing some of the methodological issues that have led to differences in interpretations of earlier findings. The authors found substantial heterogeneity among states in the types of policies they pursued, as well as in the coherence and consistency of those policies during the period 1988-1998. States' overall policy rankings correlate moderately with their record in improving Black student achievement but are somewhat less useful in predicting their record in reducing achievement gaps. State reform efforts are a blunt tool, but a tool nonetheless. The authors make recommendations for state policymakers, such as direct support of local reform efforts with proven effectiveness in addressing the experiences of students of different races attending the same schools.

To obtain a copy of this article, click [here](#).

#### State Education Policy in the New Millennium

This article by Margaret E. Goertz appears in the fourth edition of *The State of the States*, edited by Carl E. Van Horn and published by Congressional Quarterly Press in December 2005. Goertz examines key features of current state education policy. She describes the social, economic, and political contexts of education policy at the state level and surveys major issues in state policy in five areas: curriculum and instruction, accountability, teachers, governance, and finance. She concludes that state policymakers face many challenges, reflecting continuing tensions between reform values such as equity and excellence. As states grapple with these challenges in an era of standards-based reform, greater choice, and a stronger federal role, education bids fair to remain central to state policy for the foreseeable future.

To request a copy of this article, please e-mail [insites@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:insites@gse.upenn.edu).

## Recent Publications

### Reaching for Common Ground in K-12 Mathematics Education

This article in the October 2005 issue of *Notices of the American Mathematical Society* (Vol. 52, No. 9, pages 1055-1058) summarizes a document on common ground in K-12 mathematics education. The document was completed in June 2005 by a panel of distinguished mathematicians and mathematics educators including the article's authors, Deborah Loewenberg Ball, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Jeremy Kilpatrick, R. James Milgram, Wilfred Schmidt, and Richard Schaar. The document describes shared premises about expectations for what students should know about mathematics when they leave high school, and it identifies key areas of agreement among panel members regarding recall of basic facts, the use of calculators, skills in using algorithms and fractions, real-world problem solving, and the importance of developing teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge.

To download a copy of this article, click [here](#).

### Bridging the Governance Divide

A report by Andrea Venezia, Patrick M. Callan, Joni E. Finney, Michael W. Kirst, and Michael D. Usdan examines the governance gap between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors. *The Governance Divide: A Report on a Four-State Study on Improving College Readiness and Success*, published in the fall of 2005 by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, proposes a set of state policy levers that can be used to create meaningful changes for students, identifies other factors states face as they seek to improve transitions between high school and college, provides state leaders with real-world policy choices, and offers recommendations to help states transform ad hoc approaches into sustained action and institutionalized, long-term K-16 reforms.

To download a copy of this report, click [here](#).

### Teacher Quality and Educational Equality: Do Teachers With Higher Standards-Based Evaluation Ratings Close Student Achievement Gaps?

The September 2005 issue of the *Elementary School Journal* (Vol. 106, No. 1, pages 3-20) features this article by Geoffrey D. Borman and Steven M. Kimball, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Using standards-based evaluation ratings for nearly 400 teachers and achievement results for over 7,000 students from grades 4 to 6, this study investigated the distribution and achievement effects of teacher quality in

Washoe County, a mid-sized school district serving Reno and Sparks, Nevada. Classrooms with higher concentrations of minority, poor, and low-achieving students were more likely to be taught by teachers with lower evaluation scores. Two-level multilevel models, nesting students within classrooms, tended to show higher mean achievement in classrooms taught by teachers of higher than of lower quality, with differences of approximately one tenth of one standard deviation. Findings relating teacher quality to closing within-classroom achievement gaps, though, were mixed. The authors discuss implications related to teacher evaluation, teacher quality, and educational inequality.

To request a copy of this article, please e-mail [insites@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:insites@gse.upenn.edu).

## Primary School Leadership Practice: How the Subject Matters

The September 2005 issue of *School Leadership and Management* (Vol. 25, No. 4, pages 383-397) features this article by James P. Spillane. The publication explores how the practice of leadership in primary schools is structured differently depending on the school subject. The issues addressed in the article are based on data from the Distributed Leadership Study, a five-year longitudinal study of school leadership in kindergarten to grade 5 (K-5) and kindergarten to grade 8 (K-8) schools in the Chicago area. Spillane argues several key points. First, teaching is a critical consideration in investigations of primary school leadership, and not just as an outcome variable; specifically, factoring in instruction as an explanatory variable in scholarship on school leadership involves moving away from views of teaching as a monolithic or unitary practice. Second, when it comes to leadership in primary schools, the subject matters. And finally, more sophisticated constructions of teaching are necessary that take into account the subject matter (e.g., mathematics, literacy) and the dimension of teaching (e.g., content, teaching strategies).

To download a copy of this article, visit

[http://hub.mspnet.org/media/data/SLM\\_Spillane.pdf?media\\_000000001426.pdf](http://hub.mspnet.org/media/data/SLM_Spillane.pdf?media_000000001426.pdf).

## Knowing Mathematics for Teaching

In this article in the fall 2005 issue of *American Educator*, Deborah Loewenberg Ball, Heather C. Hill, and Hyman Bass describe their research on the link between student achievement and teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching. They argue that teaching mathematics effectively requires both common knowledge of the subject and specialized knowledge of how to teach it. This specialized knowledge entails thinking from the learner's perspective and expressing ideas fluently in mathematical terms. Working with colleagues in CPRE's Study of Instructional Improvement at the University of Michigan, the authors developed and tested measures of common and specialized mathematical knowledge. They found that teachers' performance on such measures significantly predicted the size of student test score gains. The authors discuss implications of their findings for teacher preparation, professional development, and future research.

To download a copy of this article, visit

[http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_educator/issues/fall2005/BallF05.pdf](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2005/BallF05.pdf).

## Books by CPRE Researchers

### New Directions in Education Policy Implementation: Confronting Complexity

Meredith I. Honig (Ed.)

This volume, to be published in July 2006 by State University of New York Press, features articles on

education policy implementation by a number of distinguished scholars in the field, including CPRE researchers James P. Spillane and Heather C. Hill. Education policy implementation is defined in the volume as the complex product of the interaction among particular policies, people, and places. The contributors analyze past and present implementation research and show that current research builds on the past but also endeavors to provide more nuanced and rigorous explanations of implementation. They contend that researchers and practitioners can help improve education policy implementation by asking not only what works, but also what works for whom, where, when, and why.

For more information and to preorder the volume from SUNY Press, click [here](#).

## Politics, Ideology, and Education: Federal Policy During the Clinton and Bush Administrations

Elizabeth H. DeBray

In March 2006, Teachers College Press published this book by former CPRE researcher DeBray and featuring a foreword by Carl Kaestle. DeBray examines the politics of federal education policy during the two administrations through the lens of the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and illustrates the new dynamics of political interactions and policy formulations as they affect public education issues. The book describes the administrations' attempts to pass major education reform bills, examines changes in institutional relationships that left practitioner groups out of the policy process, shows how congressional leaders were able to compromise on key provisions, and analyzes the changed political and institutional environment in which education policy decisions will be made in the new century.

Click [here](#) to access ordering information from the publisher.

## Distributed Leadership

James P. Spillane

In January 2006, Jossey-Bass published a new volume by CPRE researcher Spillane. Distributed leadership is an exciting, new concept in education that concerns the ways in which leadership is exercised in everyday practice through communications and actions, and via others in the school community like teachers and parents. Spillane's book examines the distribution of leadership among administrators, specialists, and teachers in the school, and explains the ways in which leadership practice is stretched over leaders, followers, and aspects of the situation, including routines and tools of various sorts in the organization such as memos, scheduling procedures, and evaluation protocols. Spillane offers an overview of distributed leadership, a summary of research, examples of promising practice, and guidelines for the future.

Click [here](#) to access ordering information from the publisher.

## Upcoming Meetings

### CPRE Presentations Offered at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco

The annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) will take place from Friday, April 7, to Tuesday, April 11, in San Francisco, California. The theme for this year's meeting will be Education Research in the Public Interest.

Many CPRE researchers will deliver presentations at the meetings. CPRE's recent work with high schools will be featured in a session titled "Changing Times: How High Schools and External Improvement Organizations Work Together." Findings from CPRE-Wisconsin research on resource allocation and on teacher quality will be reported in several sessions. CPRE has recently begun to study the measurement of school leadership for evaluation of large-scale programs, and a session will address early findings.

CPRE Communications will host a booth in the Moscone Center West exhibit hall. Publications will be available free of charge, and representatives will be on hand to answer questions about CPRE research. Copies of the schedule of presentations by CPRE staff will also be available. Please stop by booth #528 and visit us!

For more information, please visit the AERA annual meeting website:  
<http://www.aera.net/annualmeeting/?id=282>.

## 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 editions 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](mailto:insites@gse.upenn.edu).

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With the growing use of anti-spam 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 at 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!

CPRE In-Sites

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