

Subject: CPRE In-Sites, Issue 34 (October 2005)

From: Kelly Stanton <stantonk@gse.upenn.edu>

Date: Fri, 07 Oct 2005 12:00:48 -0400

To: Kelly Stanton <stantonk@gse.upenn.edu>



New From CPRE

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

The current issue of the *Elementary School Journal* (Vol. 106, No. 1, pages 3-20) features the article by Geoffrey D. Borman and Steven M. Kimball, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Teacher Quality and Educational Equality: Do Teachers with Higher Standards-Based Evaluation Ratings Close Student Achievement Gaps?" Using standards-based evaluation ratings for nearly 400 teachers and achievement results for over 7,000 students from grades 4-6, 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.

Primary School Leadership Practice: How the Subject Matters

The September issue of *School Leadership and Management* (Vol. 25, No. 4, pages 383-397) features "Primary School Leadership Practice: How the Subject Matters," an article written by James P. Spillane. This article explores how the practice of leadership in primary schools is structured differently depending on the school subject. The issues addressed are based on data from the Distributed Leadership Study, a 5-year longitudinal study of school leadership in kindergarten to grade 5 and kindergarten to grade 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. The practice of leadership differs depending on the school subject. Hence, more sophisticated conceptualizations 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) in research on school leadership.

To download a copy of this article, visit http://hub.mspnet.org/media/data/SLM_Spillane.pdf?media_00000001426.pdf.

Reaching For Common Ground in K-12 Mathematics Education

Over the past decade, much debate has arisen between mathematicians and mathematics educators. These debates have significantly distracted the attention of key players at all levels and have impeded efforts to improve mathematics learning in this country. This document, recently written by a panel of distinguished mathematicians and mathematics educators including Deborah Loewenberg Ball, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Jeremy Kilpatrick, R. James Milgram, Wilfred Schmid, and Richard Schaar and published in the *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, represents an attempt to identify a preliminary list of positions and to bring clarity to key perspectives on K–12 mathematics education.

This document is based on the proceedings of two sessions convened in 2004 and 2005 for the purpose of reaching common ground in K–12 mathematics education. The panel was focused on developing common elements of understanding in order to focus on student outcomes instead of controversy and to forge new alliances, across communities, necessary to develop effective solutions to the serious problems that plague mathematics education in this country. As the document indicates, after the two sessions, the group was able to coalesce around some very specific principles which should serve as common ground.

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

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 [American Educator](#) or visit [Deborah Ball's](#) personal homepage for a direct link to the article.

Meeting the Challenges of Urban Schools: Lessons From a United States/United Kingdom Bilateral Conference on Urban Education

This brochure highlights key lessons learned from a bilateral conference between CPRE and the University of London's Institute of Education sponsored by the Goldman Sachs Foundation. The bilateral conference, held in December 2004, was intended to provide education researchers from both nations a forum to share their experiences, learn from each other, and consider which current approaches to urban schooling seem promising—with a focus on England in the UK.

This brochure provides lessons learned from this intense and diverse exchange of ideas and offers suggestions for moving forward in both policy and research to improve urban schools.

To download a copy of this brochure, visit [CPRE's website](#).

Recent Publications

Can Pensions Help Attract Teachers?

The spring 2005 issue of the *Journal of Education Finance* (Vol. 30, No. 4, pages 399-411), features the article "Can Pensions Help Attract Teachers" by Steven M. Kimball, Herbert G. Heneman III, and Eileen M. Kellor. In this article, the authors review characteristics of teachers' pensions and present several proposals to change pensions in ways that might increase teacher attraction and mobility. The authors also discuss key research questions awaiting investigation and factors that make pensions ineffective in teacher attraction.

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

Effects of Teachers Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching on Student Achievement

This study, written by Heather C. Hill, Brian Rowan, and Deborah Loewenberg Ball and published in the summer 2005 issue of the *American Educational Research Journal* (Vol. 42, No. 2, pages 371-406), explores whether and how teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching contributes to gains in students' mathematics achievement. In recent years, the issue of teachers' knowledge of the subject matter they teach has attracted increasing attention from policymakers, but to date, past research has inadequately specified what counts as "subject matter knowledge for teaching" and how it relates to student achievement.

To download a copy of this article, visit the [American Educational Research Association](#).

Standards Deviation: How Schools Misunderstand Education Policy

This policy brief, written by James P. Spillane, summarizes the findings of his recent book, *Standards Deviation: How Schools Misunderstand Education Policy*, which examines state and local government relations as the standards move from the statehouse to the district policymakers to the teachers who attempt to make sense of them. Spillane's research takes a case study approach, focusing on a single state, Michigan, and strategically sampled school districts. The brief provides an overview of the study's findings and identifies implications of the study for policy outcomes, analysis, and design.

To download a copy of this policy brief, visit <http://www.cpre.org/Publications/rb43.pdf>.

The book was published in 2004 by Harvard University Press. To order a copy of it, visit <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/SPISTA.html>.

Books by CPRE Researchers

The Public Schools

Susan Fuhrman and Marvin Lazerson (Eds.)

>From curriculum standards and testing to school choice and civic learning, issues in American education are some of the most debated in the United States. *The Public Schools*, a collection of essays by some of the nation's leading education scholars and professionals, is designed to inform the debate and stimulate change.

In association with the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands and the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, *The Public Schools* is the first in a series of books commissioned to enhance public understanding of the nature and function of democratic institutions.

Each essay in *The Public Schools* addresses essential questions for policymakers, educators, and anyone committed to public education. What role should public education play in a democracy? How has that role changed through American history? Have the schools lost sight of their responsibility to teach civics and citizenship? How are current debates about education shaping the future of this democratic institution?

For more information about this book, and to order copies, contact [Oxford University Press](#).

CPRE in The News

Later this month CPRE will gather in Washington, DC to celebrate 20 years as a leading education policy research center, working to increase understanding of policies that may solve the problems of the nation's schools. We look

forward to this opportunity to thank all those who have supported CPRE over the years and to honor three distinguished guests for their outstanding contributions to education policy: James B. Hunt, Jr., a four-term governor of North Carolina and chairman of the Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy; Lynn Olson, an award-winning editor at *Education Week* and the executive project editor for *Quality Counts*, an annual report card on public education; and Robert Slavin, director of the Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University and chairman of the Success for All Foundation.

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.

Also, we respect your privacy and will not share or sell your e-mail/contact information. To unsubscribe, click on the link below. Write "Remove" in your subject heading, and we will promptly remove you from our listserv.

insites@gse.upenn.edu

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

Managing Editor
Kelly Stanton

Editor
Mark Rohland

Copyright 2005 by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education