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ABSTRACT

This publication shares highlights from the Eisenhower Professional Development Evaluation Conference, also introducing the upcoming Improving America's Schools (IAS) Conferences. The Eisenhower conference focused on improving content knowledge and instructional practice through effective professional development. The IAS conference will examine former President Clinton's executive order on improving low-performing schools. The first article describes how the Wyoming Department of Education polled teachers, administrators, and support staff to determine their feelings about staff development opportunities. Lack of time and funding and unmanageable workloads were the main obstacles to respondents statewide. Most districts used traditional staff development models with little systematic follow-up. Wyoming established a professional development strategic design team for creating a clearer focus of professional development statewide and building strategic partnerships. The second article describes performance indicators and how they can help improve Eisenhower programs. Performance indicators are measures that program staff can use to assess the extent to which they have met their objectives. They are intended to help staff plan, manage, monitor, and improve their program. The third article describes how New Hampshire built a corps of well-trained teachers via the Preservice Education Review Project. This project involved developing proficiency standards for teacher education in mathematics and science. (SM)

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EISENHOWER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION PUBLICATION
AUGUST-OCTOBER 2000

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In this edition of *Impact* we share highlights from the July Eisenhower Professional Development Evaluation Conference, and we also look ahead to the Improving America's Schools Conferences to be held this fall in California, Kentucky, and Washington, D.C.

At the Eisenhower conference, three packed days of sessions and activities focused on ways to improve content knowledge and instructional practice through effective professional development. We plan to share what was learned from educators and state coordinators who attended the Eisenhower conference with participants at the IAS sessions. (See the Events Calendar on the back page for IAS registration information.)

Also at the upcoming IAS conferences, we'll discuss President Clinton's executive order on improving low-performing schools. Professional development plays a central role in the effort to improve teacher performance, and there is a strong need to marshal resources to assist students in low-performing schools throughout the nation.

Since 1993, much has been accomplished in improving reading and math achievement, particularly by children in low-performing schools, but much work remains to be done. See page 5 for a list of resources for low-performing schools as well as information on how you can help in this important national effort.

As always, we at *Impact* welcome your suggestions and ideas for articles. To submit your ideas, or to request additional copies of the newsletter, contact Peggy Miles at (202) 260-2531 or Margaret_Miles@ed.gov. I hope to see you at the upcoming IAS conferences.

Dr. Arthur Cole
School Improvement Programs

FEATURE STORY: WYOMING
Modeling What They Monitor

What makes a professional development program successful? To answer that question, the Wyoming Department of Education went straight to the source, polling teachers, administrators, and support staff to find out how they really felt about the staff development opportunities available to them.

As part of a statewide needs assessment, 7,000 surveys were sent to Wyoming educators in spring 1999. To make the questions job-specific—and the responses as useful as possible—three different surveys were designed for administrators, teachers, and support staff. To encourage participation, if the school district had a 50 percent survey return rate the department promised to return individual results to the school districts so they could see for themselves what their needs were and plan activities accordingly.

"The response was phenomenal," notes Kay Vrooman, who administers Eisenhower grants for both K-12 and higher education in Wyoming. "We had a 57 percent response rate. Of the 7,000 surveys we sent out, 4,000 were returned."

What did Vrooman and her colleagues learn from the needs assessment? Following are some highlights:

- Lack of time, shortage of funding, and unmanageable workloads were the biggest obstacles to educators throughout the state. Other common issues were a lack of strategic planning time and the distances people often have to travel to participate in staff development opportunities.
- Most districts admitted they were using the traditional model of staff development, such as lectures and one-time workshops. People indicated that they were beginning to understand modeling, says Vrooman, "but they weren't quite there yet."
- Although most staff development programs focused on district and state standards and benchmarks, respondents indicated that there was a lack of systemic follow-up, a lack of evaluating progress.
- Almost all schools had a line item in the budget for staff development. More than half believed that staff development did impact classroom instruction, and a third believed it resulted in improved student test scores.

Vrooman, a classroom veteran who taught for 28 years, wasn't surprised to find that teachers

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ASK THE EXPERT:

What are performance indicators and how can they help improve Eisenhower programs?

Performance indicators are an integral part of a strategic planning process. The process begins with setting goals that support the overall mission of improving the entire education system. Based on these goals—general statements of desired outcomes—program staff develop objectives that are more specific statements of desired outcomes. Performance indicators, which come next, are measures that program staff can use to assess the extent to which those objectives are met.

For example, the overall goal of the Eisenhower program is to improve the quality of classroom teaching through professional development. Under this goal, program staff may develop the following objective:

Professional development is sustained, intensive, and high-quality, and has a lasting impact on classroom instruction.

Under this objective, we may then have the following indicator:

At least 60 percent of a sample of teachers will indicate that participation in Eisenhower-assisted professional development has resulted in an improvement in their knowledge and skills.

For a typical Eisenhower program, there may be three to seven objectives, each with one or two performance indicators.

There can be many different kinds of performance indicators. For example, there are input, process, output, outcome, and impact indicators. What we call them is not important. What is important is that we have indicators that cover the essential components of the program. In general, we should have indicators on professional development activities (e.g., participation in workshops, conferences, and study groups), how the activities affect the ways teachers teach, and how the different ways of teaching improve student achievement.

A good indicator is one that:

- Is conceptually or logically related to a key objective of the program
- Provides information that is useful for program management and improvement as well as accountability
- Requires data collection that is feasible in terms of cost and methods
- Identifies data sources from which accurate information can be gathered
- Can tell program staff whether a key objective has been met
- Reflects the best practice (e.g., professional development activities are content-focused, have extended duration, and involve collective participation of a school team)

Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, each federal program and agency is required to develop performance indicators and to report annual progress toward meeting these indicators. This is done as a way of ensuring that tax dollars are spent wisely and that programs produce results.

The purpose of performance indicators, however, goes beyond accountability. Performance indicators are also intended to help program staff plan, manage, monitor, and improve their program. This is accomplished by collecting indicator data from students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and others who participate in the program. Indicator data can be collected through interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations, and review of school records, including those containing student achievement information.

Student data can tell us whether students are performing at an acceptable level. Teacher data may reveal whether all program activities are working well. Administrator data can show where changes in policy and practice are needed to further strengthen the program. These findings can then be used to make mid-course corrections or other modifications to improve the program. Performance indicators provide program staff with a means of engaging in a continuous improvement process.

Dr. Kim Yap is the director of the Evaluation Program at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon. ■

GLENN COMMISSION TO RELEASE RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, chaired by former astronaut and U.S. Senator John Glenn, continues to work on a set of recommendations to raise the quality of mathematics and science teaching in all the nation's classrooms, thereby improving students' math and science achievement.

The commission's recommendations will focus on the needs of the existing cadre of teachers, on helping to ensure an adequate supply of highly skilled math and science teachers, and on increasing the appeal of the math and science teaching profession. The recommendations will also be designed to help assure that teachers, throughout their careers, can generate and share knowledge about math and science content and teaching methods.

The commission will release its report to U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley and the nation on October 3, 2000, at the National Air and Space Museum.

To learn more about the Glenn Commission, visit www.ed.gov/americacounts/glenn or call 1-877-220-9684.

Feature Story: New Hampshire
Building a Corps of Well-Trained Teachers

The faculty in higher education and their commitment to teaching are absolutely critical to the quality of instruction in engineering, mathematics, and the sciences provided to both majors and non-majors on our college campuses and also to the quality of instruction in K-12 classrooms through the future teachers they prepare.

—National Science Foundation, 1992

With an aging teacher population and a growing number of novice teachers leaving the profession, schools across the country face a looming teacher shortage. To help ensure that tomorrow's classrooms are led by capable, committed teachers, the New Hampshire Department of Education challenged universities and colleges throughout the state to examine their teacher preparation programs.

New Hampshire's Preservice Education Review Project (PERP) was developed as an answer to this call. Plymouth College, which manages the project, collaborated with other community colleges, universities, and institutions of higher education to explore what was happening in preservice preparation and develop a set of proficiency standards for teacher education in mathematics and science. Funding for PERP was possible by pooling Eisenhower Professional Development funds with money from the state Department of Education's Division of Educational Improvement.

"We wanted to enhance our work around standards-based education, particularly in math and science," explains Ed Hendry, who coordinates the Eisenhower Program in New Hampshire. "We began by asking, 'What is important knowledge? How should it be taught?'"

Colleges involved in PERP spent two years gathering data about the current status of math and science instruction, best practices in preservice preparation, and so forth. A steering committee of math and science professors from the colleges then met with hundreds of teachers to talk about what their preparation was like—what helped them the most, what they felt they lacked. "We were comparing what we thought should be happening with what was really happening," notes Hendry.

The information gleaned over these two years was distilled into a set of recommendations for faculty involved in teacher preparation, and then published in a document titled *A Consensus Model for Preservice Teacher Education in Mathematics and Science*. The book presents proficiency standards representing what prospective teachers in New Hampshire should know and be able to do: the knowledge they need about the way students think, learn, and behave; the knowledge they need relative to instruction and technology; and the knowledge they need in the content areas of mathematics and science.

What were some of these recommendations? For starters, teacher preparation institutions must ensure that all prospective teachers of mathematics or science:

- Have regular, ongoing opportunities to participate in both informal and formal learning situations
- Reflect on classroom and institutional practices using various techniques for self and collegial reflection such as peer coaching, portfolios, and journals
- Understand, analyze, and apply feedback about their teaching to improve their practice
- Share teaching experiences with mentors, teacher advisors, lead teachers, and resource teachers to support their professional development
- Seek and value contemporary research about teaching and learning
- Participate in doing mathematics and science in coursework and field settings
- Integrate and coordinate content with appropriate instructional theory and practice to meet the needs of a diverse student population

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Photo by Denise Jarrett-Weeks

WYOMING: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

felt staff development was "essential" for good teaching. The challenge, she believes, is in creating relevant, timely opportunities for participation.

"Developing more sustained programs is a big need for us," she notes. "Respondents said that 50 percent of staff development was sustained, and the other half was not. Wyoming has a staff development model, but the needs assessment has had an impact on us shifting to more 'job-embedded' staff development."

The needs assessment has been a useful tool for giving the department a "snapshot" view of professional development efforts throughout the state. In addition to school districts, results have been used by the governor's office, the University of Wyoming, and community colleges. "It gave us a glimpse of the quality of programs and the general attitudes toward them. By comparing that, it gave us a really good idea of where we in Wyoming were going with our programs," says Vrooman.

One new project that dovetails with the needs assessment is the Teacher-Quality Enhancement Grant, a cooperative effort among the department, the University of Wyoming, the Professional Teaching Standards Board, and the Wyoming School-University Partnership, comprised of the state's 48 school districts, seven community colleges, the University of Wyoming, and the department.

Representatives from these organizations met and brainstormed ways to improve staff development. First, they established three Professional Development Sites (PDS) to bring teacher education to local communities. They are also looking at their induction model, as well as reviewing university standards for classes in order to align teacher standards with student standards in the K-12 classroom. Because of the teacher shortage predicted in the coming years, Wyoming is also rethinking its certification process for teachers and designing alternative methods, such as evaluating portfolios and letting subject-area specialists without teaching certificates teach in their field as a part of a collaboration system.

Wyoming's small population means that many people, including educators, are separated by geographic distance. This can lead to a climate where everyone is "doing their own thing, instead of aligning their efforts," says Vrooman. To combat this, Wyoming has established a professional development strategic design team, which met for the first time in July. The team was designed to:

- Create a clear focus of professional development throughout the state
- Build strategic partnerships
- Integrate and align policies and practices
- Look at common initiatives and outcomes
- Share resource allocations
- Use technology to enhance distance learning for staff development
- Foster communication and networking

In Wyoming, it's no accident that opportunities for communication and networking are now taking place at the state level, mirroring what effective staff development looks like for teachers. "At the state level, we must model what we monitor," stresses Vrooman. "It helps us understand how difficult it is to create effective programs, and how important it is."

For more information on Wyoming's professional development programs, contact Kay Vrooman at (307) 777-6216 or kvroom@educ.state.wy.us ■

NEW HAMPSHIRE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3.

- Observe and implement exemplary models of technology use to enhance teaching and learning
- Interact and network with the people involved in education programs and schools—including teachers, teacher educators, policy makers, members of professional and scientific organizations, parents, and business representatives—to enhance the learning and teaching of science and mathematics

Any effective teacher education program, the book points out, must be as concerned with *how* prospective teachers will teach as with *what* they will teach. This requires active communication and collaboration among all the stakeholders, particularly between the faculty within the mathematics and science departments and the faculty within the education department, so that the courses and activities of each department complement and reinforce each other.

The proficiency standards outlined in the book are designed to improve teaching at all levels in New Hampshire. In addition to faculty at teacher preparation programs, superintendents can use them as qualifications for hiring teachers. The state Professional Standards Board can use them for certification and accreditation, and K-12 school personnel can use them to ensure that candidates for positions in math and science are qualified. Recommendations from PERP were also used to help New Hampshire develop new standards for colleges. These new policies went into state law July 1, 2000, and two colleges will begin implementing them this fall.

"A real math and science network is developing in New Hampshire," concludes Hendry. "The PERP program is impacting state standards, and colleges are changing their programs because of it. By examining how educators assess learning in college classes, it's embedding good teaching."

For more information on New Hampshire's Preservice Education Review Project, contact Ed Hendry at (603) 271-3846 or e_hendry@ed.state.nh.us ■

Highlights from the Eisenhower Professional Development Evaluation Conference

With close to 200 participants in attendance, the Fourth Annual Eisenhower Professional Development Evaluation Conference was held in Washington, D.C., in July. Attendees at the three-day conference included Eisenhower coordinators for state agencies and state higher education agencies, faculty from K-12 school districts, higher education faculty from across the country, U.S. Department of Education program officers and staff, and other educators involved in teacher professional development.

Focusing on the theme of Improving Content Knowledge and Instructional Practice Through Effective Professional Development, conference sessions examined current research on effective teacher practices and professional development, performance indicators that guide state efforts, ways to support teachers in high-poverty schools, the data analysis that guides professional development, and the national evaluation of the Eisenhower Program.

Keynote speaker Dr. James Stigler of the University of California-Los Angeles challenged conference participants to recognize that changing the practice of teaching requires us to change the "culture and shared language" of teaching practices. Professional development can be a vehicle for such change, according to Stigler. Dr. Glenda Lappan of Michigan State University made a strong case for supporting teacher learning through content-specific professional development and through networks of master and novice teachers. And Assistant Secretary of Education Michael Cohen urged conference participants to look closely at the aggregate federal funds that go to the states for professional development to see how the combination of those funds could be used most effectively and to determine how best to focus those funds to help low-performing schools.

On the final day of the conference, Richard Wenn and Brenda Hamilton of WestEd demonstrated the features of the new Eisenhower Professional Development Web site (www.edgateway.net/ike/visit), which is a valuable resource for state coordinators and educators involved in professional development activities. The site includes research studies, evaluation results, promising practices, news dissemination, directories of state Eisenhower coordinators, and links to related data and resources.

Other speakers included: Dr. Paul Kimmelman and Dr. David Kroeze of the Northbrook, Illinois, School District; Dr. Janine Bempechat of Harvard University; Dr. Kati Haycock of the Education Trust; Charlotte Danielson of ETS; Elizabeth Eisner and others from the American Institutes of Research; Dr. Gail Nordmoe of Augsburg College; Dr. Kim Yap of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; Dr. Linda Rosen of the Department of Education; Dr. Gloria White of the Texas SAHE; and John Drake of the Kentucky SEA ■

Help for Math and Science Programs

This month U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley announced awards for 10 regional organizations to help states, districts, and schools improve math and science education. The grants, made under the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Education Consortia Program, will support efforts to provide exemplary instructional materials and technical assistance to schools and teachers. For example:

- The Appalachia Educational Laboratory's plan includes hosting an annual conference on closing the achievement gap for underserved students and establishing Web-based communities to provide continuous support for educators.
- The Mid-Atlantic Consortium's plan includes professional development workshops for more than 3,000 participants, leadership conferences, and the Middle School Math Project.

For more information on these and other regional projects, visit www.ed.gov/PressReleases/07-2000/0712.html.

Resources You Can Use

The following resources, available on the Internet, provide information and tips for educators striving to improve low-performing schools:

- **Actions to Improve Low-Performing Schools**—The complete text of President Clinton's Executive Order 13153 is available at www.ed.gov/PressReleases/05-2000/wh-0503b.html
- **Class-Size Reduction**—For legislation information related to class-size reduction, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ClassSize/legislation.html
- **Comprehensive School Reform Assessment Tool**—This checklist from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory is available at www.nwrel.org/csrdp/tool2.pdf

EVENTS CALENDAR

The U.S. Department of Education's 2000 Regional Conferences on Improving America's Schools will be held September 18-20 in Sacramento, California; October 2-4 in Louisville, Kentucky; and December 13-15 in Washington, D.C.

The annual conference series on education reform brings together a host of participants—teachers, principals, parents, grant administrators, state and local education agency employees, federal program grantees, and others—to network with Department officials and learn more about new initiatives, funding opportunities, the latest research and data, and other education topics.

Through forums, hands-on workshops, and in-depth institutes, participants will learn more about coordinating federal programs, integrating federal programs with state and local efforts, accessing the Department's technical assistance network, and using available resources to implement comprehensive school reform. Priority presentations include:

- America Counts: Improving Student Achievement in Mathematics
- America Reads Challenge
- America's Technology Literacy Challenge
- Ensuring a Talented, Dedicated, and Well-Prepared Teacher in Every Classroom
- Think College Early
- Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
- Standards, Assessments, and Accountability

For a complete list of conference sessions, as well as fee and registration information, visit the conference Web site at www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ias-conferences or call 1-800-203-5494. State and local teams are encouraged to attend, and group discounts are available.

Building a Comprehensive Math Program

While at the IAS conference, don't miss the education reform institute "Building A Comprehensive Mathematics Program in Your School: Important Elements To Consider." The institute will present current research and examples from practice on the many components of effective comprehensive mathematics programs. Participants will learn how to identify and put together effective leadership and school governance, teacher mathematical and pedagogical knowledge, mathematics curriculum and content, effective classroom environments, and technology to establish a comprehensive mathematics program.

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