DEADLINE APPROACHING

Unlocking the Power of District Data to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

The May 30 deadline for submitting an application to participate in Unlocking the Power of District Data to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities rapidly approaching. The goal of the project is to help school districts build capacity in analyzing large-scale data sets to make real and measurable improvements in outcomes for students with disabilities. Last September, nine Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative member school districts were selected to participate and representatives from those districts attended a productive, two-day, hands-on institute in Bethesda, Maryland, as well as participated in follow-up work back in their school districts.

Participation in this initiative includes a 2-day hands-on institute currently scheduled for September 28 and 29, 2010, in Bethesda, MD. Participants will be guided as to how they might generate and then refine questions, most particularly those related to IDEA performance indicators, in order to get answers that will assist with action planning and decision-making.
The application for participation in the project is available online at this link. Due to available resources, participation must be limited to ten school districts and requires a commitment to be engaged in pre-meeting activities (online and by phone), the two-day meeting beginning on the evening of September 27, and assembling/having access to the district data necessary for the work that will be done. As indicated on the application, participants will be working only with their own data sets and will not be required to submit them to the workshop leaders or exchange them with other participants. All institute participants will be required to sign a confidentiality statement to protect the rights of the students.

If you have any questions regarding the project or the application, please contact Ron Felton at rfelton@edc.org.

CENTRAL OFFICE TRANSFORMATION

Central offices of urban school districts have been able to shift their focus from administration and compliance to improvement of teaching and learning district-wide by making five key changes, according to a new report by University of Washington researchers published by the Wallace Foundation. This report identifies five major changes that can help transform the focus of school district central offices from administration and compliance to improving classroom instruction. The report is based on an in-depth study of central office reform efforts in Atlanta, New York City, and Oakland, California. The changes identified include the offices’ strong engagement with school principals on improving instruction in their schools, and the reorganizing and “reculturing” of every central office so it centers its work on the classroom. The report is part of a series by University of Washington researchers that investigates how leaders can contribute to improved student achievement, particularly in challenging schools and districts. It is available at this link.

WEBINAR AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING

Identifying Learning Disabilities in English Language Learners: Lessons from Three New York Districts

If you were unable to participate in the recent Webinar by the Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI) regarding the identification of Learning Disabilities in English Language Learners, the event is available for viewing at the REL-NEI Website. The researchers presenting
at the Webinar discussed eight challenges to identifying learning disabilities in ELLs and five interrelated elements that appear to be important for avoiding misidentification of learning disabilities. An instructional supervisor from one of our member districts - Miami-Dade Public Schools - connected the research findings to her own district’s practices.

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS NETWORK

High Performing, Inclusive Secondary Schools: A Leadership Institute: Online Registration to Open in May!

A two-day institute with Dr. Lisa Dieker will be held July 14-15, 2010, in Boston, Massachusetts. During the summer institute, participants will engage in lectures, learning activities, and action planning sessions. Content will build on knowledge and skills in effective strategies for inclusion at the secondary level and leadership development. Participants will complete action steps between the summer and the fall follow-up session and have the opportunity to share successes and problem solve with faculty and peers.

The two-day program will be held in downtown Boston at the Hilton Back Bay. A small amount of rooms has been set aside for program participants at a rate of $159.00/night. Please be sure to book early and reference “Education Development Center” to receive this reduced rate. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-HILTONS.

Be sure to check the Inclusive Schools Website in May for more information on the Institute.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

San Francisco Unified School District has posted an announcement for the position of Executive Director, Special Education. Information and a job description is available on their website.