

Welcome to the January issue of CollabNews!

CollabNews is a monthly electronic newsletter for members and associates of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, a network of special and general education leaders from the nation's urban school districts.

FEATURES THIS MONTH:

- ⇒ Member Update: Spring Meeting (May 16-19), Call for presentations, Member referral opportunity, Member 2005 Special Education Enrollment Analysis
- ⇒ Web Site of the Month: Education Commission of the States Database
- ⇒ Call for Content: My School's Inclusive Journey
- ⇒ Event: Special Education Nexus Briefing Series (Various Dates), A Framework for Improving Instruction (February 13)
- ⇒ New Resource: Parent Toolkit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities
- ⇒ Collaborative Help Desk

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHERS

MEMBER UPDATE

Spring Meeting 2007

May 16-19, 2007 • Dallas, Texas

The primary topic for our Spring Meeting is "General & Special Education: Partnering for the Benefit of ALL Students." As you are more than aware, IDEA and NCLB have promoted and forged a new partnership between special education and general education through the requirements that students with disabilities 1) have access to the general education curriculum and 2) are a part of states' and school districts' performance accountability systems. More recently, federal Department of Education requirements for State Performance Plans focus the attention of state education agencies on 20 performance indicators, most of which cannot be achieved without significant collaboration between general and special education. Registration and travel information will be sent out via email and fax in mid-February.

Call for presentations

The Collaborative's Spring Meeting will be dedicated to highlighting the ways in which this new partnership is organizationally, programmatically, and qualitatively working, and to what results for students with and without disabilities. We are interested in proposals for sessions that will speak to how special education and general education are working together in ways that have had a significant impact. Proposals must speak to an organizational, programmatic, instructional, professional development, policy, and/or management strategy that has been implemented over at least a three-year period and that has student performance or other data to support its consideration by other Collaborative Members. Visit our Web site to download the Call for Presentations guidelines and form at <http://www.urbancollaborative.org/spring07.asp>

Member referral opportunity

Many of our member districts joined the Collaborative based on a referral from a current member. Please help us expand the impact of the Collaborative by recommending one or more school districts that would benefit from membership. If a district you refer enrolls in the Collaborative, we will waive registration fees for one additional participant from your district at the next national meeting.

Download a member referral form from

<http://www.urbancollaborative.org/login.asp>

2005 Special Education Enrollment Analysis - Preliminary Report

The Collaborative has compiled a report of members' special education enrollment and placement data from the December 2005 child count reports. Thank you to the 54 Collaborative members who contributed their data. The purpose in collecting, organizing, and presenting this information is to provide members an opportunity to compare their own district's special education enrollment and placement patterns with those of other urban school districts across the country. Such quantitative comparisons contribute to the kind of self-analysis and dialogue that the Collaborative is dedicated to promoting within and across its member districts. As a way of encouraging cross-district conversations, we have included the contact information of all our member district leaders. The report also includes the national and state-by-state special education enrollment data. You may download a copy of the report from the Collaborative's Web site: http://www.urbancollaborative.org/researchbriefs_archive.asp

WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

Education Commission of the States Database

<http://www.ecs.org/rs>

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) recently launched the first stage of a new database designed to help policymakers and educators who are grappling with the question, "What does the research say?" The database currently includes 12 studies on what is needed to improve the education of students in high schools. Soon, more studies will be added in other areas: teaching quality, postsecondary completion, restructuring schools, and more. Users can search for studies by issue, author, organization, publisher, and date. For each study, the online tool features concise, bulleted lists of findings and results, policy implications, and recommendations. All studies included have been carefully screened and many are peer reviewed. Visitors can go directly to the findings and recommendations of vetted studies and get ECS's perspective on why a particular study is a valuable contribution to knowledge in the policy area.

CALL FOR CONTENT

My School's Inclusive Journey

Collaborative members are invited to nominate schools in their districts for a new *National Inclusive Schools Week* Web feature called "My School's Inclusive Journey." Each month on <http://www.inclusiveschools.org>, principals will tell stories about how their schools are striving

to be more welcoming and supportive of students with disabilities and those of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These narratives will help building leaders, teachers, and families gain national recognition for their efforts to develop inclusive schools and communities. Participating principals will fill out a brief form sharing information about 1) best inclusive practices that have been implemented school-wide, 2) how the school personalizes learning for every student, 3) teacher training and support, 4) parent and community involvement, 5) biggest challenges, and 6) next steps on the school's journey. In our effort to provide visuals of inclusive schools and practices, we encourage the submission of photos and short video clips or PodCasts (five minutes max) along with the written stories. To nominate a principal for this project or request an entry form, please contact Jennifer Quinlan at jquinlan@edc.org.

EVENTS

Special Education Nexus Briefing Series

IDEA & NCLB NEXUS 101

First and third Thursday of the next four months

Meetings in February will be held February 1 & February 15, 2007 (3:30 pm – 5:00 pm)

U.S. Capitol HC-8

Briefing for Congressional staff and educators on issues at the nexus or intersection of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act will be held on the first and third Thursday of the next four months, beginning February 1. Bicameral briefings will focus on IDEA implementation and how provisions in NCLB interact with IDEA and impact the education of students with disabilities. The February 15 briefing will focus on School-Based Health Services and Medicaid. Moderators will include Connie Garner, Disability Policy Director of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Theda Zawaiza, Senior Disability Policy Advisor of the House Committee on Education and Labor. Presenters will include Nancy Jones, CRS; Richard Apling, CRS; Jane West, The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; and Ricki Sabia, J.D., National Down Syndrome Society. For more information or to RSVP, contact Amy at Amy.Elverum@mail.house.gov or 202-226-3139.

National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities presents...

The Big Four: A Framework for Improving Instruction that Leads to School Completion

A telephone seminar with Jim Knight, University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning Tuesday, February 13, 2007 (12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m. EST) [Seminar Code: 12242]

This presentation will describe a framework, which professional developers, coaches, and other educators can use to improve instruction and decrease dropout rates. The Big Four Framework of 1) Classroom Management, 2) Content Knowledge, 3) Direct Instruction, and 4) Formative Assessment provides a simple, yet sophisticated way of analyzing critical variables in teaching and identifying next steps in the important process of improving teaching practices. The presentation is designed for representatives of state education agencies, school-based leadership teams, classroom and special education teachers, central office and building level leadership, parent leaders, and policymakers. A registration fee of \$75.00 includes access from one

telephone line and one set of reproducible participant materials. Participants can invite as many people to participate as one telephone connection can accommodate. Register by calling 1-800-775-7654 or online at <http://www.ndpc-sd.org>. Email Deb Hall at dhall@edc.org.

NEW RESOURCES

Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students With Disabilities: Parents' Materials (CD-ROM)

This new Parent Took Kit from the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs is designed to assist parents and states in their efforts to work together to raise the achievement of students with disabilities. The CD-ROM offers a collection of resources on assessment, instructional practices, behavior, and accommodations. Materials also provide information that will help parents become active and informed participants in IEP discussions and other decision-making meetings. A companion Web site--
<http://www.osepideastthatwork.org/index.asp>--includes the materials found in the tool kit (additional materials will be added as they become available).

COLLABORATIVE HELP DESK

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Past CollabNews issues can be found online at:
<http://www.urbancollaborative.org/members/collab.html>.

FYI: CollabNews is not a listserv or discussion list. Members cannot send mail to this list. If you have questions or concerns about CollabNews, or would like to contact staff members, please send all correspondence to: collaborative@edc.org.

Visit us on the Web at: <http://www.urbancollaborative.org>.