

Utah Advances Dropout Prevention

Researchers, educators, and students were among more than 80 invited participants who exchanged knowledge and experiences related to high school dropout prevention, at a November 14 event in Salt Lake City, co-hosted by WestEd, the Utah State Office of Education, and the National Dropout Prevention Center.

Russell Rumberger's keynote presentation included an overview of the *Dropout Prevention Practice Guide* from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, which he co-authored, and a discussion of the Guide's six recommended, research-based practices. Rumberger is Vice Provost for Education Partnerships, University of California Office of the President; and Professor, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

A panel of education and community leaders focused on the national and state costs and consequences of dropping out of high school. A panel of youth discussed their experiences, including reasons for considering dropping out, what supports both in and out of school

might have been helpful in preventing dropping out, and the impact that returning to or staying in school is having on their lives. Panel discussions were moderated by Dr. Loujeania Williams Bost, Executive Director, National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities; and Carol Anderson,

Education Specialist for Emotional Disabilities and Mental Health, Utah State Office of Education, respectively.

Participants had opportunities throughout the day to interact with experts, panelists, and each other to plan next steps to increase academic success for all of Utah's students. **Get more details.**

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Selected Fast-Response and Technical Assistance Project Reports

In carrying out fast-response projects intended to inform quick action and policy decisions, and in providing technical assistance on regional evaluation and research activities, REL West researchers analyze or otherwise utilize existing data, studies, and research reviews. Results undergo external peer review to ensure that they meet the Institute of Education Sciences standards for scientifically valid research. The reports described below have been published since the previous issue of the Research Digest, October 2011. Published REL West reports are available at <http://relwest.WestEd.org>. Reports from all 10 RELs are available at the national REL website at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/index.asp>

How California Evaluates Educators

The 2009 State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) program required that states collect data from all local education agencies (LEAs) on their current teacher and principal evaluation practices. To meet this requirement, California's Department of Education created and sent a survey to all LEAs during summer 2010, and more than 99 percent responded. REL West developed a free, downloadable analysis and summary report of survey results, ***How California's Local Education Agencies Evaluate Teachers and Principals***. (Coming in December)

Teacher Retirement Trends Examined

Given the magnitude of the recent economic recession in California, along with the baby boomer population currently reaching peak retirement ages, state education leaders have expressed interest in investigating recent variations in California educators' age distribution and retirement rates over time.

Download a free copy of the complete report, ***An Examination of Retirement Rate Patterns Among California Educators Since 1995/96 School Year***. (Coming in December)

Publications from Other Organizations

Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center

Guidance for Developing and Selecting Assessments of Student Growth for Use in Teacher Evaluation Systems (Extended Version)

The authors provide comprehensive guidance on evaluating the quality of assessments used to measure student learning as part of “value-added” teacher evaluation systems.

A policy brief on the topic is also available.

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

Online Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems

Teacher Evaluation Models in Practice

Center on Instruction

Progressions Documents for the Common Core Math Standards

Developed by the Institute for Mathematics and Education at the University of Arizona. (November 2011)

These narrative documents describe the progression of a math topic across a number of grade levels, informed both by research on children’s cognitive development and by the logical structure of mathematics.

Center on Innovation and Improvement

Handbook on Family and Community Engagement

The Handbook is designed to guide state, district, and school Title I personnel in providing high-quality, research-based family and community engagement programs and experiences.

OTHER RELS

REL Mid-Atlantic

What Four States are Doing to Support Local Data-Driven Decision-Making: Policies, Practices, and Programs

This report documents how four state education agencies are supporting local data-driven decisionmaking through their policies, practices, and programs for creating data systems, improving data access and use, and building district and school capacity to use data. (November 2011)

REL Appalachia

Superintendent Turnover in Kentucky

This report is the state’s first detailed description of superintendent turnover. It intends to help policymakers and other leaders better understand turnover so that they can develop new programs to prepare, recruit, and retain superintendents. The report describes superintendent turnover statewide, by rural status, and by Appalachian and non-Appalachian region over 1998/99–2007/08 and also looks at how turnover varies by 2007/08 school district characteristics. (August 2011)

REL Northeast & Islands

A Descriptive Analysis of State-Supported Formative Assessment Initiatives in New York and Vermont

This study examines two state-supported formative assessment initiatives that promote a consensus definition of formative assessment endorsed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. It describes the primary components of the two initiatives and the strategies that state, district, and school leaders report using to support implementation of each initiative. (November 2011)

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