

# Snapshots

**Fast Fact** Sixty-six percent of Americans view



## RESEARCH DIGEST Teacher Effectiveness Is Key to Improving Student Learning

range of professional development programs.

According to “Teacher Effectiveness as a Key to Improving Student Learning,” the academic performance of students in Colorado, Missouri, New Jersey, and Vermont could be attributed to professional development programs that include well-defined professional development standards, effective state-level oversight of teacher licensing and teaching standards, and innovative supports and incentives for professional learning such as teacher induction, curriculum support, study groups focused on specific subject areas, and mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

In examining these four states, researchers noticed that while their approaches to professional development varied, all the states shared a number of key characteristics such as clearly articulated state policies, funding earmarked specifically for professional development, accountability systems that include guidance and oversight by state education agencies, effective program monitoring mechanisms such as surveys that gauge teacher satisfaction, and partnerships with universities and independent professional development providers who offer innovative coaching and supports services.

The report was published by Learning Forward and the Stanford University Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. Read it online at [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org).

**S**ince the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, the U.S. Department of Education reports that nearly \$1.2 billion has been given to states and school districts for professional development each year. However, despite this extraordinary national investment, the quality of professional development programs and the number of teachers participating in these programs vary significantly from state to state.

Based on a 2008 Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey and teacher surveys associated with the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), students in Colorado, Missouri, New Jersey, and Vermont scored above the national average on the NAEP assessment tests. These surveys also show that teachers in these four states have high participation rates in a wide

## MYTWOCENTS

Since you left the principalship, how has your experience as a K-8 principal informed your work in your current capacity?

**Nineteen years as a middle school principal in an era of high-stakes testing provided me with a multitude of practical experiences in achieving developmentally responsive middle-grades classrooms and instruction. I am able to share my knowledge and experiences of effectively meeting young adolescents' educational needs in ways that make sense to my preservice teachers. My experiences inform the work preservice teachers do to ensure they are well prepared for success in middle schools.**

**ROBERT HEATH**, Assistant Professor, Middle Grades Teacher Education, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina

## Promising Practices

**THERE IS OFTEN** a stigma attached to students who have been identified as needing special education. We knew these students' self-confidence and self-esteem was already fragile and they needed a positive non-judgmental environment that would support their academic and social growth. We developed the Learning Lab for any student needing support to receive special services. In developing the lab, we ensured that the environment was both stimulating and welcoming. Our Learning Lab serves both special and regular educa-

tion students. After just a few years of using the lab approach, none of our students knew if he or she had an individualized education plan—the Learning Lab became a place where all children wanted to go.

**Rita White**

PRINCIPAL, RIVERWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

**ONCE A MONTH**, teachers come to work early to have breakfast with the administrators and the reading coach before students arrive. We share one research-based article a month. The teachers and administrators discuss the articles and share their experiences in the classroom with others. This

is a great time for employees to build stronger professional relationships, provide enriching professional development, and collaborate about good teaching practices. It is also a great time for teachers to receive a healthy breakfast before starting their day.

**Lydia Davenport**

PRINCIPAL, HERITAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
MADISON, ALABAMA

Learn more promising practices at [www.naesp.org/promising-practices](http://www.naesp.org/promising-practices).

## Members in the Spotlight

**CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN** order for **Steven A. Marrone** who has been named Rhode Island's 2010 Outstanding First-Year Principal by the Rhode Island Association of School Principals. Marrone, who leads Ashaway Elementary School, was selected in recognition of his excellent work during the 2009-2010 school year. He told *The Providence Journal* that his greatest pleasure is showing up every day and "trying to inspire the students to better themselves."

**PRINCIPAL JEFF CLARK** also deserves a round of applause for winning this year's Thomas B. Foster Award for outstanding leadership. The award, which includes a \$50,000 grant, is given to a Seattle middle or high school principal by the Alliance for Education, a nonprofit that supports Seattle Public Schools. Clark, who is in his sixth year at Denny Middle School, said he plans to use the \$50,000 prize to buy one book for every student to recognize their hard work, to purchase musical instruments, and to start an endowment fund that can be used to help pay field-trip or other fees.



### Are You Moving?

**IF YOU'RE STARTING** the new school year at a different school, make sure you don't miss a single issue of *Principal* or any of the other NAESP benefits. Send an e-mail to [membership@naesp.org](mailto:membership@naesp.org) with your new contact information, including mailing address, e-mail address, phone number, and school name, as well as what date this information becomes effective. If you have any questions, contact NAESP's membership team at 800-836-2377.

**During my nine years as a principal, I learned how diverse that role is and how the ability to handle multiple projects is essential. No position is more critical in shaping the future of so many children, and effectiveness is closely linked to how well the gift of time is managed. That experience has helped me in my role as one who works with other administrators to improve organizational and time management skills.**

**FRANK BUCK**, *President, Frank Buck Consulting Inc., Pell City, Alabama*

✦ Read more responses—and submit your own—by visiting the Principals' Office at [www.naesp.org/blog](http://www.naesp.org/blog). Click on "My Two Cents."