

Research – Resources – Report

1-888-605-1951

February 2010

www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/index.shtm

Mission: To gather and share current research and resources with educators.

Research And Resources

A Coherent Approach to High School Improvement: A Needs Assessment Tool

The National High School Center has released a needs assessment tool to help districts and schools assess current high school education policies and practices, identify areas of strengths and limitations, and implement coherent and sustainable school reform initiatives.

This framework was developed to support researchers, policymakers, and practitioners at all levels in their efforts to maximize the achievement of all high school students. The document outlines eight core elements that can be used for mapping school, district, and state high school improvement efforts in a comprehensive, systemic manner.

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/EightElementsNeedsAssessment.pdf>

Digital Divide Can Make Completing Assignments Complicated for Students

While the digital divide has narrowed among students nationwide, the use of technology in learning is still difficult for students who do not have access to the Internet at home. Students without home computers must work to complete assignments during limited hours at school computer labs or travel to public libraries, where they struggle to complete their work during timed sessions. At one Virginia school, administrators have instituted a special study period during the school day to provide computer time for students who cannot come in early or stay late at school.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/05/AR2009120501746.html>

Four-Day School Week

As school districts nationwide struggle with funding cuts, the four-day school week has gained momentum as one way to save money. This article, through the Education Commission of the States (ECS), highlights the positives and negatives of the four-day school week and shares how some states are addressing the issue.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/83/49/8349.pdf>

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has posted evaluation results for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in eight categories including school management, finance, technology, and staffing. The information indicates that North Dakota does well in financing and staffing, but there are also several areas we could improve.

<http://www.uschamber.com/reportcard/default>

Research Shows Brain Connections Improve With Reading Practice

Students who practice reading can strengthen their brains, especially the white-matter connections essential to learning, according to research by scientists at the Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Researchers scanned students' brains, then enrolled struggling readers in an intensive reading program. Researchers again scanned students' brains, this time after 100 hours of reading practice, and found the training improved "not just their reading ability, but the tissues in their brain."

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121253104>

Teacher Lassos At-Risk Students With Cowboy-Code Curriculum

Denver high school teacher Ann Moore is using curriculum adapted from "Cowboy Ethics", a book written by Jim Owen about what investment bankers can learn from the Old West, to teach her at-risk students, many of whom have learning disabilities or are English-language learners. The curriculum has spread to schools in Nebraska, Texas, Wyoming, and other states. Moore's lessons relate the unspoken ethical code of the Old West to current events and the lives of today's students teaching such values as courage, self-reliance, and duty.

http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_13941996

Yoga is Used in Schools to Help Students Become Better Learners

Some educators are using yoga in schools as a way to calm and focus students as well as improve posture, balance, and even grades. One elementary school in Minnesota uses yoga as an alternative to recess, while another offers yoga exercises to help students relax before taking standardized tests. "When we slow down the nervous system and they're able to be calm, they open up and become better learners," said a school social worker who teaches yoga.

<http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/76320887.html>

