

The View from Here



Dr. James Butterworth

Responsibility for education has historically been shared by state governments and local school boards, with the federal role limited to protecting young people's civil rights. In recent years, this balance has

been dramatically altered as federal and state governments assume greater control to ensure that all kids have the same educational opportunities, treatment and outcomes. But, try as they might, one problem remains---you can't educate students or fix schools from Washington or Albany.

Federal and State Policies Are Necessary But Not Sufficient

State and federal policies are necessary. Educational policymakers almost always focus on the right issues. High property taxes, school violence and incompetent teaching are bad. Student achievement, school attendance and 21st century curriculum are good. Through statute and regulation, these officials identify what appropriately requires our attention and rightly compel us to improve. The bad news is that they rarely stop at this point, usually continuing on to dictate exactly how the identified problems are to be remedied. As a result of this overreaching, matters often go awry since those operating at the 30,000 foot level have little or no understanding of the complexity and variability of conditions on the ground where people actually live, teach and learn.

Local leaders are acutely aware of policy implementation problems which often go unrecognized at the federal and state level. Policymakers operate under the assumption that you can successfully mandate what matters; school leaders know you can't. State officials believe that everything that is

important can be measured; local leaders know that not everything that's measured matters and not everything that matters can be measured. Government officials place great stock in the new APPR system; most educators probably agree with Linda Darling-Hammond when she observes that you can't fire your way to school success.

And, unintended negative consequences usually accompany new state and federal policies enacted with the best of intentions. The accountability program which requires schools to demonstrate capacity to educate all children well leads to fear and efforts to game the system. The assessment program seeks to learn whether students have attained state standards but results in reduced attention to school subjects without state tests. Certification rules designed to guarantee that pupils will have highly qualified teachers results in fragmentation of the school day and serious coordination problems.

Local Leadership Makes The Difference

Since they often don't know what they don't know, government officials generally believe that all local educators need to do is to comply with new requirements and success will be virtually guaranteed. Local leaders, of course, know that the solution is much more complicated and elusive. The priorities of parents and community members may not be the same as the state's. School boards may object to unfunded mandates. Teachers may view new requirements as harmful to currently effective programs. Disengaged students may not respond enthusiastically to new initiatives. Very real resource constraints in the form of time, space, money and people may preclude full implementation. And on and on.

Without the professional efforts of district and school leaders who understand their local communities, implementation of state

and federal policies, mandates and requirements would be minimal at worst, haphazard at best. It is odd and sad then that government officials treat their local counterparts as so many clerks to be micromanaged from afar. This myopic attitude seems to be at the heart of the despair, frustration and anger which so many local leaders feel in reaction to recent state and federal changes. This sense of powerlessness leads in turn to a variety of ineffective administrative responses to new requirements---rejection, opposition, paralysis or halfhearted compliance. Of course, all of these approaches are demoralizing for school adults and unhelpful to students.

Though state and federal officials may provide the initial push for improvement, they ultimately depend on the will and skill of local leaders for success. District and school leaders need to avoid feeling like victims, martyrs or functionaries and must reclaim their rightful role in helping all children to achieve. They can do this in a number of ways. They can defend the spirit of new requirements and use new mandates as a force for good, essentially saying, "If we have to do this, let's do the very best we can for our kids." They can embrace priorities in their local school communities, recognizing that state requirements are the floor rather than the ceiling for their efforts. Not waiting for or wanting state direction, they can use their professional judgment to make the changes in their schools and districts which will make a real difference for kids.

In improving schools, both government and local leadership have a role to play. Your school leadership is vital; don't cede the field to state and federal officials from afar. They work on behalf of humanity; you work for children who have faces, dreams, potential. Noble work. Don't let anyone take it from you.

Recent Events at a Glance



Professor Hal Lawson of the University at Albany offers closing remarks at the Rural Schools Summit.

CASDA partnered with Professor Hal Lawson and members of USDOE Regional Laboratory for Northeast and the Islands (REL-NEI) to conduct an Eastern New York Rural Summit on December 9 at the University at Albany East Campus.

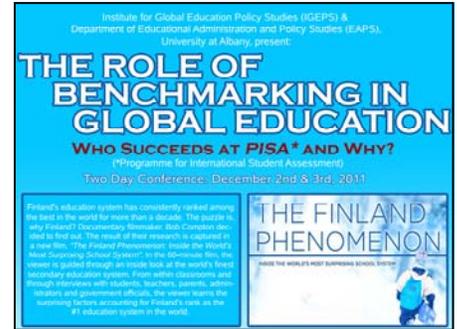
Participants examined budget and student population trends, while also sharing common challenges and opportunities with fellow administrators.



Participants of the K-12 Curriculum Conference wait for a workshop to begin.

CASDA conducted the 4th annual Curriculum Coordinators Conference on Dec. 2 at Union College.

Participants enjoyed a program built around the theme of "Building a Balanced Assessment". Nationally recognized educational consultant Karen Bailey provided the keynote and informative workshops.



University at Albany Professor Heinz Dieter Meyer produced a well-received conference on International Benchmarking.

This December 2 & 3 conference explored the role of the Program International Student Assessment (PISA) as an international educational benchmarking standard. The gathering also examined the reasons that have launched nations like Finland and Singapore to their top position in the assessments.

CASDA partners with the Greater Capital Region Principals Center Board Center Board on initiatives

CASDA and the Greater Capital Region Principal Center Board (GCRPC) have a long-standing professional relationship. This year these institutions will partner on three initiatives including: a Principal Forum Series, a New Leaders Seminar and the Capital Region Principal of the Year Award.

The Principal Forum Series, beginning on Feb. 10, is designed to help principals understand and prepare for evaluations based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. This series is a great way for principals to share with one another how their districts are proceeding in implementing their new APPR system.

CASDA educational consultant Nancy Andress is working with the GCRPC to introduce a New Leaders Seminar series. These Seminars will take the place of the Potential Administrators

Conference and will begin on January 19. The program is designed for educators (interns, new administrators, team leaders, department chairs) considering a career in administration, currently taking courses, or entering the field.

Participants will learn about the interview process for a principal position, participate in mock interviews, and can even schedule an optional consultant appointment. Participants will hear critiques of their interviews and get a chance to ask questions and share their impressions with their peers.

Each April at CASDA's Annual Awards Dinner, the

GCRPC gives out a Principal of the Year Award recognizing outstanding performance as a building leader. Since its inception, 43 principals have been honored with the award. Last year's winners included:

Melodye Eldeen, Principal of Geysers Road Elementary School, Saratoga Springs CSD; Leslie Whitcomb, Principal, New Lebanon Jr./Sr. High School, New Lebanon CSD; and, Donald Flynt, High School Principal, Shenendehowa High School, Shenendehowa CSD.



GCRPC Principal of the Year 2011 winners: Melodye Eldeen, Leslie Whitcomb, Don Flynt

CASDA welcomes new faculty member

CASDA has added a new faculty member who will serve as a consultant and a project manager.

Terrance (Terry) Brewer specializes in Organization and Leadership services as well as School Safety programs. Terry will also act as project manager on multi-faceted CASDA studies and reports.



Terrance Brewer

Terry is a career educator/school administrator with 34 years in public education in New York State. Terry's experience as a social studies teacher, middle school principal and school superintendent has afforded him the opportunity to work with students and parents in bringing about positive educational change in the schools and communities he has served.

Terry retired as Superintendent of the East Greenbush Central School District in July

2007 where he served from 1992-2007. In this capacity he worked with staff and community members on several educational initiatives: inclusive education programs for all children, supervised \$100 million dollars of renovations and building additions to the district's seven schools and buildings, school safety programs and response to a school shooting incident in the district and developing community support for redistricting schools. He also garnered support for school programs and initiatives through a decade of successful annual budget votes and referenda.

Terry retired from public education in August 2007. He is currently serving as an adjunct professor with Siena where he is teaching education courses and serving as a Student Teaching Supervisor for field placements. He continues to work with schools on school safety planning and response to critical issues, and works with school districts in New York State on leadership training for school administrators.

Save This Date

Leading in a time of increased state mandates and decreased funding
Sponsored by CASDA and PDK

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Registration and light buffet: 5:30 - 6pm

Panel presentation: 6 - 7:30 pm

COST: \$20 for all attendees

Register Here:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/K97DXJ5

**Registration limited to 80. Please reply early to secure your registration.*

Many states are facing budget shortfalls. Sadly, the burden of these budget deficits is too often placed on children in the form of well-intended but ill-conceived decreases in K-12 education. Current educational research points to the connection between great leadership and great school districts. Demonstrating visionary leadership becomes even more important if our schools are to survive these extremely tough economic conditions. Come learn about and share promising approaches.

Be on the lookout for exciting new CASDA Webinar Series

CASDA will again offer a Spring webinar series, produced at the Northeastern Regional Information Center at Capital Region BOCES. These are designed to engage administrators and teachers on timely issues facing schools of our region. All live webinars will strategically begin at 3:15 and conclude at 4:30; however, by registering and obtaining the internet link, the recorded presentation can be viewed via the internet at your convenience.

February 15, 2012 – “Social Media: Engaging the Community”

Using social media as a vehicle for addressing internal and external communication challenges will be the topic of this session. Bring all of your questions to the Q&A segment with the presenters.

March 1, 2012 – “Improving Teacher Effectiveness Through National Board Certification”

A panel of regional experts will share with participants the background, process, and alignment to state initiatives related to National Board Certification for Teachers. Bring all of your questions (and ideas) as the Q&A lines will be open for all participants.

Mid-March, 2012 – “Spotlight on Rural Schools: Curriculum”

The series specially geared toward the needs and issues facing our rural schools continues. In March 2012, webinars, presenters and panelists will review research and practices in an attempt to balance the implementation of the common core state standards with the need to tailor curricular programming within the local context. Discussion about selection considerations, instructional strategies, and methods of delivery will be included in each. Each session will stand alone but register for all three for the most complete experience.

April 5, 2012 – “Meeting the ISLLC Standards”

Hosted by Dr. Butterworth and relevant for district and building leaders, this session will be packed with standards based insights. Participants will leave this webinar with an understanding of each of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and a brief look at how local districts are exploring use of the standards in the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process for principals.



A Webinar on RtI goes live last year.

CASDA

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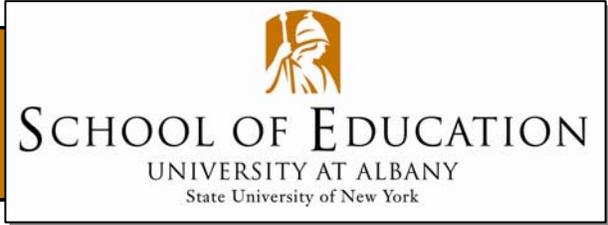
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News from



UAlbany Day-Showcase at the Plaza coming to the Plaza Feb. 6

The 5th Annual UAlbany Day – Showcase at the Plaza celebration is set for Monday, February 6, 2012 from 9:30am—6pm at the Empire State Plaza.

UAlbany Day – Showcase at the Plaza is an “open-to-the-public,” student-focused day dedicated to highlighting the strengths, successes and vitality of the University’s more than 23,500 students, faculty and staff. As the single largest enterprise in the Capital Region outside of State government, the University at Albany has an enormous impact in advancing new learning and discovery, preparing tomorrow’s workforce, spurring innovation and entrepreneurship, and driving economic growth and prosperity in Upstate New York.



UAlbany students pose at a science booth at last year’s UAlbany Day.

This year, UAlbany Day promises to deliver the most exciting, fun-filled, informative and dynamic event yet. Students of all ages are encouraged to participate in UAlbany Day as the University’s student scholars and faculty demonstrate how the University immeasurably benefits our community and businesses alike.

Students will have an opportunity to see amazing research and discovery including: faculty demonstrating their research, robot demonstrations, nanotechnology, counter-terrorism, financial literacy, RNA Science, and the Young Entrepreneurs Academy.

There will also be a chance for two participating students to each win a \$1,000 scholarship by writing the best essay about their UAlbany Day experience. Students can pick up the necessary form at the show on Feb. 6.

You can register your school by visiting UAlbany’s official page on the University website:

www.albany.edu/ualbanyday

