
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: NGA CONFERENCE CALL ON EDUCATION WEEK'S *QUALITY COUNTS 2001*
DATE 7/24/00
CC: FILE

First report nearly 5 years ago to provide coherent yard stick on K-12 education. Each year also taken on a special theme – this year it is standards based reform.

Premise of wide spread acceptance of standards based reform as a lever for change. 49 states have standards for core subjects and all states have assessment system. Most have beginning of school accountability

State efforts to raise acadmic standards are beginning to pay off in the rooms Test scores rising and teachers reporting expectations are rising. But there needs to be a better balance between standards and support to accomplish these standards.

Survey through 2 ways: review of policies on academic standards, testing, and accountability in all 50 states. And first ever survey of teachers on what they think is happening.

Negatives: state tests overshadowing standards they were designed to measure, tests do not adequately reflect standards or provide rich enough picture. States may be rushing for accountability w/out providing support.

State efforts to raise are starting to pay off. Dsts and schools starting to change curriculums to meet stnds. Polled 1,019 teachers – nearly 9 in 10 agreed raising stnds a move in right direction, and 8 in 10 said curr is more demanding, 6 in 10 said expectations of students are higher and 6 in 10 said students are writing more. Slightly more than half of teachers said students working more. But 7 in 10 said tests stressed too much and 66% said this is detriment to other topics. 7 in 10 teachers said not enough time to cover e'vthing in stnds.

State policies: 49 staets have snds and 47 have in all 4 (eng, math, sci, soc studies). Only 3 have stnds that are clear and specific in core 4 in all levels (k-12). 49 staetes include multiple choice and 38 have short answer, but only 7 rquire essays in subjects other than English and only 2 rquire portfolios

Teachers may not be receiving enough help in reading test results. Only 4 states tell teachers how students answer multiple choice.

40 states have aligned assessments in English through levels elementary through high and 39 (?) states in math.

18 states require students to pass test for diplomas but only 3 states release results to public every year.

States need to make sure built on solid foundation: good accountability and support and aligned.

Policy: states moving forward, but lagging behind in resources needed to increase student performance. 45 states now require district level report cards. 27 states now assign ratings to all schools or ID low performing ones (up from 19 in 1999).

11 of 27 states with accountability for schools rank only on test scores and fewer states include other matters (absenteeism, resources, etc..) States more and more rewarding (20 states now compared to 13 last year – high perform or improved) 14 states can take over failing schools – 9 states allow students to move out of consistently low performing schools

18 states now withhold diplomas from students who fail – 5 other states now giving tests and 3 states student promotion will depend on a state test.

Teacher capacity to help students reach high standards? States not balanced in accountability and support. 27 with accountability systems, say they help, only 7 states provided additional funding and 5 require professional devt for low performing schools.

Of 18 states that now require students to pass test, only 9 fund remediation to help students who fail the test

Teachers who said that they received more training were more likely to use effective practices – modify curriculum to meet standards, using lesson plans to meet; but less than 1/2 said that they had resources (training on assessments, overview of state test) - majority of teachers said less than 5 hours of training in last year on state tests

Teaching Quality: 37 states provide incentives for teachers (like NTPBS) – 42 states help fund professional development at local, only 24 states earmark funds for each district, 38 states that require professional development for teacher license renewal, but only 7 require training to be in teacher's main subject area