

EDUCATION

WHAT WE KNOW FROM EDUCATION RESEARCH

Reforming schools with technology beneficial to all

Special to Sentinel-Voice (NAPS)—Educators agree that one way to improve America's educational system is to shift away from devoting short blocks of time to academic disciplines and to encourage students in long-term meaningful projects.

Technology is being used to help realize this educational reform and to help students acquire the skills they need for a successful transition from school to work.

To find how technology was being used to further the project-based approach to learning, the U.S. Department

of Education recently studied nine schools.

The study found that although technology-based reform made extra work for most teachers involved, many teachers found that technology supported their efforts by:

- Adding to the students' perception that their work is authentic and important.
- Increasing the complexity with which students can deal successfully.
- Dramatically enhancing student motivation and self-esteem.
- Making obvious the need for longer blocks of time.

• Creating different roles leading to student specialization in different aspects of technology.

• Instigating greater collaboration with students helping peers and sometimes their teachers.

• Giving teachers additional impetus to take on a coaching and advisory role.

Involvement in technology-based educational reform also positively affected teachers. Respondents talked about:

- An increase in their technology and pedagogical skills.
- Greater collaboration

within their own school.

• Contact and collaboration with external school reform and research organizations.

• Involvement in training and professional conferences.

One of the things that makes reforms most difficult, the study found, is the absence of a schoolwide consensus on the importance of reform.

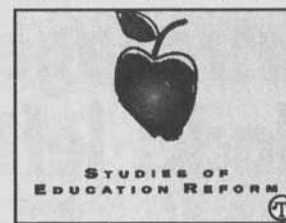
To achieve successful reform, time must be devoted to developing a schoolwide vision. This should include the commitment that all students have access to adequate technology. Teachers also need the time to learn to use

technology and to incorporate it into their own curricular goals.

Easy, accessible technical support is critical, and the school system should provide rewards and recognition for exemplary technology-supported activities. In addition, strong curriculum content must drive the design of technology-supported activities.

Technology is not an easy route to transforming schools, the study found, but it can be an exciting one.

For more information: The Study is called *Technology and*



Reforming the educational system with technology is not an easy route, but is one that offers many rewards, found a recent study by the Dept. of Education.

Education Reform. It is one of twelve Studies of Education Reform recently completed by the U.S. Dept. of Education. To obtain information from this series call 1-800-424-1616.

Parents: You must take charge of your children's education

Vivian W. Owens

Special to Sentinel-Voice

As national standards for education take shape and as states continue to decree Standards of Learning (SOLS), many parents find themselves wondering how they can assist their children in meeting these academic requirements.

They ask themselves how their children will be affected by state or national SOLS. Will they

benefit in the short run or the long run? Will new mandates open a hostile or friendly atmosphere for them?

Parents will want to stay on top of every decision made concerning education, whether that decision is local, state, or national. Ask questions of school officials and legislators. Attend meetings where policies are being discussed, and voice your opinions. Join parent organizations to keep company with advocates

for strong schools. When you stay abreast of educational changes and policies, you are better able to predict effects brought on by new SOLS.

These Standards of Learning being formulated today may affect your child's future more than you think.

Even though your child may only have started second grade in September, it is not too early for you to ponder the consequences of the California state law banning affirmative action programs in law schools, which significantly reduced the number of black applicants. Affirmative action policies are consistently being retracted and 15 years from now, your child may suffer the consequences.

What learning standards are you check-listing today that may prevent such a future judgment?

In holding his school accountable for providing him with accesses to academia, do you also hold yourself accountable for making sure that your child actually partakes in the available resources?

In the new year resolve to follow your child into his classroom.

How large is the class? If there are more than 20 children in his class, does the teacher have an assistant? Is your child given individual textbooks for subjects which he's allowed to bring home? What objectives should he achieve

(See Parenting, Page 15)

Riverside dismisses protests, names school after King

Special to Sentinel-Voice

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Despite objections from some who wanted to celebrate the city's citrus heritage, a new high school whose student body is expected to be about two-thirds white will be named after Martin Luther King, Jr.

School board members agreed unanimously on the proposal Monday, rejecting worries that using the slain civil rights leader's name could hurt students' college chances in less-tolerant states. About a third of the 46 speakers at the meeting opposed naming it King High School but their voices were scuttled by those wanting to celebrate King's legacy rather than highlight the city's contribution to the nation's citrus

harvest.

"The general impression is everybody is going to think we got a black school there," said Dale Dunn. The comment prompted yells from the audience saying: "What's wrong with that?"

Board member Roger Luebs told the crowd of about 200 people: "I would feel really good about striking a home run for citrus. But I feel a lot better with just a modest blow against bigotry."

The school will be the first named after a black person in the 36,000-student district, which is the largest in Riverside County, about 60 miles east of Los Angeles.



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