

Top Ten Performance: Challenges and Opportunities for Missouri Education

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1. Defining Top Ten Performance

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – advantages and disadvantages
- State Proficiency Indicators – advantages and disadvantages
- The Limits of State Policy – intellectual consistency and state mandates
- Beyond Governance – the moral imperative of education

2. National and International Evidence on Student Achievement

- Depth of Implementation is Key to Sustained Gains in Achievement
- Constellation of Practices: Focus, Monitoring, and Efficacy
- Implications for Missouri Policy and Practice – From Autopsies to Physicals

3. Top Ten Instructional and Leadership Policies

- Standards Establishment – clear and specific academic expectations at all levels
- Standards Implementation – written standards supported with accountability and assessment
- Writing – especially cross-disciplinary writing in science, social studies, and math
- Funding – focus on classroom, with accountability accompanying funds
- Monitoring – focus on adult actions, not just test scores
- Early Childhood Education – with focus on academic content and standards

4. Policy Implications for State Leaders

- Allocate Cuts Judiciously – increased failure rates cost taxpayers money
- Emphasize Informational Writing – essential for the Common Core, cross-disciplinary success, and post-secondary opportunities
- Depoliticize Educational Policy – common ground among diverse interests is clear, as every citizen and taxpayer wins when dropout rates decrease
- Implement Common Core Standards With Rigor, Clarity, and Specificity – “mailing the binders” is not sufficient
- Monitor Instructional and Leadership Strategies

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5. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

- Lessons from the Show-Me Standards and the 1990's
- State Responsibilities – assess causes and effects
- District Responsibilities – system of assessments, not end-of-year tests
- Classroom and School Responsibilities – document and assess best practices
- Higher Education Responsibilities – prepare teachers and leaders ready to implement common core
- Citizen Responsibilities – demand and support “Standards Plus” education

6. Missouri Challenges and Opportunities

- Most District Leaders Not Prepared (Leadership and Learning Center, 2011)
- State Leaders Focused on Quality, Not Federal Funds (Center on Educational Policy, 2011)
- States Ahead of Districts in Curriculum Design (CEP, 2011)
- Participation in Assessment Consortium – clear emphasis on formative assessment
- Acceleration of Data to Schools – significant improvement over prior years
- Higher Expectations (students and teachers) – students, teachers, and communities can rise to challenge
- State-wide Data Teams – best practice in education
- Local Control Means Local Responsibility – clear commitment to 100% opportunity and 100% participation in society

7. Myths and Realities of International Competition – “The Shanghai Surprise”

- Myth: High-Performing Countries Abandon Music, Art, and Physical Education. Reality: Students, parents, and grandparents embrace music, art, and physical fitness.
- Myth: Working Smarter Is Sufficient. Reality: Successful nations and students work harder.
- Myth: Teachers Can Be Ordered to Do Anything. Reality: Successful teachers, like successful attorneys, physicians, engineers, plumbers, electricians, paramedics, and every other profession, work very hard, have high standards of accountability, and know that there are grave consequences for error.
- Myth: National Mandates Drive Education. Reality: Cultural respect for teaching and learning drive education.

8. Evidence and Educational Debates

- Level 1 – I believe it
- Level 2 – I experienced it
- Level 3 – My friends and colleagues share my experience
- Level 4 – Objective observation
- Level 5 – Preponderance of the evidence