

SchoolsMovingUp Presents:

Ideas In Action

For the next few months at SchoolsMovingUp, we are highlighting "Ideas in Action." Ideas in Action are tips, examples, and stories to gain insights, learn from others' efforts, and build your knowledge base about school and district reform. We are also hosting three new Online Events presented by practitioners who will describe their successful school improvement efforts. We have organized our resources that feature real school and district improvement stories.

Online Events

[Ideas in Action: Baldwin Academy, December 5, 2007](#)

Baldwin Academy is a an elementary school in La Puente, California with a high poverty, high minority student population that performs well above its peers and has maintained a "similar schools ranking" of 10 (on a 10-point scale) on the California Academic Performance Index (API) for over four years. Baldwin is beating the odds and demonstrating success with its students. How have they accomplished this? In this interactive presentation, California school and district leaders interested in honing their instructional programs will learn from principal Bonnie Wilson about successful strategies at Baldwin. Topics will include Baldwin's staff focus on participating in shared decision-making and collaboration, providing professional learning opportunities, conducting ongoing analysis of data, and creating a culture of high expectations and extensive family involvement. This webinar is presented by the American Institutes for Research and WestEd as partners in the California Comprehensive Center to highlight high performing schools making a difference in student achievement

[Ideas in Action: Central Union High School, January 16, 2008](#)

Central Union High School serves a high minority, high poverty student population and has earned a "similar schools ranking" of 10 (on a 10-point scale) on the California Academic Performance Index (API) and recognition as a 2007 California Distinguished School. Central Union is beating the odds and demonstrating success with its students. In this interactive presentation, school and district leaders interested in learning about innovative uses of data to direct instruction and meet students' needs will learn from principal Emma Jones. Jones will share how Central Union has improved instructional practice through a system and culture that incorporate routine formal and informal classroom observations, analysis of instructional techniques, and feedback on teacher practices. Topics will include Central Union's focus on collaboration — both between the district and school and among school staff and administrators — to support instructional practices that boost student

achievement. This webinar is presented by the American Institutes for Research and WestEd as partners in the California Comprehensive Center to highlight high-performing schools making a difference in student achievement.

[Data Use and Teacher Collaboration: One School's Success Story, January 30, 2008](#)

In this webinar, Michael Gulden, former principal of Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary School from 2001 to 2007, will present on Morse's successful and innovative data use and teacher collaboration practices. Morse, recognized as a Title I California Achieving School in 2004 and 2005, received a "similar schools ranking" of 10 (on a 10-point scale) on the California Academic Performance Index (API). This interactive discussion will explore the strategies and practices the school pursued to improve instructional practices and student achievement through collaborative data use. Gulden will also share practices to cultivate a positive teacher attitude toward collaboration and how to build effective teacher collaboration practices around data.

Online Event Archives

[The Envision Schools Approach to Project-Based Learning, October 17, 2007](#)

Envision Schools uses an innovative education model with a project-based curriculum, in which art and technology are integral, to engage students in meaningful learning. In this presentation, Envision staff members Kyle Hartung and Bob Lenz discussed how the "Six A's of Project Design" (Academic Rigor, Authentic Audience, Applied Learning, Active Exploration, Adult Relationships, and Authentic Assessment) are used to guide instructional practice, and how project-based instruction scaffolds learning to support mastery of 21st Century leadership skills and clearly defined performance outcomes. The discussion also included a description of the systems and structures that are essential for Envision Schools to succeed using a project-based pedagogy.

[District & School-Based Professional Development Approaches for Content Area Literacy Improvement, March 14, 2007](#)

During this interactive presentation, Diane Waff, Senior Program Associate with the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd, and Cathleen Kral, Instructional Leader for Literacy with Boston Public Schools, shared characteristics of successful school and district professional development initiatives that help teachers acquire the knowledge and skills needed to become teachers of other teachers. The presenters also discussed features of effective literacy coaching at one culturally diverse high school and in a large urban school district. These examples show the importance of using a strong conceptual framework such as the [Reading Apprenticeship®](#) model to inform the work, develop a supportive professional learning community, and promote teacher leadership. All are key components of an integrated approach to improving student learning and achievement.

[Schools on the Right Track: Mathson Middle School, June 7, 2006](#)

Mathson Middle School made a 198-point gain on California's Academic Performance Index over the last three years and moved from a statewide decile ranking of 1 to 5. How did they accomplish this? In this interactive presentation, school and district leaders interested in school improvement learned from teacher Kilian Betlach about ongoing improvement at Mathson Middle School. Topics included Mathson's extensive staff collaboration around data and changes to their instructional program that have turned around achievement. This Online Event was sponsored by the California Comprehensive Center and was a follow-up presentation to the On the Right Track 4 Symposium, which highlighted California Program Improvement schools and districts making a difference in student achievement.

[Data Mentoring: Building Capacity for Data-Driven Decision Making, January 25, 2006](#)

All schools have data, but most don't know how to effectively use the information to make decisions. In this free interactive presentation led by Darrell Brown, Assessment & Accountability Coordinator of Beaumont USD (CA), participants learned how Beaumont and WestEd partnered to build the capacity of teachers to read, analyze, and interpret assessment data to inform their planning. This presentation was co-facilitated by Lori Van Houten, Senior Program Associate with WestEd's Comprehensive School Assistance Program.

[Assessment and Accountability: Six Habits of a Highly Effective District, September 21, 2005](#)

This Online Event highlighted one school district's success in raising student achievement, along with some of the reasons for this improvement. The Vail School District (AZ) and its Mesquite Elementary moved rapidly and effectively to implement an accountability system and significant changes in classroom practice, with excellent results. With implementation support and professional development from WestEd's Local Accountability Professional Development Series (LAPDS), and using ATI's web-based benchmark assessment/data management system, teachers and administrators were able to quickly intervene with students who had missed the opportunity to learn with the help of instant turnaround on benchmark assessment and formative assessment data.

[Tips to Go](#)

This section features easily implemented or replicated school and district tips to assist in school improvement efforts.

[Schools on the Move](#)

This section features profiles of schools from across the country that have effectively implemented changes and improved student achievement. These profiles are developed by and for SchoolsMovingUp.

Other School Profiles

This section features stories of school improvement from across the country.

Other District Profiles

This section features stories of district improvement from across the country.

Selected Reading Room Abstracts

Bottom-Up Simple Approach to School Accountability and Improvement

Carr, J., Artman, E.

Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 2002

<http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/565>

(For Purchase)

[Results: The Key to Continuous Improvement](#)

Schmoker, M.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999

[Creating a Culture Shift for Needy, Low-Performing Students at Village Academy](#)

Reeves, D.

Center for Performance Assessment, 2004

[Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts Can Do to Improve Instruction and Achievement in All Schools](#)

Togneri, W.

Learning First Alliance, 2003

[District Initiative](#)

Borja, R.R.

Education Week, May 2006

[Breakthrough High Schools: You Can Do It Too!](#)

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAASP), 2004

[Educational Leadership Online: Summer 2005 Turnaround Schools](#)

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Summer 2005

[Portrait of a Benchmark School](#)

Cawelti, G.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000

[First Ring Leadership Academy: A Multidistrict Model for Developing, Sharing and Supporting Leadership Talent](#)

Anthes, K., Long, A.

Education Commission of the States, October 2005

[Rethinking High School: An Introduction to New York City's Experience](#)

Huebner, T.A.

WestEd, 2005