

# Marshall Memo 205

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education

October 15, 2007

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## Quotes of the Week

“The thing that really got me mad was finding out that a huge number of our high-school graduates think that we fought with the Germans against the Russians in the second world war. It’s so unbelievable.”

Ken Burns in a *Newsweek* article on “The War”, his 12-hour documentary on World War II (Sept. 24, 2007, p. 55)

“In a democracy, public schools, at least, have the obligation to offer a first-class program of studies to every student. There are no second-class citizens, so there can be no second-class schooling – no mere training for worker bees...”

Jim Haas (see item #9)

“At its best, liberal education prepares intellectually curious young men and women to appreciate the difference between making a living and actually living; to cultivate more than a passing familiarity with ethics, history, science and culture; and to perceive the tragic chasm between the world as it is and the world as it could and ought to be.”

Vartan Gregorian (*ibid.*)

“The goal of legal literacy is not to help teachers win in court. On the contrary, it is to avoid litigation whenever possible, since judicial resolution of an educational dispute is usually an expensive, distracting, polarizing, and time-consuming experience.”

David Schimmel and Matthew Militello (see item #4)

“The surveillance camera’s singularity of function sends a message of power without love... In-person surveillance, because it overtly combines power with caring, is preferable to electronic surveillance.”

Bryan Warnick (see item #5)

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## 1. Closing the Achievement Gap in Brookline, Massachusetts

This article in *The Bay State Banner*, a Massachusetts newspaper, highlights the achievement gains made by African-American students in suburban Brookline High School, where they make up 10% of the 1,850-student enrollment. Here are the percentages of black students who scored proficient or above on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tenth-grade tests (a lower score, Needs Improvement, is the current requirement for high-school graduation):

	2005	2007
English Language Arts	32%	74%
Math	36%	67%

What's producing these gains? Headmaster Robert Weintraub believes the school's African-American Scholars Program has played a major role. To be admitted and take part in regular meetings with the program's director, students need at least a B- average in high-level courses. The goal of the program, says Weintraub, is to recognize high achievement and create a culture where students are respected, not denigrated, for their intellect. "What [these students] are all about is enrolling in high-level courses, working hard, doing well and getting high grades, and obviously moving on to high-level colleges," he says. "The goal is not only to help these kids do even better, but also for them to be role models – to establish a core of elite African-American scholars as a model, not just for other African-American kids, but for all kids."

The school is quite explicit about counteracting the delusion that professional sports are the road to wealth and fame. Weintraub: "You say to them, 'Well, there are maybe 1,000 professional athletes in the country, and that's great. Did you know that there are 20,000 African-American lawyers, and 20,000 African-American dentists, and 20,000 African-American doctors out there?' You have to transform their aspirations, in a sense." The program also talks about lifetime income from various professions – and the low odds of making a good living in the NBA.

The program has taken some flak for catering only to high-achieving students. Weintraub is quick to point out that the school works hard to help students who are not achieving at high levels, including daily tutoring from regular faculty members in a variety of subjects. But he has no hesitation about paying special attention to high-achieving African-American students. "These are the kids who are going to be the leaders of our country," he

says. “We’re going to transform the way we talk about achievement. Now we’re going to talk about African-American scholars as exemplary citizens and as leaders of our country and of our world. It’s time to do that. It’s time to transform the paradigm.”

Weintraub has an ambitious goal: that within one or two years, there will be no difference between the educational achievement of white and non-white students in the school. “I do believe that,” he says, “because I think what we’ve conquered is the stereotype threat, the rumors that black kids can’t do well on these tests. And I think that’s huge. The seniors and juniors have made their mark. They’ve eliminated the gap, to a large extent. Now, they have to work with the sophomores, the freshmen, even the eighth-graders – that’s the message. ‘We did it, you can do it.’ The achievement gap at Brookline High School is something that’s history right now. Watch. It’s over.”

“Brookline High Racing to Close MCAS Gap” by Dan Devine in *The Bay State Banner*, Oct. 11, 2007 (Vol. 43, #9, p. 1, 7), no e-link available; <http://bostonbanner.com/> to subscribe.

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## **2. Advice for Handling Interviews with Reporters**

In this savvy *Principal Leadership* article, Beth McCullough, public information officer for the Chatham County Schools in North Carolina, has the following pointers for principals when they are interviewed by reporters:

- *Use positive interviews as practice.* Being interviewed for a “puff piece” builds your interview skills and forges positive relationships with the reporter.
- *Don’t duck problems.* McCullough recalls one media frenzy that was caused by a principal and a central office official not returning calls from an angry parent, who then went to the press. The whole thing could have been avoided by one phone call.
- *Don’t delay returning reporters’ calls.* Even if you don’t have time for an in-depth conversation, it’s always wise to call back immediately, explain your own time crunch, find out the reporter’s deadline, and get the basic reason for the call. You don’t want to read in the paper the next day, “The principal did not return repeated phone calls for comment.”
- *Stick with your messages.* Reporters will sometimes ask the same question several different ways to try to get more information. You need to be clear about what you’re willing to disclose, says McCullough, especially if the subject is an investigation that law enforcement officers or social services workers are handling. It’s perfectly legitimate to refer reporters to the proper agency and say that you can’t comment because that might jeopardize an investigation that they are conducting.
- *Silence is golden.* “Reporters will sometimes use long pauses to entice you to add comments to questions you have already answered,” says McCullough. “Enjoy the moment of peace and quiet – it’s one of the few you may have that day – and wait for the reporter to move forward.”
- *Don’t let the reporter get the wrong idea.* Saying “No comment” in response to a question on a tricky subject sounds like you have something to hide. The reporter is going to

write the story, and if you don't give your side, someone else will probably give the reporter a different spin that will not be helpful to you. McCullough suggests one possible response: "Information related to students and personnel matters is confidential. However, it is important to us that everyone who has an interest in our schools be assured that we work diligently to deal with these matters immediately and appropriately."

- *Have a message and rehearse it.* McCullough encourages Chatham administrators to talk with her before an interview so they can think through what they want to say and refine their message. "I am amazed at the number of times I have read in a published article the exact phrasing an administrator and I crafted," she says.

- *Three points is ideal.* If you make fewer than three points, says McCullough, your comments won't carry enough weight. If you have more than three, you'll muddy the waters on your most important points.

- *Don't use jargon.* Terms like NCLB, AYP, ESL, ELL, and other education-speak terms don't communicate well with the lay public. Conversely, don't talk about *kids*; say *students*.

- *There is no such thing as off the record.* "Whatever you say is fair game for a reporter to use," says McCullough. "Remember this simple rule: you are on camera from the moment you see (or hear) the reporter until you cannot see (or hear) the reporter any more."

"Reporter on Line 2" by Beth McCullough in *Principal Leadership*, October 2007 (Vol. 8, #2, p. 30-32), no e-link available

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### **3. What Should Teachers and Principals Know About School Law?**

In this *Harvard Educational Review* article, David Schimmel and Matthew Militello of the University of Massachusetts/Amherst report the following findings collected by Common Good, an advocacy group:

- 82% of teachers say that schools practice "defensive teaching" to avoid legal challenges.
- 61% of teachers say their colleagues avoid making decisions they think are right because they fear a legal challenge.
- 63% of teachers feel the increased potential for legal challenges by students and parents hurts their ability to do their job.
- 78% of teachers say students are quick to remind them that they have rights or that their parents can sue.
- 85% of teachers and principals think reducing the availability of legal challenges for day-to-day management and discipline would help improve the quality of education.

Schimmel and Militello's reaction: "It is unclear whether these statistics reflect a problem of too much law in education or not enough education about school law." To find out, they surveyed a sample of 1,317 teachers in 17 states to ascertain the level of classroom sophistication about school law.

The findings: (a) teachers are “uninformed or misinformed” about students’ rights and teachers’ rights because few have taken law courses and most get their information from colleagues who haven’t either; (b) teachers would change their actions if they were better informed; and (c) most teachers are eager to learn more about school law.

So who will teach the teachers? Schimmel and Militello advocate a mandatory course in teacher preparation programs, but acknowledge that for teachers who are already on the job, the principal is the most important law teacher. “We posit that school administrators can be a powerful force in the development of legal literacy for teachers,” they write. “...Unfortunately, however, principals usually teach school law unconsciously and poorly (e.g., through warnings at staff meetings and in informal conversations with teachers). This is because most administrators do not think of themselves as law teachers, and because courses they may have taken in education law did not prepare them to teach the subject.” Principals need better preparation, say Schimmel and Militello, and those already on the job “should be partners with their district lawyers, who should be selected based on their ability to be teachers as well as litigators.”

Good inservice training is essential to empower teachers in this area, say the authors. “The goal of legal literacy is not to help teachers win in court,” they contend. “On the contrary, it is to avoid litigation whenever possible, since judicial resolution of an educational dispute is usually an expensive, distracting, polarizing, and time-consuming experience. By becoming legally literate, teachers will be able to use the law as a source of guidance to avoid unconstitutional actions, to bring legal violations to the attention of colleagues and administrators, and to improve the educational experience of students by guaranteeing that their rights are understood and respected... With increased knowledge of school law, teachers may no longer see themselves as victims of the legal system. Instead, they will better understand how the system works and how it can work to protect them, their students, and their schools.”

Here is the quiz Schimmel and Militello gave teachers, along with the percent of respondents who got each question correct. You might want to take this quiz yourself to assess your knowledge of school law. The answers will be in next week’s Memo.

Student Rights True or False? (teachers’ average score: 39.2%)

- a. School officials may legally search a student’s personal belongings without a specific reason. (55.7% correct)
- b. Students who refuse to salute the flag may be required to stand in respectful silence. (40.7% correct)
- c. Law enforcement officials requesting permission to search a student at school must have probable cause. (73.6% correct)
- d. Students who choose to participate in competitive athletics may be subjected to random drug testing. (48.6% correct)
- e. Schools may require all students to wear uniforms without violating student rights. (53.8% correct)

- f. Before students are suspended for 5-10 days, they have a right to a hearing where they can bring a lawyer to advise them. (17.5% correct)
- g. Students have the right to promote their political beliefs to other students at school. (52.7% correct)
- h. School officials must permit students to distribute controversial religious materials on campus if it does not cause disruption. (19.1% correct)
- i. Students have a constitutional right to participate in extracurricular activities. (34.3% correct)
- j. Students may wear T-shirts that criticize school policies as long as they do not cause a significant interference with school operations. (35.8% correct)
- k. The First Amendment protects student speech that is offensive, provocative, and controversial. (18.1% correct)
- l. Invocations and benedictions at graduation ceremonies are permitted. (21.2% correct)

Teacher Rights and Liability True or False? (teachers' average score: 39.2%)

- a. Teachers can be held liable for any injury that occurs if they leave their classroom unattended. (2.8% correct)
- b. Teachers may be held liable for their failure to report sexual, physical, or verbal abuse. (92.9% correct)
- c. It is unconstitutional to study the Bible in a public school. (47.9% correct)
- d. Teachers can be disciplined for publicly criticizing school policies of community concern. (39.9% correct)
- e. Teachers have the legal authority to select the texts for students. (46.7% correct)
- f. Academic freedom generally protects teachers who discuss controversial subjects if they are relevant, appropriate for the age and maturity of the students, and do not cause disruption. (60.6% correct)
- g. If a teacher is asked to give a recommendation for a student and includes false information in the recommendation that causes a student to be rejected for a job, the teacher can be held liable for libel even if the libel was unintentional. (14.8% correct)
- h. Teachers are prohibited from viewing their students' records unless they receive permission from the parents or the principal. (67% correct)
- i. Public schools can fire a teacher for having a consensual sexual relationship with a student in their school even if the student is over 18. (77.8% correct)
- j. Teachers cannot be held liable for student injuries that occur in breaking up a fight. (26.4% correct)
- k. Teachers/schools can be held liable for educational malpractice. (9.3% correct)
- l. As an agent of the state, a public school teacher is constrained by the Bill of Rights. (41.3% correct)
- m. Teachers can be sued for defamation if their report of student abuse is not substantiated. (35.1% correct)

- n. Schools can be held liable for failing to prevent student sexual harassment. (4.8% correct)
- o. Schools have the right to require supplemental material approval by administrators in advance without violating teachers' academic freedom. (54.6% correct)
- p. Schools can impose rigid dress codes on teachers without violating their rights. (36.9% correct)
- q. If a teacher gives a student a ride home from school without parental permission and the student is injured – not as a result of teacher negligence – the teacher would still be held liable. (3.6% correct)

[If you're interested in further honing your legal knowledge, there's another quiz in Marshall Memo 66 on legal protection for gay and lesbian students – and a 20-question First Amendment quiz online at <http://www.firstamendmentschools.org/firstamendment101/>.]

“Legal Literacy for Teachers: A Neglected Responsibility” by David Schimmel and Matthew Militello in *Harvard Educational Review*, Fall 2007 (Vol. 77, #3, p. 257-284), no e-link available

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#### **4. Ethical Guidelines for the Use of Surveillance Cameras in Schools**

In this thoughtful *Harvard Educational Review* article, Ohio State professor Bryan Warnick analyzes the ethical dilemmas raised by the use of school surveillance cameras. There have been no successful legal challenges to such devices, but Warnick wonders about the moral and interpersonal issues involved. Do cameras violate students' right to privacy? When are privacy rights trumped by the right to safety from bullying and violence? Could cameras (like overly protective parents) prevent students from developing good judgment outside the sphere of adult supervision? And how are cameras different from a watchful adult?

Warnick explores these issues by asking us to consider the difference between human and electronic supervision in these four situations:

- Case A:
  - A school official watches over a hallway or cafeteria.
  - A camera watches over a hallway or cafeteria.
- Case B:
  - A bus driver watches over what goes on in a bus.
  - A camera watches over what goes on in a bus.
- Case C:
  - A school official watches over a classroom.
  - A camera watches over a classroom.
- Case D:
  - A school official watches over a locker room.
  - A camera watches over a locker room.

One key difference, says Warnick, is the technological storage capacity of modern surveillance cameras, which increases the possibility of abuse over time and space and decreases students' ability to defend themselves in problematic situations.

But a second issue is subtext that cameras implicitly communicate. "Cameras send messages of permanency when there should be messages of change and growth," writes Warnick. "The surveillance camera's singularity of function sends a message of power without love. These messages constitute a sustained assault on the necessary component of trust in educational environments."

Warnick suggests five principles for the effective and ethical use of surveillance cameras in schools:

- *Electronic surveillance should be minimal.* Cameras should be used only when there is evidence of a serious problem, other measures have failed, and there is evidence that surveillance can help. Why? Because: (a) This will minimize the negative effects on the school environment, i.e., distrust and changelessness; (b) Students will get the message that surveillance is used only with care and in special circumstances; and (c) It will maximize the space in which students can practice autonomy and actualize their right to an open future. "In-person surveillance, because it overtly combines power with caring, is preferable to electronic surveillance," says Warnick.

- *Surveillance cameras should be open to public debate.* Students should be part of this ongoing discussion, says Warnick, and there should be "clear and publicly known policies concerning who has access to images and when, where the cameras are located, who supervises the use of technology, and what consequences exist for abuse of the cameras (such as using the cameras for voyeurism, targeting certain groups for surveillance over others, and so forth)." Why? Because: (a) This policy acknowledges the public nature of schools; (b) It enables students to govern their own actions and "sends messages of respect and trust that offset the presence of video cameras;" and (c) "It sets a precedent for institutional transparency and accountability to the community... and shows that "issues of surveillance are important enough to deserve careful public scrutiny, thus working against dangerous precedents that accept without question continuous surveillance."

- *Students, teachers, parents, and staff should have access to surveillance data to defend their rights and advance their own legitimate ends* (constrained, of course, by the privacy rights of others). Why? Because: (a) It's fair; "the use of the technology should serve the public interest and not simply the interests of those in power;" (b) It sends a message to students that they can "actively engage with the world on behalf of their legitimate interests and not be passive objects to be supervised and policed by others;" and (c) It helps develop "student responsibility, autonomy, and self-governance."

- *The location and purpose of cameras should be public knowledge.* Why? Because this awareness "allows members of the population to protect their privacy as much as possible, if that is important to them."

- *Video and digital records should be erased after a certain period of time.* Why? Because: (a) "Limiting the time in which recordings exist sends the message that past behavior

will not be timelessly archived and that change and growth are possible;” and (b) this reduces the possibility of abuse.

“Surveillance Cameras in Schools: An Ethical Analysis” by Bryan Warnick in *Harvard Educational Review*, Fall 2007 (Vol. 77, #3, p. 317-343), no e-link available

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## **5. Three Things That Low-Income Students Need to Succeed in College**

In this *Education Week* article, Nancy Hoffman and Joel Vargas from the Boston-based nonprofit Jobs for the Future suggest three crucial resources that need to be in place for low-income students to successfully make the leap from high school to college:

- A rigorous academic program that moves without a break from high school to non-remedial college work.
- Financing for higher education promised at least by ninth grade.
- A web of school-based, familial, and community support through high school and into college.

Some states and districts are making progress on the first and second, but the third item needs the most attention, say Hoffman and Vargas. These ideas are fleshed out in a book they edited with Andrea Venezia and Marc Miller: *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It* (Harvard Education Press, 2007).

“The College Gap: Why Integrating High School with Higher Education Makes Sense – and How to Do it” by Nancy Hoffman and Joel Vargas in *Education Week*, Oct. 10, 2007 (Vol. 27, #7, p. 24-25), <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/10/07hoffman.h27.html>

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## **6. What Does College Readiness Look Like? A New Report**

In this *Education Gadfly* review of a new report from the National Center on Education Statistics, “Interpreting 12<sup>th</sup>-Graders’ NAEP-Scaled Mathematics Performance Using High School Predictors and Postsecondary Outcomes from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988,” Michael Petrilli zeros in on the main conclusions. The study followed a representative group of students from the time they left middle school in 1988 to the time they were 26 years old. Here were the college outcomes of students at different levels on a NAEP-level test taken in 12<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Scored Below Basic – 20% earned a bachelor’s degree, 20% an associate’s degree
- Scored Basic – 50% earned a bachelor’s degree, 12% an associate’s degree
- Scored Proficient – 84% earned a bachelor’s degree
- Scored Advanced – 90%+ earned a bachelor’s degree, most from selective colleges.

What does this mean for college readiness? Petrilli believes that getting students to the proficient level on NAEP-level standards virtually guarantees it.

“Short Reviews of New Reports and Books” by Michael Petrilli in *Education Gadfly*, Oct. 11, 2007; the full report is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007328>

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## **7. Improving the Odds for Students Whose Families Move Frequently**

This *Education Week* article confirms many educators’ sense that students who move frequently from school to school have more difficulty with achievement – and that there is a high correlation between mobility and poverty. “One of the consistent findings in the dropout literature is that students who have changed schools many times for elementary and middle school are more likely to drop out in high school,” says David Kerbow of the University of Chicago. Kerbow notes that mobility also affects students who don’t move because teachers tend to slow the pace of instruction to accommodate newcomers.

Kerbow notes that U.S. military schools around the world have had to deal with high mobility for decades. Their practices, and those of other districts that have grappled with the problem, can be summed up as follows:

- Develop a personal connection with parents so they have a direct point of contact at school, even if the family moves.
- Create a standard way to quickly assess students who enroll after the beginning of the school year, particularly in math, reading, and writing.
- Compile a portfolio of student work that can travel with the student from one school to another.
- Create links between schools so that staff members can share information about the needs of students who move from school to school.
- Support teachers in helping to integrate students into classes.

“Mobility of Native-American Students Can Pose Challenges to Achievement” by Mary Ann Zehr in *Education Week*, Oct. 10, 2007 (Vol. 27, #7, p. 1, 14),

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/10/07native.h27.html>

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## **8. Which DIBELS Subtests Are Most Useful for First Graders?**

In this *Reading Research Quarterly* article, Brant Riedel of the Memphis City Schools Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment reports on the use of DIBELS data in first-grade classrooms to guide instruction and predict students’ future proficiency in reading comprehension. The bottom line: only the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) subtest provides teachers with useful information. The Oral Reading Fluency subtest, which measures the number of words that a student can read accurately in a minute, doesn’t measure comprehension directly, but students’ scores on the Oral Reading Fluency subtest correlate strongly with comprehension – and this is true for ELL students as well as native English speakers.

Riedel found that other DIBELS subtests, including Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), and Retelling Fluency (RT), do not correlate well with

future reading comprehension and don't provide teachers with useful diagnostic information for instruction. "If the goal of DIBELS administration is to identify students at risk for reading comprehension difficulties," he concludes, "the present results suggest that by the middle of the first grade, administration of DIBELS subtests other than ORF is not necessary. The minimal gains in predictive accuracy do not justify the time and effort involved in administering the non-ORF subtests to teach students."

Riedel goes on to express some doubts about the usefulness of Oral Reading Fluency results for classroom purposes. "The value of DIBELS ORF as a diagnostic assessment is less clear," he writes. "Although DIBELS ORF usually correctly predicts current and future comprehension difficulties, it may not provide any details regarding the student's reading difficulties or the interventions needed to remedy them. Also, further study is needed to identify factors that cause DIBELS ORF to misjudge comprehension ability in some students."

Riedel notes the importance of vocabulary in building reading comprehension. Those first graders who scored well on the Oral Reading Fluency subtest but poorly in comprehension almost invariably had weak vocabularies. Clearly vocabulary development would be the point of intervention for these students.

"The Relationship Between DIBELS, Reading Comprehension, and Vocabulary in Urban First-Grade Students" by Brant Riedel in *Reading Research Quarterly*, October/November 2007 (Vol. 42, #4, p. 546-567), no e-link available

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## **9. The Goals of Public Schools**

In this letter to *Education Week*, Jim Haas of Webster University in Kansas City, Missouri recalls the three aims that the late Paul Gagnon believed schools in a democracy should embrace: Preparing young people for work, citizenship, and private culture. "In a democracy," says Haas, "public schools, at least, have the obligation to offer a first-class program of studies to every student. There are no second-class citizens, so there can be no second-class schooling – no mere training for worker bees..."

Haas goes on to quote Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation: "At its best, liberal education prepares intellectually curious young men and women to appreciate the difference between making a living and actually living; to cultivate more than a passing familiarity with ethics, history, science and culture; and to perceive the tragic chasm between the world as it is and the world as it could and ought to be."

"Education Serves More Than the Bottom Line" – a letter from Jim Haas of Webster University, Kansas City, MO in *Education Week*, Oct. 10, 2007 (Vol. 27, #7, p. 25)  
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/10/07letter-1.h27.html>

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## 10. Should No Child Left Behind Be Radically Re-thought?

In this trenchant piece in *Education Gadfly*, conservative commentators Chester Finn and Frederick Hess offer their critique of No Child Left Behind and suggest that the law needs major changes. Several excerpts:

“At its heart, today’s NCLB amounts to a civil rights manifesto dressed up as an accountability system. This provides an untenable basis for serious reform, as if Congress declared that every last molecule of water or air pollution would vanish by 2014, or that all American cities would be crime-free by that date... Only politicians promise such things. The inevitable result is cynicism and frustration among educators and a ‘compliance’ mentality among state and local officials... In the end, Washington is not well-positioned to effect radical change in a sphere that depends primarily on state and local action, or successfully to require states and districts to adopt measures whose efficacy hinges on gusto and creativity rather than compliance... A sense of urgency and outsized aspirations is commendable, but there’s a world of difference between determination and delusion. We have spent forty years since the LBJ era learning how hard school reform actually is... What Washington can do best, given the structure of the American federal system, is deploy its ‘bully pulpit’ to change the political climate, set common standards, collect and disseminate data, cultivate research and technical expertise, nurture pioneering state efforts and cast a spotlight upon them, and promote a clear understanding of what constitutes unacceptable school performance.”

“Leave No (None, Zero, Nada) Child Behind?” by Chester Finn and Frederick Hess in *Education Gadfly*, Oct. 11, 2007 (adapted from *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons from a Half-Decade of NCLB* (AEI Press, 2007)

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## 11. Short Items:

*a. Online language practice* – The Language Exchange Community or xLingo (at <http://www.xLingo.com>) is a privacy-protected website that allows language learners to pair up with people around the nation and the world and mutually practice learning a new language and teaching their own. For example, English speakers who want to learn Japanese enter some basic information (language, age, gender, interests); Japanese speakers who want to learn English do the same; both sets of learners select as many possible matches as they wish and add them to their Friends lists; and pairs match up based on similar needs and interests, contact each other through xLingo’s internal mail service, an internal audio/video chat forum, or through Skype (free software that allows learners to call other people over the Internet: <http://www.skype.com>). xLingo has several strong points:

- Privacy – xLingo uses an internal mail service, so members do not need to reveal their regular e-mail addresses.
- Authenticity – Learners practice with a native speaker in a real conversation.
- Bidirectional interaction – Learners take turns being second language learners and tutors of their own language.

- Coherent goals – Both partners aim to learn the language and culture of their interlocutors.

“xLingo” by Baburhan Uzum in *Essential Teacher*, September 2007 (Vol. 4, #3, p. 40)

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***b. Help setting up a blog*** – At this link, the Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education (CASTLE) will create a free blog for any principal who is interested: <http://principalblogs.jot.com>.

“Principal Blogging Project” in *Principal Leadership*, October 2007 (Vol. 8, #2, p. 10)

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***Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?***

*If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: [kim.marshall8@verizon.net](mailto:kim.marshall8@verizon.net)*

# About the Marshall Memo

## ***Mission and focus:***

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 37 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

## ***Subscriptions:***

Individual subscriptions are \$50 for the school year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

## ***Website:***

If you go to <http://www.marshallmemo.com> you will find detailed information on:

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- What readers say
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Marshall Memo subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in PDF or Word format)
- All back issues (also in PDF or Word)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- How to change access e-mail or password

## ***Publications covered***

*Those read this week are underlined.*

American Educator  
American School Board Journal  
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews  
Atlantic Monthly  
Catalyst Chicago  
Chronicle of Higher Education  
CommonWealth Magazine  
Ed. Magazine  
EDge  
Education Digest  
Education Gadfly  
Education Next  
Education Week  
Educational Leadership  
Educational Researcher  
Edutopia  
Elementary School Journal  
Essential Teacher (TESOL)  
Harvard Business Review  
Harvard Education Letter  
Harvard Educational Review  
JESPAR  
Journal of Staff Development  
Language Learner (NABE)  
Middle Ground  
Middle School Journal  
NASSP Bulletin  
New York Times  
New Yorker  
Newsweek  
PEN Weekly NewsBlast  
Phi Delta Kappan  
Principal  
Principal Leadership  
Principal's Research Review  
Reading Research Quarterly  
Reading Today  
Rethinking Schools  
Review of Educational Research  
Teacher Magazine (online)  
Teachers College Record  
TESOL Quarterly  
Theory Into Practice  
Tools for Schools