

NCLB Making a Difference in West Virginia



- “The State Board recognized a need for professional development in the area of reading and as a result it launched ‘Reading for All,’ which focuses on three phases: Learn to Read for grades K-4; Read to Learn for grades 5-12; and Read to Succeed which continues through adulthood. The state board also created the West Virginia Reading Academy. It has provided intensive professional development in reading to K-3 principals and educators for more than five years. During its first four years, approximately 500 educators representing 100 schools have participated. One year later, the Department of Education’s Reading Cadre was formed. Within a few months, this group of dedicated teachers delivered reading professional development to Regional Education Service Agencies, counties and schools throughout West Virginia. The training was tailored to the reading needs of the particular county or school served.... This month [West Virginia] wrapped up the third annual Reading Research Symposium, which sparked...educators’ minds with new research on effectively teaching our children to learn to read. Wayne Elementary received the 2003 Exemplary Reading Program Award from the International Reading Association and the West Virginia Reading Association. More recently, West Virginia was one of only two states in the nation to receive the prestigious International Reading Association’s Five Star Policy Award by demonstrating that it guarantees quality education and student achievement by implementing excellent reading policies, programs and initiatives.” (*Charleston Daily Mail*, 3/28/05)
- “When former Principal Carol Thom decided to give single-sex classes a try at Stonewall Jackson Middle School last fall, she was hopeful the experiment would increase student achievement. Thom, now the director of professional development for Kanawha County schools, says preliminary results have been so promising she’s tracking the school’s progress for her dissertation and working to develop teacher training programs for other schools. ... After only one semester, the number of the school’s 600 students making A’s jumped from 30 to 36 percent. At the same time, the number making D’s and F’s declined 10 percent, from 24 to 14 percent. ... Stonewall Jackson, in a racially mixed area on Charleston’s West Side where about 70 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, was the first public school in West Virginia to segregate students by gender. Students in grades six through eight are separated for classes in English, math, science and social studies. Other courses, including art, physical education and band, are mixed. Next year, the single-sex concept will be expanded to health and gym.” (*Charleston Gazette*, 6/19/05)
- “Earlier this week, Kanawha school board members lauded Sissonville [High School] Principal Calvin McKinney for mandating that students take math and science courses. ... With 140 seniors this school year, and one of the lowest graduation rates in the county, the school has all but six students enrolled in math and 100 percent enrollment in science. That’s the highest percentage of all eight high schools in Kanawha County. ... Sissonville also had the second lowest number of graduates in remedial college courses in 2003 behind George Washington High.” (*Charleston Gazette*, 12/9/04)