



PRESS RELEASE

Former Massachusetts Commissioner of Education Discusses Critical Issues in Education Reform in New Web Video Series From Pearson

Company's Evaluation Systems Group Produces Free Videos to Contribute to National Conversation on Improving Student Achievement

HADLEY, Mass. – Dec. 23, 2009 – Education reform is a national priority. Pearson, the education, services and technology company, is stimulating discussions of school reform issues with today's launch of a series of video interviews with nationally recognized education leader David Driscoll, Ed.D. The company's Evaluation Systems group, the most experienced provider of standards-based teacher certification testing programs, developed these thought-provoking videos with the former Massachusetts Commissioner of Education to contribute to the national conversation on the most effective ways to improve student achievement.

In these five Web video segments, Driscoll addresses a wide range of school reform topics from his perspective as a leader in education for more than 43 years. He began his career as a secondary math teacher and then served in district leadership roles, as a state commissioner of education, president of Council of Chief State School Officers and is now the chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress: The Nation's Report Card. Driscoll discusses key areas of school reform, including state education initiatives; the role of teachers, principals and educator preparation in school improvement; and the best strategies for transforming education in the future.

"The national conversation about how to reform education has reached new heights over the past several years," said William Gorth, Ph.D., president of the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson. "We developed this video series to help education, community and government leaders consider the potential that initiatives such as the movement toward common core standards and efforts to improve teaching can and will

have on student achievement. Who better than Dr. Driscoll, with his experience in education reform at all levels, to lead this discussion?”

While Massachusetts Education Commissioner, Driscoll worked with state leaders to pass the “12-62 Plan,” a law aimed at enhancing future educator quality. The program gained national recognition for its accelerated teacher education and bonus programs, both aimed at encouraging mid-career professionals to become classroom teachers. In the video series, Driscoll cites having a quality teacher in every classroom as the “most important ingredient in school reform.”

“The key to our success in Massachusetts was not just student testing, but also teacher licensure testing,” he said. “The thing that made the biggest difference in Massachusetts was ratcheting up teacher standards.”

Driscoll said that states and districts should aim to not just meet – but surpass – the federal standards for teacher quality. “We need a broad comprehensive approach to improving teacher quality in this country, starting with getting society to care more about the profession,” he said.

When discussing the role of teacher licensure testing in education reform, Driscoll cites content knowledge as having the most critical impact. He said that while effective teaching practices are important, teachers must also have strong knowledge of the content they are teaching. Driscoll said with teacher licensure testing, “We need to be very clear about what we want teachers to know and be able to do, just as we are very clear about what we want students to know and be able to do. Then build the test around that.”

In the video, “Education and the Future,” Driscoll talks about the potential effect on teachers of the current movement toward common, national standards for student achievement. “As common standards are established across the country and we raise expectations for students, in most states, they are going to have to raise the expectations of teacher skills and knowledge.”

He also addresses the value of authentic assessment and using tools, such as video, in teacher licensure testing. “The more authentic we can make evaluation, the better off we are,” Driscoll said. “Videotaping is a very good way to evaluate performance and, most importantly, hone in on areas where people need improvement.”

The five videos, “Education Reform and the States,” “Education Reform and Teachers,” “Education Reform and Teacher Licensure Testing,” “Education Reform and School Leadership” and “Education Reform and the Future” are available at <http://teacher.PearsonAssessments.com>.

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