



**ASQ**  
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# Education Brief



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## Welcome to the New *Education Brief* Newsletter

*Education Brief* provides news and information on a variety of continuous improvement topics such as this month's article on Benchmarking. It will be e-mailed to you bimonthly. We welcome your thoughts about this newsletter. Feel free to share them with [us](#) or [other members](#).

### From the Editor

#### Margaret Byrnes: No Excuses

The No Child Left Behind Act has accomplished one thing for sure. It has focused everyone on student test scores. However, due to the punitive nature of the law, thousands, indeed millions of dollars have been redirected to hire teachers specifically to ensure students pass the state standards test. ([more...](#))

### Cover Story

#### More Than Inputs and Outcomes: Process Improvement Needed in American Schools

About 60 years ago, W. Edwards Deming went to Japan to teach business leaders about the importance of quality to competitiveness. The Japanese business leaders not only listened. They took action. They focused on quality and customers through process improvement and process innovation. And steadily gained in competitiveness, while American business remained largely asleep. ([more...](#))

### This Month's Features

#### Cheaper, Faster, Better! By What Method?

With continued pressure to increase school district performance and constant reduction in resources, the mantra of "cheaper, faster, better" is louder than ever. The mantra, veiled in criticisms leveled at school districts, teachers, staff and students, proclaims what should be accomplished or what should be practiced. ([more...](#))

### **Benchmarking in the Olathe School District**

Gary George provides an overview of how a Kansas school district uses benchmarking to make improvements. Olathe began benchmarking after a discussion at a district quality council meeting indicated that the district lacked a systematic approach to customer service. ([more...](#))

### **Applying Benchmarking in Higher Education: A Review of Three Case Studies**

Benchmarking has proved to be an effective method to identify best practice information and improve processes in an organization. Although the technique has been used widely in business and industry, the concept has not been broadly embraced and applied in higher education. This article discusses and analyzes the application of benchmarking in three higher education case studies. ([more...](#))

### **Of Interest**

#### **NQEC 2006 Information Announced**

The 14th annual [National Quality Education Conference](#) will be held Nov. 12-14 in Dallas. New this year is [Counsel From the Experts](#), which will allow educators to interact with noted continuous improvement authors and consultants.

#### **Providing Support for Change at the District, School and Classroom Level**

[Jay Marino](#) shares his thoughts about the 2006 ASQ Educational Summit in his [Quality in Education](#) blog.

#### **Enter the NQEC Network for Free**

If you were a 2005 attendee of the [National Quality Education Conference](#), you can access the [NQEC network](#) for free.

#### **Education Discussion Boards Available to Public**

Check out the [Students in Quality Discussion Board](#) and [Quality in Higher Education](#).

### **Publications**

*Insights to Performance Excellence 2006: An Inside Look at the 2006 Baldrige Award Criteria*, by Mark L. Blazey. ([more...](#))

*Boot Camp for Leaders in K-12 Education: Continuous Improvement*, by Lee Jenkins, Lloyd O. Roettger and Caroline Roettger. ([more...](#))

Next month's topic: Closing the Achievement Gap

**“Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.”**

**—John W. Gardner, late author, U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare**

**“Excellent firms don't believe in excellence—only in constant improvement and constant change.”**

**—Thomas J. Peters, author**

**“Question old assumptions and methods. Quantum leaps in performance require creativity and innovation.”**

**—Paul Thorton, author**

**“You must be humble enough to admit that someone else is better at something and wise enough to learn from them.”**

**—Carla O'Dell, president, American Productivity and Quality Center**

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