

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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TEACHING & LEARNING

Study: Sleep a determining factor in test scores

Students who get regular, recommended amounts of sleep, have better academic outcomes, with sleep factoring into about one-fourth of the difference among students' grades, according to a study by researchers at MIT. The researchers found that consistency of sleep as much as a month before an exam was a major indicator.

Science News for Students, like Science News, is published by the Society for Science & the Public.

Jeremy Rehm. "Surprise! Exam scores benefit from months of regular sleep." *Science News for Students*. January 3, 2020

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/exam-scores-benefit-from-months-of-regular-sleep>

Strategies to curb bullying

School assemblies, poster campaigns and lectures are largely ineffective at curbing bullying among students, writes clinical psychologist Jeff Nalin. In this blog post, Nalin suggests seven strategies to help educators and parents address bullying behavior, including teaching coping skills and rewarding prosocial behavior.

Jeff Nalin. "7 ways schools can stomp out bullying." *Smart Brief/Education*. January 8, 2020

<https://www.smartbrief.com/original/2020/01/7-ways-schools-can-stomp-out-bullying>

Elements of successful project based learning

There are seven essential elements that comprise the "gold standard" of project-based learning, according to a report from the nonprofit PBLWorks. The group shares several tips to ensure the success of PBL efforts, including appropriate training and buy-in from leadership.

Dian Schaffhauser. "5 PBL Strategies from the Champs." *T.H.E. Journal*. January 8, 2020

<https://thejournal.com/articles/2020/01/08/5-pbl-strategies-from-the-champs.aspx>

More schools adopt dual-language programs

As a growing number of U.S. students enroll with limited English proficiency, more schools have adopted dual-language programs, which research has found can help boost achievement among students who are English-language learners. There were about 3,000 dual-language programs nationwide in 2015, up from 300 in 2001.

Erin Richards and Kristin Lam, "More US schools teach in English and Spanish, but not enough to help Latino kids." *USA TODAY*. January 7, 2020

<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/education/2020/01/06/english-language-learners-benefit-from-dual-language-immersion-bilingual-education/4058632002/>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL

Important federal court cases in 2020

Lawsuits pending in federal courts could change the nation's public education landscape significantly in 2020. The DACA case before the Supreme Court will affect thousands of educators and students. A five-year-old Virginia case over transgender students' rights to bathrooms and other school facilities could be heard by the Supreme Court, and justices are set to hear a Montana case over state aid to religious schools. Another case challenges the takeover of Houston public schools by the state of Texas.

Naaz Modan. "These court cases could shift the K-12 landscape in 2020." *Education Dive*. December 19, 2019

<https://www.educationdive.com/news/these-court-cases-could-shift-the-k-12-landscape-in-2020/569292/>

Democratic presidential candidates and charter schools

At one time Democrats joined with Republicans to expand the federal Charter Schools Program, which is now the single biggest source of funding for charter schools at \$440 million annually (the second biggest source is the Walton Family Foundation). But now Democrats are pushing back against school choice and charter schools, and electing pro-public education governors. Democratic presidential candidates being cautious on the issue.

Jennifer C. Berkshire. "The Democrats' School Choice Problem." *The Nation*. December 30, 2019

<https://www.thenation.com/article/education-school-choice-democrats/>

Chief Justice seeks more civics education

The rise of social media has fueled the dissemination of false information, made more problematic by the dearth of civics education, US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts Jr. said in an annual address. He noted several ways federal courts strive to support civics education.

Mark Walsh. "Chief Justice Warns That 'Civic Education Has Fallen By the Wayside.'" *Education Week*. December 31, 2019

Schools might deliver more health care services

A federal change will allow schools to bill Medicaid, setting up a potential spike in the number of students receiving health care services at school. More than a dozen states are expected to take advantage of the policy.

The *Michigan Advance* is a nonprofit news site covering politics and policy across the state.

Michael Ollove. "More kids on Medicaid to get health care in school." *Michigan Advance*. January 2, 2020

<https://www.michiganadvance.com/2020/01/02/more-kids-on-medicaid-to-get-health-care-in-school/>

Former superintendent: Federal & state interventions were lies

A former Ohio school superintendent writes that one of his most difficult, frustrating responsibilities was trying to stay abreast of state and federal laws governing education. He notes that for at least 30 years, politicians have claimed their goal is to close achievement gaps but their laws haven't worked while wasting billions of tax dollars.

Tom Dunn is former superintendent of the Miami County Educational Service Center.

Tom Dunn. Commentary: "Lies, lies, and more lies." *Troy (Ohio) Daily News*. December 30, 2019

<https://www.tdn-net.com/opinion/columns/76685/lies-lies-and-more-lies>

Effects of national security threats on education policy

A new study, released just before the U.S. military killed a top Iranian military commander and escalated international tensions, looks at connections between sudden national security crises and federal education policymaking.

Andrew Ujifusa. "When National Security Threats Influence Education Policy and Politics." *Education Week*. January 6, 2020

<http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2020/01/national-security-threats-education-policy.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2-rm&M=59014920&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

Existing danger: School shootings at after-school events

Since mid-August, gunfire has erupted more than 20 times at or near school sporting events around the country, more shootings than took place during school hours. Data show that shootings at school events are a longstanding problem, but efforts to prevent them have been piecemeal and, in some cases, nonexistent. After-hours games are still wide open: Anyone who pays a few dollars for a ticket can stroll right in.

Mitch Smith & Denise Lu. "An overlooked danger: School shootings after hours." *NY Times*. January 6, 2020

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/01/06/us/after-school-shootings.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_200107&campaign_id=2&instance_id=14975&segment_id=20104&user_id=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca®i_id=188779070107

Not only unions oppose charter schools

Promoters of charter schools argue that it is mainly teacher unions that oppose charter schools, but that statement is false. For years, many lawmakers, educational leaders, parents, students, and others have also opposed charter schools run by unelected individuals, and their movement is growing. People increasingly see through the charter school hype, the obsession with useless test scores, and the lack of accountability for scandal and crime in the charter school sector. Resistance to charter schools has become so consolidated that hardly any 2020 Democratic presidential candidates openly support them.

Shawgi Tell is a professor of education at Nazareth College.

Shawgi Tell. "Teachers Unions Not the Only Ones Opposing Charter Schools." *Dissident Voice*. January 7, 2020

<https://dissidentvoice.org/2020/01/teachers-unions-not-the-only-ones-opposing-charter-schools/>

Commentary: Failure of testing regime

Daniel Koretz, a leading authority on U.S. testing and professor at Harvard University, is the author of *Measuring Up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us* and *The Testing Charade: Pretending to Make Schools Better*. He recently wrote about how the federal government's demand for high-stakes testing has undermined education. He noted that the U.S. has seen no progress in PISA or NAEP test scores—and that teachers have been pressured to raise these scores for 20 years. He argues that this pressure on teachers hasn't worked, even with increased focus on reading and math. And, he notes, the effort to improve equity has also failed...*the gap between racial and ethnic minorities and non-minority students started to narrow before the rush into test-based accountability, but that progress has ground to a halt in recent years. At the same time, as Sean Reardon at Stanford University has shown, the gap between rich and poor students has widened on a variety of independent tests. The gap between high- and low-scoring students overall has also recently grown larger.*

Dana Goldstein. "'It Just Isn't Working': PISA Test Scores Cast Doubt on U.S. Education Efforts." *NY Times*. January 8, 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/03/us/us-students-international-test-scores.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

NEW YORK STATE

Kolb stepping down as Assembly Minority Leader

Brian Kolb announced on January 3 that he has resigned the Assembly Minority Leader position he has held for the past decade, following a December 31 drunk driving arrest.

Zach Williams. "Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb steps down." *City & State/NY*. January 3, 2020

https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/new-york-state/assembly-minority-leader-brian-kolb-steps-down.html?utm_source=First+Read+Newsletters&utm_campaign=5026a43afe-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_04_12_48&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-5026a43afe-34743040&mc_cid=5026a43afe&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Lockport using facial recognition software

The Lockport school district has begun using controversial facial recognition software for school safety, over the objections of civil liberties advocates. The software will alert district officials if someone on a flagged list shows up at a district school. The software can also detect ten different types of guns. Earlier this year, the NYSED prohibited Lockport from implementing the system, but relented when the district revised its policy to ensure that no student data will be created or stored in its data security system. The SED also recommended that the district consult with its local attorney to ensure that all other applicable laws and regulations are met and that the civil rights of all individuals are also protected. The district makes this distinction clear in a [message to parents on its website](#).

Alyson Klein. "N.Y. District Will Use Facial Recognition Software, Despite Big Privacy Concerns." *Education Week*. January 3, 2020 <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/DigitalEducation/2020/01/facial-recognition-new-york-software.html?cmp=e-ml-en-eu-news2-rm&M=59013496&U=252955&UUID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6ff688bfca>

Lockport is using a [biometric surveillance system](#), raising privacy concerns from the New York Civil Liberties Union. In a letter to the SED, the NYCLU wrote that approval was premature, bypassed community input and regulatory and legislative processes, and may affect use of the controversial technology in other spheres.

Rachel Silberstein. "NYCLU blasts 'premature' approval for school facial recognition system." *Albany Times Union*. January 6, 2020 https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/NYCLU-calls-on-SED-rescind-approval-for-facial-14953124.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon&stn=nf

Saugerties students 'mix it up' at lunch

Students at an elementary school in Saugerties, NY eat lunch with peers they do not know through the Mix It Up at Lunch program. The inclusion exercise seeks to help break down barriers among students, who receive seating charts and take part in "ice breaker" exercises -- with parent volunteers for added support -- during mealtimes.

[Hudson Valley One \(Kingston, N.Y.\) \(1/3\)](#)

Crispin Kott. "Saugerties elementary school's lunch program an 'ice-breaker' for kids." *Saugerties Times/Hudson Valley One* (Kingston). January 3, 2020 <https://hudsonvalleyone.com/2020/01/03/saugerties-elementary-schools-lunch-program-an-ice-breaker-for-kids/>

Research: Housing policy is education policy

Students' test scores may increase if they receive housing assistance, according to a study of NYC students. Among the positive benefits influencing test scores were reduced rent burden and more disposable income leading to a better sense of housing security, researchers say.

Matt Barnum. "Housing vouchers, like other anti-poverty programs, increase test scores, NYC study shows." *Chalkbeat/NY*. January 6, 2020 <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/us/2020/01/06/housing-vouchers-new-york-city-schools-test-scores/>

Introducing William Barclay, new Assembly minority leader

Republicans selected upstate Assemblyman William Barclay to replace Assemblyman Brian Kolb as minority leader in the Legislature's lower chamber on Tuesday. This article shares background information about Barclay.

Amanda Luz Henning Santiago. "5 things to know about William Barclay." *City & State/NY*. January 7, 2020 https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/new-york-state/5-things-know-about-william-barclay.html?utm_source=First+Read+Newsletters&utm_campaign=460e67efb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_07_08_55&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-460e67efb-34743040&mc_cid=460e67efb&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Media literacy efforts differ from state to state; efforts in NYS not coordinated

An advocacy group, Media Literacy Now, reports that only 14 U.S. states have laws requiring some form of K-12 media literacy education, though several state legislatures will consider the subject this year. Calls for increased attention to media literacy have increased following an outbreak of "fake news" reports. Howard Schneider, dean of the School of Journalism at SUNY Stony Brook, agreed with the report that "progress is still way too slow." He noted that NYS lawmakers "have not yet come to the conclusion that such competencies are a prerequisite for citizenship in the 21st [century], a minimum requirement for a high school diploma."

Linda Jacobson. "Report: Florida, Ohio called 'advanced leaders' in K-12 media literacy efforts." *Education Dive*. January 7, 2020 <https://www.educationdive.com/news/report-florida-ohio-called-advanced-leaders-in-k-12-media-literacy-effo/569879/>

Cuomo's State-of-the-State message

Governor Cuomo's 2020 State of the State address included a call for paid sick leave as well as a tax rate cut on small businesses from 6.5% to 4%. He also mentioned lowering the tax rate for those making less than \$300,000, but that seems to just be the continued phase-in of tax cuts passed in 2016. He did propose to save the state money by redesigning how the state administers Medicaid and getting local governments to pay more towards the system. Changes such as these could affect school district budgets.

Jeff Coltin. "Takeaways from Cuomo's 2020 State of the State." *City & State/NY*. January 8, 2020 https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/new-york-state/takeaways-cuomo-2020-state-state.html?utm_source=First+Read+Newsletters&utm_campaign=fb945ff1d1-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_08_09_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-fb945ff1d1-34743040&mc_cid=fb945ff1d1&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Tom Precious. "Cuomo's 2020 to-do list: 10 takeaways from the State of the State." *Buffalo News*. January 8, 2020 https://buffalonews.com/2020/01/08/cuomo-2020-to-do-list-10-takeaways-from-the-state-of-the-state/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon&stn=nf