

# EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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## January 27, 2023 Education News Update

### TEACHING & LEARNING

#### Could AI tools replace substitute teachers?

The head of a private school in Austin, Texas says he sees potential in some artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, that have raised concern in education sectors. He says the technology could replace substitute teachers -- almost allowing the teacher to program their replacement, an idea that some tech firms are exploring.

Jeffrey R. Young . "I Tools Like ChatGPT May Reshape Teaching Materials — And Possibly Substitute Teach." *Ed Surge*. January 19, 2023 <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2023-01-19-ai-tools-like-chatgpt-may-reshape-teaching-materials-and-possibly-substitute-teach>

#### How the right questions boost civic education

An inquiry-based approach that includes thought-provoking questions boosts civic education, say Donna Phillips, vice president and chief program officer for the Center for Civic Education, and Shannon Pugh, president of the National Council for the Social Studies. They say it is important to pose compelling questions to students so they can, Phillips says, "enter into their own learning and come to their own conclusions."

Lauren Barack. "Asking good questions is central to strong civics education." *K-12 Dive*. January 18, 2023

[Asking good questions is central to strong civics education | K-12 Dive \(k12dive.com\)](#)

(Monroe County currently has two initiatives applying this teaching technique to equity discussions in the classroom.)

#### Why school leaders should share power

School leaders can be more effective when establishing consensus by sharing power and control, writes an educator with the Department of Defense Overseas Schools. She shares strategies to help gain staff consensus.

Patricia Hannon. "How to Gain Staff Consensus in Meetings (and Why It Matters)." *ASCD Blog*. January 19, 2023

[How to Gain Staff Consensus in Meetings \(and Why It Matters\) \(ascd.org\)](#)

#### Student behavior puts discipline policies in spotlight

Concerns about a spike in student misbehavior could affect efforts to reform school discipline policies to embrace programs such as "restorative justice" in favor of hardline approaches. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics found that 56% of school leaders say student misbehavior has risen since the start of the pandemic.

Annie Ma & Ben Finley. "Schools face pressure to take harder line on discipline." *Associated Press*. January 21, 2023

[Schools face pressure to take harder line on discipline | AP News](#)

#### Robot teaches social skills to students with autism

Students with autism practice social skills with Milo, a humanoid educational robot from RoboKind that offers instruction on various types of interactions. Approximately 25 Indiana school districts use Milo robots with an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 students.

Jana Wiersema. "Learning from a robot: Meet Milo, the newest in technology to help students with autism." *The Republic* (Columbus, Ind.).

January 23, 2023

[Learning from a robot: Meet Milo, the newest in technology to help students with autism | The Republic News](#)

#### Relationship building could boost attendance

With chronic absenteeism on the rise nationwide, the executive director of the nonprofit Attendance Works says meaningful relationships could help improve attendance. She suggests making sure every student is connected with a caring adult and that those relationships are built into the classroom and school environment.

Daniel Mollenkamp. "Are Relationships the Key to Solving America's School Absenteeism Crisis?" *Ed Surge News*. January 23, 2023

[Are Relationships the Key to Solving America's School Absenteeism Crisis? | EdSurge News](#)

#### Restrictions prevent librarians from ordering materials

School librarians across the US report ordering hundreds fewer books this year amid parent challenges and policies requiring administrative approvals and "retraining" before purchases can be approved. The process in a Texas district requires librarians to flag book content for review, such as for "gender fluidity," followed by a 30-day public review of the book and then the school board will vote on whether the book can be ordered by librarians.

Natasha Natanson. "Students want new books. Thanks to new restrictions librarians can't buy them." *Washington Post*. January 22, 2023

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/01/22/students-want-new-books-thanks-restrictions-librarians-cant-buy-them/?wpisrc=nl\\_sb\\_smartbrief&utm\\_campaign=3E572E12-3FBC-11D5-AD13-000244141872&utm\\_content=760A32A7-E4AE-4763-AEF2-358E7171CEE8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/01/22/students-want-new-books-thanks-restrictions-librarians-cant-buy-them/?wpisrc=nl_sb_smartbrief&utm_campaign=3E572E12-3FBC-11D5-AD13-000244141872&utm_content=760A32A7-E4AE-4763-AEF2-358E7171CEE8)

## Psychologist suggests that students study differently for tests

Students are doing things that feel effective -- such as looking over notes before a test and highlighting as they are reading -- but Daniel Willingham, a psychology professor, says research shows these and other common learning strategies are wrong. Willingham says the most effective strategy is for students to probe their memory, such as making their own practice tests and flashcards.

Jill Barshay. "One expert on what students do wrong." *Hechinger Report*. January 23, 2023

[PROOF POINTS: One expert on what students do wrong \(hechingerreport.org\)](https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-one-expert-on-what-students-do-wrong/)

## FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

### SCOTUS takes up significant special-education case

The US Supreme Court heard arguments on January 18 in a case that could alter the rights of students with disabilities to sue for damages under federal disability protection laws. The case, *Perez v. Sturgis Public Schools*, stems from a lawsuit filed by a former Michigan student who is deaf, who says he was denied use of trained sign-language interpreters in school.

Jessica Gresko. "Justices seem to lean toward deaf student in education case." *Associated Press*. January 18, 2023

[Justices seem to lean toward deaf student in education case | AP News](https://www.apnews.com/story/education/2023/01/18/justices-lean-toward-deaf-student-in-education-case/)

Linda Jacobson. "SCOTUS Considers When Students With Disabilities Can Sue for Damages." *The 74*. January 17, 2023

[SCOTUS Considers When Students With Disabilities Can Sue for Damages – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](https://www.the74million.org/article/scotus-considers-when-students-with-disabilities-can-sue-for-damages-the-74/)

### Higher food prices affecting schools & families

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) states that 60.5% of school meal program directors report an increase in meal prices, while school meal debt across the country has reached over \$19 million this year, demonstrating the need for a permanent federal universal school meal program. SNA says school nutrition programs are "at a tipping point as rising costs, persistent supply chain issues and labor shortages jeopardize their long-term sustainability."

Sarah Ewall-Wice. "Schools struggle to provide meals for kids as inflation sends food costs soaring." *CBS News*. January 18, 2023

[HTTPS://WWW.CBSNEWS.COM/NEWS/SCHOOLS-STRUGGLE-TO-PROVIDE-MEALS-FOR-KIDS-AS-INFLATION-SENDS-FOOD-COSTS-SOARING/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/schools-struggle-to-provide-meals-for-kids-as-inflation-sends-food-costs-soaring/)

### New federal research supports learning recovery

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the primary research arm of the U.S.E.D., started the Leveraging Evidence to Accelerate Recovery Nationwide network -- a \$7 million research initiative aimed at helping to recover learning loss. The aim of the project is to identify and quickly scale up effective practices to help students recover academically from pandemic disruptions.

Sarah D. Sparks. "ED's Research Chief: We Don't Understand Our Most Struggling Learners." *Education Week*. January 19, 2023

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/eds-research-chief-we-dont-understand-our-most-struggling-learners/2023/01>

### How should schools manage social transitioning?

Educators are facing wrenching new tensions over whether they should tell parents when students socially transition at school. Many schools nationwide allow students to change their name, pronouns or the gender they present as (known as social transitioning) without consent from their parents. However, some parents interviewed by the reporter say parents should be informed. Many state and district policies allow the student to make the decision without parental involvement—and parents who learned of such a transition after the change had been made at school were highly distressed.

For this article, the reporter interviewed more than 50 people, including parents and their children, public school officials, medical professionals and lawyers for both L.G.B.T.Q. and conservative advocacy groups.

Katie J. M. Baker. "When Students Change Gender Identity, and Parents Don't Know." *NY Times*. January 22, 2023

[When Students Change Gender Identity, Should Schools Tell Their Parents? - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/22/us/politics/when-students-change-gender-identity-should-schools-tell-their-parents/)

### Fewer students eating lunch at school

The number of students eating lunch at school has fallen from 30 million in May -- before federal waivers enabling universal meals expired -- to 27.4 million in October.

Linda Qiu. "Families struggle as pandemic program offering free school meals ends." *NY Times*. January 22, 2023

["Families Struggle as Pandemic Program Offering Free School Meals Ends - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/22/us/politics/families-struggle-as-pandemic-program-offering-free-school-meals-ends/)

### State-by-state teacher pay comparisons

To compare teacher salaries across states, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) created the **Comparable Wage Index**, which normalizes teacher pay by cost of living and cost of labor in each state. With NCES data on **state-by-state average salaries** for public K-12 teachers, as well as the comparable wage index, clear patterns emerge about the states where being a public school teacher is more financially rewarding. Overall, New York and Massachusetts K-12 teachers are compensated more, relative to other earners and cost of living, than teachers in the rest of the country, while teachers in Florida and Arizona receive the least.

"Which states pay teachers the most and least?" *USA Facts*. November 8, 2022

<https://usafacts.org/articles/which-states-pay-teachers-the-most-and-least/>

## Research on value of school uniforms

Schools may require student uniforms for reasons that vary, from sense of belonging or school safety to increased achievement. However, a review of studies on the practice suggests that uniforms can sometimes have negative effects for girls, gender-diverse students, and those from historically underrepresented groups, and the cost can be problematic if specific brands are required.

Rachel Shanks is a senior lecturer in education at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

Rachel Shanks. "School uniforms are meant to foster a sense of belonging and raise achievement – but it's not clear that they do."

*The Conversation*. January 23, 2023

[School uniforms are meant to foster a sense of belonging and raise achievement – but it's not clear that they do \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/school-uniforms-are-meant-to-foster-a-sense-of-belonging-and-raise-achievement-but-it-s-not-clear-that-they-do)

## International educators share takeaways from pandemic

Increased use of educational technology during COVID-19 school closures has highlighted students' skills in adaptability and creativity, and has allowed for more personalized learning and student choice for assessments, educators at several international schools in Hong Kong say. Teachers and parents also have benefited in ways that are expected to continue, such as the use of online communication, opportunities for collaboration and greater attention to students' mental well-being, they say.

Jacqueline Kot. "Hong Kong educators from international schools discuss the impacts of the pandemic on students and teaching."

*South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong). January 23, 2023

[Hong Kong educators from international schools discuss the impacts of the pandemic on students and teaching | South China Morning Post \(scmp.com\)](https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/3121212/hong-kong-educators-from-international-schools-discuss-the-impacts-of-the-pandemic-on-students-and-teaching)

## What You Need to Know About Fake Parent Groups: An NPE Report

In recent months, well-funded fake "parent groups" spring up overnight and shout at school board meetings with endless complaints. The press interviews them as though they are some "regular moms" looking out for their children, but they are a well-funded facade for the Koch, Walton, and DeVos families to disrupt and destroy public education. The author highlights the players, tactics, and funders.

Maurice Cunningham, PhD, JD, is author of the new book [Dark Money and the Politics of School Privatization](#).

Maurice Cunningham. "Merchants of deception: Parent props and their funders." *Network for Public Education*. February 2023

<https://networkforpubliceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Merchants-of-Deception.pdf>

## "Raise the Bar: Lead the World" plan announced

US Education Secretary Miguel Cardona addressed the future of education in the nation on January 24 as he announced the launch of the "Raise the Bar: Lead the World" initiative. Higher academic standards, robust mental health supports, and competitive teacher salaries are all key priorities for the U.S. Department of Education in 2023, Cardona said. He talked about efforts to recover learning loss, improve pay and respect for the teaching profession and raise student performance overall.

Libby Stanford. "Teachers Shouldn't Have to Drive Ubers on the Side, Education Secretary Says." *Education Week*. January 24, 2023

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/teachers-shouldnt-have-to-drive-ubers-on-the-side-education-secretary-says/2023/01>

## NEW YORK STATE

### Growing number of homeschooled students

The average school district in the state, excluding New York City, [lost 23 students to homeschooling](#), while the average loss among the five districts with the most homeschool transitions was 284 students. Statewide, there are 54,000 children designated as homeschoolers.

Kathleen Moore. "Schenectady among state's highest in exodus to homeschooling." *Albany Times Union*. January 20, 2023

[More students leaving New York districts for homeschooling \(timesunion.com\)](https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/more-students-leaving-new-york-districts-for-homeschooling-1512121)

### How LI school districts develop Regeneron science scholars

Many Long Island schools have allocated resources and staff to provide scientific research opportunities to help prepare students for future careers in science and technology, and for competitions, including Regeneron. More than 44% of the Regeneron semifinalists in the state this year are from Long Island schools. The Syosset district has an Island-leading six. Voters in that district approved a bond in 2018 with about \$1.7 million to renovate HS science classrooms that included funding for an upgraded lab now staffed with educators specializing in scientific research.

Joie Tyrrell. "How LI school districts develop Regeneron science scholars." *Newsday*. January 23, 2023

<https://www.newsday.com/beta/long-island/education/regeneron-science-talent-contest-long-island-school-districts-e4sqasn5>

### Indigenous nations to help NYS districts change symbols

Following a November 2022 announcement by the NYSED, Indigenous nations say they are working with local school officials to change mascots and symbols depicting Native Americans. The NYSED called on Indigenous nations and schools to work together to find respectful and representative mascots or schools will need to change their mascots altogether. Immediately after the November 2022 announcement, the Seneca Nation committed to

working with schools to develop new imagery. The Seneca Nation and the Salamanca School District are now working together to discuss the Warrior name and logo, which has been in use since the 1970s. The Seneca Nation has previously worked with other districts to ensure mascots are respectful and culturally competent. Schools have until the end of this academic year to comply with the ban — or risk losing state aid and face removal of school officers. There are about 60 schools across the state that still use depictions of Indigenous people as mascots. Adria R. Walker. “Indigenous nations to help change symbols, mascots.” *Democrat and Chronicle*. January 23, 2023 [NY Native American tribes helping schools drop offensive mascots \(democratandchronicle.com\)](https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/education/2023/01/23/indigenous-nations-to-help-change-symbols-mascots/7000000001)

### **Fewer NYS school districts face fiscal stress**

Buoyed by state aid and federal pandemic relief, only a handful of NYS school districts are considered to be in some form of financial trouble, according to a recent report by Comptroller Tom DiNapoli. The report found 14 school districts are designated to be under "fiscal stress" -- the lowest number since DiNapoli's office began monitoring school budgets a decade ago. The Comptroller stated, “High need districts in urban and suburban areas, which typically have the highest incidence of fiscal stress, received some of the largest increases in aid. However, the federal aid is temporary so school district officials may face difficult operational and staffing decisions in determining how to best provide services to their students in the future.” The monitoring system does not include the state's biggest school districts of New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers. None of the districts identified as under significant or moderate stress are in Monroe County.

Nick Reisman. “Fewer New York school districts face fiscal stress.” *Spectrum News/Central NYS*. January 25, 2023 <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/ny-state-of-politics/2023/01/25/fewer-new-york-school-districts-face-fiscal-stress>