

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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December 20, 2019 Education News Update

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year with adequate support for our schools.

TEACHING & LEARNING

News Literacy Project helps teach how to separate truth from fiction

The News Literacy Project (NLP), founded more than a decade ago by a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, is a national education nonprofit offering nonpartisan, independent information. The NLP seeks to empower educators to teach students the skills they need to become smart, active consumers of information and informed participants in civic life. NLP, the leading provider of news literacy education, uses the standards of high-quality journalism as a yardstick to measure all news and information. NLP's weekly newsletter for educators, *The Sift*, sorts through recent viral rumors, hoaxes, and other misinformation to bring timely lessons in news literacy with discussion prompts and links. *The Sift* has more than 10,000 subscribers, most of them educators. A recent issue dealt with Clint Eastwood's *Richard Jewell* movie and a photo purporting to show climate activist Greta Thunberg firing a rifle.

Valerie Strauss. "News literacy lessons: Clint Eastwood's 'Richard Jewell' film and Greta Thunberg." *Washington Post/Answer Sheet* blog. December 18, 2019 https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/12/18/news-literacy-lessons-clint-eastwoods-richard-jewell-film-greta-thunberg/?utm_campaign=answer_sheet&utm_medium=Email&utm_source=Newsletter&wpisrc=nl_answer&wppmm=1

News Literacy Project - <https://newslit.org/>

NLP weekly: *The Sift* - <https://newslit.org/educators/sift/>

U.S. teachers work more than teachers in most other places

This article includes a graph from a recent OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) report, the organization that sponsors the PISA tests, which shows the number of hours that teachers work in every country tested. The report included teacher responses from 49 education systems. U.S. teachers reported working an average of 46.2 hours a week, while the average was 38.3 hours a week. Only teachers in two other education systems—Japan and Kazakhstan—reported working more hours. The bulk of that time—28 hours—is spent teaching, as opposed to on administrative work or professional development. That's more than teachers in any other education system. The survey average was 20 hours spent teaching.

"US teachers work more than teachers in nearly every other country – EdWeek." *G.F. Brandenburg blog*. December 19, 2019 <https://gfbrandenburg.wordpress.com/2019/12/19/us-teachers-work-more-than-teachers-in-nearly-every-other-country-edweek/>

Commentary: Looping works

The practice of looping -- in which a group of students remains with the same teacher as a new school year begins -- improves outcomes, according to the CEO of the nonprofit Opening Minds USA. In this commentary, she writes about the benefits of having a consistent adult who "believes in each child and knows them best."

Gail Conway. "OPINION: What if students returned to the same teachers the next year?" *Hechinger Report*. January 2, 2020 <https://hechingerreport.org/opinion-how-looping-works/>

Ed tech leaders discuss ed tech pros and cons

Education technology leaders consider strides that have been made in ed tech and new challenges it has created. Among them are Larry Berger, CEO of Amplify, who says "social media culture" has led to increased student anxiety that has affected the ability to sustain attention, read for an extended time, daydream, and remember.

Tony Wan. "What Problems Has Edtech Solved, and What New Ones Did It Create?" *Ed Surge*. December 30, 2019 <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2019-12-30-what-problems-has-edtech-solved-and-what-new-ones-did-it-create>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL

President signs federal education spending bill

President Trump has signed a bill that funds 29 education programs he had sought to abolish, marking the third time he has unsuccessfully sought to cut the department's overall budget. The fiscal 2020 spending plan just signed provides \$72.8 billion in discretionary funding to the U.S.E.D., and \$1.3 billion increase rather than the 10% cut proposed by the president. The spending bill he signed includes a \$450 million increase for Title I spending on disadvantaged students, a \$410 million increase for state special education grants.

Andrew Ujifusa. "Trump Signs Education Spending Bill That Funds 29 Programs He Sought to Abolish." *Education Week*. December 20, 2019 <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2019/12/trump-signs-education-spending-bill-29-programs-abolish.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2-rm&M=59007148&U=252955&UID=dcf579af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

Civil Rights Office & U.S.E.D. issue guidance on student health data

The U.S.E.D. and the HHS Office for Civil Rights updated guidance from 2008 related to sharing students' health information in compliance with HIPAA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The guidance clarifies that school, health care, and mental health professionals may share data without a student's consent "to anyone who is in a position to prevent or lessen the threatened harm, including family, friends, caregivers and law enforcement." Greg Slabodkin. "OCR, Education issue guidance on sharing of student health records." *Health Data Management*. December 19, 2019 <https://www.healthdatamanagement.com/news/ocr-education-issue-guidance-on-sharing-of-student-health-records>
Jessica Davis. "OCR, DOE Updates Privacy Guidance on Sharing Student Health Records." *Health IT Security*. December 19, 2019 <https://healthitsecurity.com/news/ocr-doe-updates-privacy-guidance-on-sharing-student-health-records>

GreatSchools rating steers parents toward segregated schools

GreatSchools ratings penalize schools serving low-income students of color, generally giving them significantly lower ratings than schools serving more affluent and more white and Asian students. Yet, according to GreatSchools' own data, many schools serving low-income, black, and Hispanic students are doing a good job helping students learn math and English. But those schools usually don't get an above-average rating by GreatSchools — likely because their students arrive far behind. And the effect of urging families to move to more affluent areas is increase property values in those areas, making it even more difficult for low-income families to buy there. (This rating service is funded in part by rightwing foundations that promote school choice, most notable the Walton Family Foundation.) Matt Barnum & Gabrielle LaMarr LeMee. "Looking for a home? You've seen GreatSchools ratings. Here's how they nudge families toward schools with fewer black and Hispanic students." *Chalkbeat*. December 5, 2019 <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/us/2019/12/05/greatschools-ratings-poverty-race-segregation-housing/>

NEW YORK STATE

City & State reviews 2020 state legislative issues

The news source outlines the issues it sees as dominating the upcoming session of the NYS Legislature. The two major education issues it sees are funding for public education (with possible changes to the Foundation Aid formula), and the fate of specialized high schools, charter schools, and rural schools. A major concern in any changes to education support will be the predicted multibillion-dollar Medicaid shortfall.

"Setting the Agenda: Previewing Albany's 2020 session." *CITY & STATE*. DECEMBER 14, 2019 https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/policy/policy/new-york-setting-agenda-2020.html?utm_source=First+Read+Newsletters&utm_campaign=c83c3927cd-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_12_21_12_49&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-c83c3927cd-34743040&mc_cid=c83c3927cd&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Parents, teacher sue Buffalo School District

Parents and teachers have filed separate lawsuits against the Buffalo School District, complaining that the school system has failed to provide equitable music and arts programming. The legal papers claim a legally-required arts sequence is only provided at two district HSs, in violation of 2017 state arts sequence regulations that call for "equity of arts learning opportunities and resources for all students in the district/state."

Nick Lippa. "Parents, teachers sue Buffalo school district for 'not equitably' offering music, art education." *WBFO* (Buffalo's NPR station). December 17, 2019 <https://news.wbfo.org/post/parents-teachers-sue-buffalo-school-district-not-equitably-offering-music-art-education>

Education items on 2020 state legislative agenda

There are a number of big-ticket education items on the agenda that will likely be taken up during the budget process or in the weeks that follow. This article reviews some of the major issues:

Education funding: Both the Senate and Assembly are expected to seek a significant boost in state education funding as a phase-in plan to repay school districts money owed under the state's Foundation Aid formula.

Lawmakers will also consider updating the formula, which a decade ago was designed to prioritize schools that serve large numbers of high needs students, but which doesn't. The predicted budget shortfall will be a factor.

Student discipline: Disparities in student discipline exist. Advocates argue that discipline that keeps children out of school is counterproductive. One bill aims to create more equitable discipline policies by eliminating suspensions for minor infractions, limiting long-term suspensions, and prohibiting suspensions before fourth grade.

Vape ban: The governor will seek to codify his executive order which required state health officials to prohibit sales of flavored e-cigarettes, a measure currently being challenged in court.

Student privacy and other issues: Lawmakers have introduced bills concerning the use of student data by education technology companies. Ambiguous laws on how the information can be stored and shared have made schools vulnerable to hackers and extortionists. Education Law 2D, a student data privacy law that passed in 2014, required SED officials to issue regulations on managing student data, but the state is still finalizing those guidelines. Rachel Silberstein. "N.Y. education issues to watch in 2020 legislative session." *Albany Times Union*. December 30, 2019 https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Education-issues-to-watch-in-the-2020-legislative-14939835.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon&stn=nl

SED studies lack of teachers of color

The NYSED has released a comprehensive study looking at the lack of teacher diversity in public schools, teacher training programs, and education leadership positions, seeking to determine why this situation exists. Statewide, EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

teacher diversity increased between 2011 and 2017, with the state adding 1,400 teachers of color, but most of those gains are concentrated in NYC. In other parts of the state the portion of minority teachers appears to be declining, according to the report. The focuses on shortcomings in hiring and retention policies, the lack of clear and affordable educational options, as well as social and economic barriers that may contribute to the stark demographic gaps between students and their teachers in most of the state.

Rachel Silberstein. "SED studies barriers to classroom for teachers of color." *Albany Times Union*. January 2, 2020

https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/NYSED-releases-report-on-teacher-diversity-14941860.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon&stn=nl