

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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January 7, 2022 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

Program offers affordable learning differences test

Investment banker Diana Heldfond is the founder of Parallel Learning, which features an online program to evaluate and diagnose learning or attention differences and their causes, and to provide families with a clinician-reviewed report within one week at a lower cost than that of typical assessments. The program also assists families connect to educational therapists and executive function coaches while working with school districts to meet IEP deadlines.

Ann Field. "Diagnosing Childhood Learning Differences Digitally, At An Affordable Price." *Forbes*. December 17, 2021

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/annefield/2021/12/17/diagnosing-childhood-learning-differences-digitally-at-an-affordable-price/?sh=60ea95181c64>

Schools open learning hubs to support students

Some schools have opened "learning hubs" to help students catch up following nearly two years of academic disruptions due to the coronavirus. Christopher Burnette, an assistant principal who oversees a hub, says the structure also helps keep students engaged in learning who otherwise might have "tapped out."

Anya Kamenetz. "Extra learning time is helping these students catch up from COVID interruptions." *All Things Considered/National Public Radio*. December 21, 2021

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/21/1063004934/extra-learning-time-is-helping-these-students-catch-up-from-covid-interruptions>

Commentary: Power of student assistants

In his monthly column for *Educational Leadership*, the author argues that when older students have opportunities to serve as academic mentors to their younger peers, it's a win-win-win situation for everyone.

Matthew R. Kay. "Classroom Conversations / The Power of Student Assistants." *ASCD Educational Leadership*. December 6, 2021

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/classroom-conversations-the-power-of-student-assistants>

Making student assessments authentic via PBL

Students have evolved since the start of the pandemic and now are expecting more authenticity in education, writes a MS teacher. She shares strategies to help make assessments more authentic, including project-based learning.

Heather Wolpert-Gawron. "How to Give Assessments a Boost With PBL." *Edutopia*. January 3, 2022

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-give-assessments-boost-pbl>

Study: Full remote instruction tied to learning loss

Learning loss was most significant in school districts that shifted to fully remote learning during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a study by Emily Oster, a Brown University professor, and her co-authors. The research shows that student achievement fell in all 12 states that were studied.

Kevin Mahnken. "Oster Study Finds Learning Loss Far Greater in Districts that Went Fully Remote." *The 74*. January 4, 2022

<https://www.the74million.org/oster-study-finds-learning-loss-far-greater-in-districts-that-went-fully-remote/>

How texting could boost student attendance

Concerns over student attendance have escalated during the pandemic, and guidance from the Institute of Education Sciences finds that text messages to parents could be a potential solution. The institute has released a toolkit to help effectively implement texting programs.

Kara Arundel. "Can texting parents improve school attendance?" *K-12 Dive*. January 4, 2022

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/text-parents-to-promote-student-attendance-toolkit-recommends/616596/>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) should be addressed by CEOs

This interview with Joan C. Williams, author of *Bias Interrupted: Creating Inclusion for Real and for Good* and distinguished la professor, explains how leaders can use standard business tools—data, metrics, and persistence—to interrupt the bias that is continually transmitted through formal systems in the workplace. That will lead to enhanced diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace.

Mona Hamouly. "Author Talks: How to interrupt bias in the workplace." *McKinsey*. December 16, 2021

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-on-books/author-talks-how-to-interrupt-bias-in-the-workplace>

Ed tech firms target early learning

Over the past several years, more established K-12 education-technology companies have expanded into early-childhood programming. The companies are modifying resources to meet the needs and abilities of younger learners, but some officials are concerned that the moves are just a business decision.

Emily Tate. "Expanding into Early Childhood Is Good for Edtech Companies. Is It Good for Kids?" *Ed Surge*. December 15, 2021
<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2021-12-15-expanding-into-early-childhood-is-good-for-edtech-companies-is-it-good-for-kids>

Push to ban school books spreads to public libraries

Local public libraries in Texas are fielding a flurry of book challenges from local residents. While book challenges are nothing new, there has been a growing number of complaints about books for libraries in recent months. And the fact that the numbers are rising after questions are being raised about school library content seems more than coincidental, according to the Texas Library Association.

Allyson Waller and Kevin Reynolds. "The Push to Ban Books in Texas Schools Spreads to Public Libraries." *Texas Tribune*. December 20, 2021
<https://www.route-fifty.com/health-human-services/2021/12/push-ban-books-texas-schools-spreads-public-libraries/360016/>

Coalition seeks more than 1,000,000 educators of color

A coalition of education groups is working to increase the number of educators of color working in the nation's public schools, with the goal of adding 1 million teachers and 30,000 leaders of color to the workforce by 2030.

Denisa R. Superville. " 'Bold, Audacious Goal': Coalition Pushes to Add More Than 1 Million Educators of Color." *Education Week*. December 21, 2021

https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/bold-audacious-goal-coalition-pushes-to-add-more-than-1-million-educators-of-color/2021/12/?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64254324&U=252955&UUID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

Moms for Liberty aims to impact 2022 elections

Moms for Liberty was founded in January 2021 to fight for parental rights in Florida. The group has since spread across the country, focusing on the 2022 elections -- from school board and county races to federal offices -- and is harnessing anti-government sentiment stoked by the pandemic and public health orders. There are now 167 chapters in more than 30 states, with 70,000 members. The goal is to have a Moms for Liberty chapter in every school district, showing up at every school board meeting, to protest mask and vaccine mandates, curriculum related to race and LGBTQ rights, and falling literacy rates. The group hopes to make 2022 the "year of the parent" at the ballot box. The move has energized opponents. Support Our Schools, a new group of Florida parent, calls Moms for Liberty a danger to democracy.

Leyla Santiago & Sara Weisfeldt. "How two Florida moms spearheaded a parent movement aiming to impact the 2022 elections." *CNN*. December 17, 2021

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/16/politics/florida-parent-power-elections-moms-for-liberty/index.html>

Federal ed secretary: Expectation is for in-person learning

The expectation is that schools will remain open to in-person learning as they return from winter break amid a surge in coronavirus hospitalizations, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said during a Sunday TV appearance. The surge has some schools making plans for remote or hybrid learning or enhancing efforts to test students for the virus.

Carolyn Thompson. "Schools adapt for return from break as COVID-19 cases surge." *Associated Press*. January 2, 2022

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-education-pandemics-newark-b5441b86a47e3af9b8a0ce625274ed42>

More students consider careers in skilled trades

Data show fewer HS students are considering pursuing a four-year degree amid a resurgence of interest in the skilled trades. The shift comes as higher demand is leading to new respect, higher wages, better benefits and other perks.

Jon Marcus. "Long disparaged, education for the skilled trades is slowly coming into fashion." *Hechinger Report*. December 31, 2021

<https://hechingerreport.org/long-disparaged-education-for-the-skilled-trades-is-slowly-coming-into-fashion/>

Teachers, districts at odds over hybrid instruction

The move to "hybrid teaching" (teaching in-person and online students simultaneously), has drawn criticism from some educators who say it is ineffective and difficult to manage. While some district officials say they do not want to drop that option, teachers' unions in some states seek to ban the practice.

Nirvi Shah. "'I Feel Half as Successful': Teachers Push to Ban Hybrid Instruction, But Districts Want to Keep It." *Politico*. December 29, 2021

<https://www.politico.com/news/agenda/2021/12/29/teachers-districts-hybrid-education-526214>

Screen time relates to pediatric mental health issues

Research published in *JAMA Network Open* found that children and youths who engaged in more screen time during the COVID-19 pandemic may be at greater risk for issues with mental health. Researchers noted that greater exposure to stressful news, online bullying and detrimental advertising could be contributing factors.

Joe Gramigna. "More screen time during COVID-19 pandemic has negative effects on pediatric mental health." *Healio*. December 30, 2021

<https://www.healio.com/news/psychiatry/20211230/more-screen-time-during-covid19-pandemic-has-negative-effects-on-pediatric-mental-health>

COVID interrupting education, even where schools are open

Teachers say that kids' absences and staff shortages have thrown a wrench in their plans for the beginning of this semester. Nearly all schools returned from winter break with in-person learning this week, amid record-breaking COVID-19 case counts. But the virus is still causing widespread disruptions to learning.

NEW YORK STATE

SUNY Trustees name interim chancellor, promise global search

The SUNY Board of Trustees has pledged a global search for the next chancellor while naming SUNY Oswego President Deborah F. Stanley as interim chief for the 64-campus public university system starting January 15. Rachel Silberstein. "SUNY Board of Trustees pledges 'global' search as it names interim chief." *Albany Times Union*. December 20, 2021
https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/SUNY-Oswego-s-Deborah-Stanley-appointed-interim-16716252.php?IPID=Times-Union-HP-CP-Spotlight&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=tu_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af

January Regents exams cancelled

NYS's HS Regents exams scheduled for January have been canceled because of the pandemic, Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa said on December 21. The SED will ask the Board of Regents to modify the assessment requirements students need to earn diplomas credentials. The SED says no decisions have been made about later Regents exams or any other state assessment exams. The move marked the second year in a row that the annual January tests were scrubbed amid a winter wave of the pandemic. Last year, the Regents exams scheduled for June were also canceled because of the pandemic, and students were exempted from having to pass them to graduate. Carl Campanile, Bernadette Hogan, & Bruce Golding, "New York's January high school Regents exams canceled due to COVID-19." *NY Post*. December 21, 2021
<https://nypost.com/2021/12/21/new-yorks-january-regents-exams-canceled-due-to-covid-19/>
Mike Goodwin & Rachel Silberstein. "Regents exams scheduled for January have been canceled." *Albany Times Union*. December 22, 2021
https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Regents-exams-canceled-in-January-16719947.php?IPID=Times-Union-HP-CP-Latest-News&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=tu_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af

Governor Hochul: Funding for special ed providers to increase 15 % in next budget

Governor Kathy Hochul will include a \$240 million increase in funding for schools serving children with disabilities in her upcoming 2022-2023 executive budget. She also signed a package of legislation to increase resources and support for students with disabilities, their families, and social services providers. The adjustment would include provision for the state to reimburse school districts and counties for roughly 60 % of the cost. Hochul also signed legislation to ensure the timely appointment of an impartial hearing officer to address due process complaints for students with disabilities, and legislation to fund early intervention education for toddlers with disabilities. Rachel Silberstein. "New York governor announces 'historic' investment in schools for children with disabilities." *Albany Times Union*. December 30, 2021
https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Hochul-announces-historic-investment-in-schools-16738092.php?IPID=Times-Union-HP-CP-Latest-News&utm_source=First-Read+Newsletters&utm_campaign=666a6252ed-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_12_30_09_42&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-666a6252ed-34743040&mc_cid=666a6252ed&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Staffing crisis in MC schools

Quarantines and other COVID-19-related health issues have led to a huge increase in employee absences at Monroe County schools, and a critically shallow labor pool cannot fill the gaps. Four local districts (Brockport, Pittsford, Rochester, West Irondequoit) have canceled at least one day of school this year due to shortages. Districts also have hundreds of positions they cannot fill, especially low-paying jobs like bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and classroom assistants, despite many incentives. Districts are using available qualified adults—reading or speech specialists, counselors or assistant principals—as substitutes. Some local districts have begun offering attendance incentives to employees. The problem is that most of the absences are not voluntary, but rather forced by COVID quarantines. Justin Murphy. "Staffing shortage a crisis in Monroe County schools." *Democrat & Chronicle*. January 3, 2022
<https://rochesterdemocrat-ny.newsmemory.com?selDate=20220103&goTo=A01&artid=2>

NYS Ed leaders: Change coming to schools?

The SED is considering revision of New York's graduation requirements, development of new ways to assess students, lessons learned from the pandemic thus far, and even whether it's time to replace the September-June "agrarian" school calendar. SED leaders say the pandemic has exposed the inequities that separate students in different communities, plus other challenges, creating a "moral moment" for action. The state is not requiring districts to create DEI plans, leaving time and room for communities to address these issues in their own ways. The expectation is that NYS's Regents exams will play a smaller role. One of the thorniest issues remains how to assess, or test, students. While certain standardized tests are required by federal law, NYS wants to rethink how it measures what students know. The SED will select schools in different regions to pilot different testing models. Gary Stern, *Rockland/Westchester Journal News*. "Leaders: Change coming to schools?" *Democrat & Chronicle*. January 2, 2022.
<https://rochesterdemocrat-ny.newsmemory.com?selDate=20220103&goTo=A01&artid=3>

NYS Health Department policy could lead to more quarantine time

The new change established by the NYS Health Department, which went into effect on December 23 as most districts were entering winter break, says that test to stay will only be allowed for COVID-19 exposures that happen on school grounds. Previous guidance covered all potential COVID-19 exposures. The new guidance on "test to stay" policies allow local school districts set to more quarantine time for students and a slower return to school.

Matt Drifill. "State change for school 'test to stay' policy could lead to more quarantine time for students." *WROC-TV8*. January 5, 2022
https://www.rochesterfirst.com/news/education/state-change-for-school-test-to-stay-policy-could-lead-to-more-quarantine-time-for-students-new-york-education-covid-isolation-coronavirus-hochul-mendoza-health-department-contact-tracing/?nxs_link=big-story_1_title_6&email=5d13d09406fe309325210ec455be4940065cc236&utm_source=Salihru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WROC%20Daily%20News%202022-01-05&utm_term=Daily%20News

Governor's State of the State address

Governor Kathy Hochul today delivered her 2022 State of the State Address on January 5, outlining nine key components of her agenda: rebuilding our healthcare economy; protecting public safety and acting against gun violence; investing in NYS's people; investing in NYS's communities; making NYS's housing system more affordable, equitable, and stable; making NYS a national leader in climate action and green jobs; rebuilding NYS's teacher workforce and reimagining higher education; advancing NYS's place as a national equity model; and making critical reforms to restore New Yorkers' faith in their government. Her full address is available online at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/remarks-prepared-governor-hochul-delivers-2022-state-state>