

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

Compiled by Judy Wadsworth, Alpha Alpha, for the Monroe County School Boards Association and shared by permission. Send comments to judithw@frontiernet.net

October 1, 2021 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

9th grade ethnic studies set students on better trajectory

A 9th-grade ethnic studies class has a remarkably prolonged and strong positive effect on students, increasing their overall engagement in school, probability of graduating, and likelihood of enrolling in college, according to a new study. The findings appear in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Carrie Spector, Stanford University. "Ethnic studies in 9th grade sets students on better trajectory." *Futurity*. September 27, 2021
[Ethnic studies in 9th grade sets students on better trajectory - Futurity](#)

How preK care differs by economic class

New research finds that kids from households on higher socioeconomic rungs tend to spend less time with their parents, but also receive higher quality care.

Andre Claudio. "How Early Childhood Care Differs Between Better and Worse Off Families." *Route Fifty*. September 24, 2021
[How Early Childhood Care Differs Between Better and Worse Off Families - Route Fifty \(route-fifty.com\)](#)

Teacher burnout soaring

In a July poll, 60% of teachers said they experience job stress frequently or always, and 42% said their administrators have not tried to relieve that stress. However, just 2% say there is nothing schools or districts could do to help. Jaclyn Borowski & Mark Lieberman. "What's Behind the School Staffing Shortages—And What Districts Can Do To Address Them." *Education Week*. September 23, 2021
[What's Behind the School Staffing Shortages – And What Districts Can Do To Address Them \(edweek.org\)](#)

Student clubs encourage problem solving and student leadership

Using their interests as a guide, elementary students can simultaneously acquire knowledge, solve problems, serve the school community, and learn to lead. This article lists steps to successfully start and maintain student clubs.

Ally Fitzpatrick. "After-School Clubs Encourage Problem-Solving by Letting Students Lead." *Edutopia*. September 23, 2021
[After-School Clubs Encourage Problem-Solving by Letting Students Lead | Edutopia](#)

Survey: Math confidence drops after middle school

Less than 20% of students in g.7-10 say they are confident in their math skills, according to a recent survey of 900 students. The survey found that confidence in math drops 9% between grades 7 and 10.

David Nigel. "Most Students Fearful of Math." *T.H.E. Journal*. September 28, 2021
[Most Students Fearful of Math -- THE Journal](#)

Analysis offers keys to motivating students to learn

Teachers have more influence than parents when it comes to motivating students to learn, according to an analysis of studies involving nearly 80,000 students, by researchers from Canada and Australia. Researchers also conclude that competency, belonging and autonomy are keys to motivation.

Jill Barshay. "What almost 150 studies say about how to motivate students." *Hechinger Report*. September 27, 2021
[PROOF POINTS: What almost 150 studies say about how to motivate students - The Hechinger Report](#)

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

CDC director approves booster shots for teachers

Reversing a decision by an advisory panel, the CDC director has ruled that workers in high-exposure jobs, including school staff, may receive a Pfizer booster shot, based on an assessment of their individual benefits and risks.

Madeline Will. "CDC Director Approves Booster Shots for Teachers, Reversing Panel's Decision." *Education Week*. September 24, 2021
[CDC Director Approves Booster Shots for Teachers, Reversing Panel's Decision \(edweek.org\)](#)

COVID outbreaks far higher at schools without mask mandates

The CDC reports that new research finds that, weeks into the school year, COVID cases were more than three times higher for schools that did not require students to wear masks.

Sara D. Sparks/ "CDC: COVID Outbreaks Far Higher at Schools Without Mask Mandates." *Education Week*. September 24, 2021
[CDC: COVID Outbreaks Far Higher at Schools Without Mask Mandates \(edweek.org\)](#)

What's behind staffing shortages

It's not just bus drivers. School districts are struggling to fill many jobs this year, including cafeteria workers, social workers, and custodians, as well as the bus drivers in constant short supply. COVID fears, poor pay, and conflicts over masks and vaccines exacerbate shortages. Read or watch a video about how districts are plugging gaps. Mark Lieberman. "No Bus Drivers, Custodians, or Subs. What's Really Behind Schools' Staffing Shortages?" *Education Week*. September 21, 2021 [No Bus Drivers, Custodians, or Subs. What's Really Behind Schools' Staffing Shortages? \(edweek.org\)](#)

Racist history of school choice

Political historian Nancy MacLean writes about how the rhetoric of "choice" and "freedom" has long stood in stark contrast to the true goals of school choice advocates: to protect segregation and destroy public education. Nancy MacLean is William H. Chafe distinguished professor of history and public policy at Duke University and author of "Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America." Nancy MacLean. "'School choice' developed as a way to protect segregation and abolish public schools." *Washington Post*. September 27, 2021 ['School choice' developed as a way to protect segregation and abolish public schools - The Washington Post](#)

School choice is resegregating America's public schools

So-called "school choice" policies—charter schools, private school vouchers, "[student-centered budgeting](#)"—introduce incentives into public education that cut against our society's values of equality, diversity, and togetherness. They undermine the mission of public education to [prepare us for democratic citizenship](#). Worst of all, they pit students against other students in a competition with winners and losers. Jeremy Mohler. "'School choice' policies are resegregating America's public schools." *In the Public Interest*. September 23, 2021 ['School choice' policies are resegregating America's public schools \(inthepublicinterest.org\)](#)

For-profit charters open the door for private investors to exploit public education

Journalist Jeff The author examined the relationship between Pansophic Learning, owner of the Accel Schools chain of for-profit charter schools, and Safanad Limited, a private equity firm, originating in the Middle East, with extensive investment holdings in K-12 education, senior living, and other public sector-related enterprises. What he found sheds light on how wealthy investors from overseas profit from charter schools. Jeff Bryant. "How for-profit charter schools open the door for private investors to exploit public education." *Alter Net*. September 28, 2021 [How for-profit charter schools open the door for private investors to exploit public education - Alternet.org](#)

More than 90% of educators have job-related stress

A new nationally representative survey offers key takeaways from teachers, principals, and district leaders. "91% of Educators Have Experienced Job-Related Stress, According to a Survey." *EdWeek Research Center*. September 14, 2021 [91% of Educators Have Experienced Job-Related Stress, According to a Survey \(edweek.org\)](#)

USDA grants emergency relief for school meal programs

The USDA has announced it will provide \$1.5 billion to school foodservice programs this year, as schools report supply chain challenges, labor shortages, and rising costs. Katie Lobosco & Tami Luhby. "USDA sends schools \$1.5 billion to relieve student lunch crunch." *CNN*. September 29, 2021 [Supply chain delays prompt USDA to help feed students - CNNPolitics](#) Mike Dorning. "USDA Funds \$1.5 Billion to Combat School Meal Supply-Chain Problems." *Bloomberg News*. September 29, 2021 [USDA Funds \\$1.5 Billion to Combat School Meal Supply-Chain Problems - BNN Bloomberg](#)

Calls to ban books by Black authors increasing

Books about race and the experiences of Black Americans are being challenged by parents who claim they make white children feel uncomfortable. Madeline Will. "Calls to Ban Books by Black Authors Are Increasing Amid Critical Race Theory Debates." *Education Week*. September 30, 2021 [Calls to Ban Books by Black Authors Are Increasing Amid Critical Race Theory Debates \(edweek.org\)](#)

President asked to consider threats and violence as possible 'domestic terrorism'

The White House should aid education leaders facing rising disruptions and harassment that threaten educators and community members, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) wrote in a letter to President Biden. NSBA says the federal government should review violence and threats involving schools to see if they violate federal statutes about domestic terrorism and hate crimes, amid ongoing tension and anger about COVID-19 policies. NSBA noted that school board members, officials and students across the nation are facing an increased amount of malice, violence and threats that amount to "a form of domestic terrorism and hate crimes." Brendan O'Brien. "U.S. school board group asks Biden for help against growing 'threat'." *Reuters*. September 30, 2021 [U.S. school board group asks Biden for help against growing 'threat' | Reuters](#)

As Heat Waves Intensify, Tens of Thousands of US Classrooms Will Be Too Hot for Students To Learn In
PAUL CHINOWSKY | THE CONVERSATION | America's public schools, which are over 40 years old on average, are not equipped to handle rising temperatures due to climate change, a new study reveals. Paul Chinowsky. "As Heat Waves Intensify, Tens of Thousands of US Classrooms Will Be Too Hot for Students To Learn In." *Route Fifty*. September 30, 2021 [As Heat Waves Intensify, Tens of Thousands of US Classrooms Will Be Too Hot for Students To Learn In - Route Fifty \(route-fifty.com\)](#)

NEW YORK STATE

SUNY schools now un-enrolling unvaccinated students

New York's public colleges and universities began unenrolling students this week who've decided against getting vaccinated after the SUNY system's 35-day grace period for that requirement expired on Monday, [WMHT reports](#). Dan Clark. "SUNY Begins De-Registering Unvaccinated Students After Mandate Deadline Passes." *WMHT* (Troy, NY). September 29, 2021 [SUNY Begins De-Registering Unvaccinated Students After Mandate Deadline Passes \(wmht.org\)](#)

NYS Health Department COVID-19 Report Card

The NYS Health Department is posting coronavirus cases at NYS's K-12 schools and colleges online with its COVID-19 Report Card. The schools are sorted by public schools, charter schools, private schools, and BOCES programs. [School Report \(ny.gov\)](#)

Pandemic exacerbates bus driver shortage

The ongoing pandemic didn't cause the bus driver shortage that has vexed school districts across the nation. The virus exacerbated the problem. The job combines relatively low pay, unusual hours, the stress of controlling dozens of children, some of whom are disruptive, and the ability to safely operate a large vehicle. In some districts, school bus drivers and monitors are also facing frustrated parents opposed to masking requirements.

Victoria E. Freile. "Unruly kids. Hostile parents. Low pay. Bus drivers open up about challenges of job." *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. September 21, 2021 [School bus drivers open up about challenges of job in Rochester NY \(democratandchronicle.com\)](#)

