

# EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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## October 15, 2021 Education News Update

### NYS to pay \$4.2 billion owed in school aid over three years

A coalition of public education stakeholders signed an agreement with NYS on October 13 to settle a seven-year lawsuit over unpaid foundation aid. The agreement is contingent on NYS paying approximately \$4.2 billion in owed school aid over three years, with the first installment already included in the 2021-2022 state budget. Governor Hochul has pledged that owed foundation aid will be included in state budgets going forward. The New Yorkers for Students' Educational Rights (NYSER) coalition, represented by pro bono counsel, sued the state in 2014 to compel it to fully fund the foundation aid formula, a school funding system established as the result of a court ruling after an advocacy group, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, sued the state. The landmark state Court of Appeals ruling declared the state's public school funding inadequate and unconstitutional. Last spring, the NYS Legislature enacted legislation to pay a third of the owed aid during the current 2021-2022 fiscal year and outlined a non-binding plan to pay out the long-promised funds over three years. If the state honors its commitments, the case will be dismissed. If not, the plaintiffs will be able to continue the litigation and seek an expedited trial to secure the promised funding.

Rachel Silberstein. "State to fund \$4.2 billion in overdue public school Foundation Aid." *Albany Times Union*. October 15, 2021  
[State to fund \\$4.2 billion in overdue public school Foundation Aid \(timesunion.com\)](http://timesunion.com)

## TEACHING & LEARNING

### How districts can respond to growth of home schooling

The popularity of home schooling has surged during the pandemic, according to a report from public policy think tank Pioneer Institute. The report offers recommendations for school districts and policymakers on responding to this trend, including encouraging alternative education options, surveying home-schooling families for ways to improve schools and offering support to home-schoolers.

Matt Zalanick. "Why homeschool growth and other enrollment shifts should concern K-12 leaders." *District Administration*. October 4, 2021  
[Why homeschool growth should concern K-12 leaders \(districtadministration.com\)](http://districtadministration.com)

### Commentary: Ways to prevent the teacher exodus

Shortages of employees in public schools (teachers, substitute teachers, bus drivers, teacher aides) indicate the need for change. Law makers have instead given tax dollars to charter schools and vouchers, and to standardized testing companies. The author offers several steps districts can take, noting that these steps will not stop the flight of educators from our schools without better salaries and treatment:

- \* Eliminate unnecessary, unrealistic tasks.
- \* Eliminate formal lesson plans (which invite micromanagement by administrators).
- \* Provide teachers with more planning time.
- \* Provide better communication / better COVID safety (more listening to teacher concerns).
- \* Respect teachers. Teachers need to know that administrators and school board members support them.

*Blogger Steven Singer is a veteran teacher in Pennsylvania.*

Stephen Singer. "Top Five Actions to Stop the Teacher Exodus During COVID and Beyond." *Gadfly on the Wall blog*. October 7, 2021  
[Top Five Actions to Stop the Teacher Exodus During COVID and Beyond | gadflyonthewallblog](http://gadflyonthewallblog)

### Researchers: Pandemic strengthened student ingenuity in many cases

While the transition to remote instruction was challenging, it also caused many to act creatively and with ingenuity, write researchers from the University of Colorado Boulder and University of Colorado Denver. The authors detail findings from their research that counter the narrative of learning loss during this period.

Ben Kirshner, et alia. "Students Learned So Much More During the Pandemic Than We Realize. Just Ask Them." *Ed Surge*. October 11, 2021  
[Students Learned So Much More During the Pandemic Than We Realize. Just Ask Them. | EdSurge News](http://EdSurge News)

### Resources aimed at helping teachers protect student data

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of teaching educators about data privacy, according to a senior research scientist who, with the Future of Privacy Forum, has just released two training resources – the Student Privacy Primer and a guide to data ethics – to better K-12 teachers to handle and protect student data.

Nadia Tamez-Robledo. "What Do Teachers Know About Student Privacy? Not Enough, Researchers Say." *Ed Surge*. October 8, 2021  
[What Do Teachers Know About Student Privacy? Not Enough, Researchers Say | EdSurge News](http://EdSurge News)

## Teens also need SEL

Amid the pandemic, more schools say they are paying more attention to teenagers' social and emotional needs. Teens aren't so sure.

Arianna Prothero. "Middle and High School Students Need Social-Emotional Learning, Too. Are They Getting It?" *Education Week*. October 12, 2021 [Middle and High School Students Need Social-Emotional Learning, Too. Are They Getting It? \(edweek.org\)](#)

### **Commentary: The overdue case for competency-based education**

We're long overdue to redesign our education system around competency, argue six superintendents. In American schools, time is the constant, and the quality of learning is the variable. Some students graduate ready for the Ivy League, and others are barely able to read. The authors argue for a different system.

*Morcease Beasley, Alberto Carvalho, William Hite, Jesus Jara, Monica Goldson, and Jerry Almandarez are the superintendents of the school districts of Clayton County, Ga.; Miami-Dade County, Fla.; Philadelphia; Clark County, Nev.; Prince George's County, Md.; and Santa Ana, Calif., respectively. They are the founding members of the Superintendents Alliance at the National Center on Education and the Economy.*  
Morcease Beasley, Alberto Carvalho, William Hite, Jesus Jara, Monica Goldson & Jerry Almandarez. "Graduation Must Depend on Learning, Not Time." *Education Week*. October 12, 2021 [Graduation Must Depend on Learning, Not Time \(Opinion\) \(edweek.org\)](#)

### **Commentary: The case against zeros in grading**

Teachers should rethink their grading practices to make them more mathematically fair for students and allow for redemption for a missed assignment.

Alexis Tamony. "The Case Against Zeros in Grading." *Edutopia*. October 6, 2021 [The Case Against Zeros in Grading in Middle and High School | Edutopia](#)

### **How administrators can show they care about teachers**

It's important to remember that teachers are more than their job titles. Changes in protocols, pedagogy, and building practices have shifted. Many teachers learned how to teach classes that are remote, hybrid, asynchronous, or synchronous. With all of this focus on the work behind the scenes, the challenge can be remembering that teachers are people with concerns that extend outside of school. School leaders must find ways to show support.

Jessica Cabeen. "3 Ways Administrators Can Show They Care About Teachers as People." *Edutopia*. October 6, 2021 [3 Ways School Administrators Can Show They Care About Teachers as People | Edutopia](#)

### **Elementary school integrates reading across curriculum**

Many fourth-grade students at an elementary school in Phoenix started this school year at a second-grade reading level. To recover learning loss attributed to the coronavirus pandemic, the school adopted a phonics-based program that integrates reading across the curriculum, including in classes such as PE, and put other supports in place.

Yoree Koh. "When Fourth-Graders Can't Read: One Phoenix School Has a New Way to Fight Pandemic Learning Loss." *Wall Street Journal*. October 9, 2021 [When Fourth-Graders Can't Read: One Phoenix School Has a New Way to Fight Pandemic Learning Loss - WSJ](#)

## **FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL**

### **Can schools help defeat COVID as they did with polio & diphtheria?**

As educators work to help vaccinate students against COVID-19, the history of schools' involvement with past inoculation efforts shows how K12 teachers, principals, and staff can have a significant influence on the views of parents and others. However, decades of decay in public trust has made it harder for institutions like schools and the medical community to rally support.

Andrew Ujifusa. "Schools Helped Defeat Polio and Diphtheria With Vaccine Efforts. Can They Do It With COVID?" *Education Week*. October 08, 2021 [Schools Helped Defeat Polio and Diphtheria With Vaccine Efforts. Can They Do It With COVID? \(edweek.org\)](#)

### **New law requires federal help in identifying K-12 cybersecurity risks & solutions**

President Biden has signed into law a measure requiring the federal government to conduct a threat assessment and to help K-12 schools counter cybersecurity risks with appropriate solutions. By February 5, 2022, the U.S.

Department of Homeland Security must conduct a study on specific K-12 cybersecurity risks, including challenges that schools face in implementing cybersecurity protocols and securing sensitive student and employee records, cybersecurity challenges involved with remote learning; and provide cybersecurity recommendations.

Brian Bradley. "New Law Requires Federal Government to Identify K-12 Cyber Risks, Solutions." *Education Week*. October 8, 2021 [New Law Requires Federal Government to Identify K-12 Cyber Risks, Solutions - Market Brief \(edweek.org\)](#)

### **NEA: Social media making teachers' jobs more difficult and dangerous**

Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok spread misinformation and embolden students to cause damage school property and people, a situation that is making teachers more fearful, the National Education Association says.

Alyson Klein. "Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok Make Teachers' Jobs More Difficult and Dangerous, Union Says." *Education Week*. October 12, 2021 [Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok Make Teachers' Jobs More Difficult and Dangerous, Union Says \(edweek.org\)](#)

### **How to ensure effective school-family communication**

An authentic, "two-generation" communication model that builds connections and offers supports is among recommended strategies for school leaders to build better partnerships with families, according to a recent report. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of a trustworthy, transparent relationship with students' families that goes beyond basic information dissemination, the report's author explains.

Matt Zalaznick. "5 post-COVID lessons about how to engage families more deeply in schools." *District Administration*. October 11, 2021 [5 ways to better engage families in schools post-COVID \(districtadministration.com\)](https://www.districtadministration.com/2021/10/11/5-ways-to-better-engage-families-in-schools-post-covid)

### **Commentary: Budgeting for equity and lasting change**

State and local governments should prioritize equity in their budgets by using data, being outcome driven and engaging the whole community. While it is often said that government budgets are value statements, the past year has revealed that many budgets need to be revisited so that they better demonstrate the values of the people they serve. Leaders should focus on budgeting for equity, which has these fundamental facets: prioritizing equity, using data and evidence, budgeting for outcomes, and engaging the community in new ways.

Andrew Kleine & Josh Inaba. "How to Budget for Equity and Drive Lasting Change." *Route Fifty*. October 13, 2021 [How to Budget for Equity and Drive Lasting Change - Route Fifty \(route-fifty.com\)](https://www.route-fifty.com/blog/how-to-budget-for-equity-and-drive-lasting-change)

### **How schools can strengthen network security**

An estimated 1,180 cyber-related incidents have hit K-12 since 2016, and an influx of digital tools opens new vulnerabilities as students return in person. School cybersecurity threats are on the rise, and K-12 administrators can act now to strengthen school network security, according to the national director of K-12 Security Information Exchange, who recommends that schools focus on protecting network traffic, end-user devices, and personal information, while conducting regular patches and maintaining offline backups.

Roger Riddell. "3 cybersecurity best practices to keep school networks safe as students — and devices — return." *K-12 Dive*. October 12, 2021 [3 cybersecurity best practices to keep school networks safe as students — and devices — return | K-12 Dive \(k12dive.com\)](https://www.k12dive.com/news/3-cybersecurity-best-practices-to-keep-school-networks-safe-as-students-and-devices-return/)

### **NAEP math scores decline**

Math scores for 9- and 13-year-old students on the "Nation's Report Card" declined sharply from 2012 to 2020, and reading scores remained largely flat, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress Long-Term Trend study just released. Data shows the math-score gap between Black and white students more than doubled during that time period.

Lauren Camera. "America's Kids Earn Disappointing Grades on Nation's Report Card." *U.S. News & World Report*. October 14, 2021 [America's Kids Earn Disappointing Grades on Nation's Report Card | Education News | US News](https://www.usnews.com/story/news/education/2021/10/14/naep-math-scores-decline)

### **Surge in schooling options tests American model**

A number of mostly Republican-led states acted this year to provide parents access to state funding for educational options outside of traditional public schools. Some public school backers warn of fracturing support for the role public education plays in cultivating a strong democracy. Most Americans think that a well-educated populace is desirable, yet many are divided on how to achieve that goal. In 2021, 7 state legislatures created new school choice programs, and 14 states expanded 21 existing programs. Opponents warn that the wave of legislation will weaken public education and undermine the American promise to provide all students with a quality education.

Chelsea Sheasley. "Public education at a crossroads? Surge in schooling options tests US model." *Christian Science Monitor*. October 7, 2021 [In New Hampshire, public education tested by push for school choice - CSMonitor.com](https://www.csmonitor.com/US/2021/10/07/Public-education-at-a-crossroads-Surge-in-schooling-options-tests-US-model)

## **NEW YORK STATE**

### **State testing to resume in Spring 2022**

In 2022, NYS's tests will go on as they did before the pandemic. G. 3-8 English tests will be given in late March, followed by the reading tests in late April. G.4 & 8 science exams will be administered in late May through early June, according to a memo sent to districts. Regents exams are offered each year in January, June and August. It will likely be impossible to make any useful interpretations about tests taken this school year. They won't be comparable to results from 2020-2021 because children who were learning remotely were not required to take them, and some questions were recycled from previous years. SED officials also canceled all Regents exams except for Algebra I, earth science, living environment, and English, which are federally required, and removed diploma requirements tied to these exams. Officials did not say whether Regents will again be required for graduation this school year.

Reema Amin. "After two years of disruption, New York's state exams will go on as normal this spring." *Chalkbeat NY*. October 14, 2021, [New York state tests will go on as normal this spring - Chalkbeat New York](https://www.chalkbeat.com/story/education/2021/10/14/new-york-state-tests-will-go-on-as-normal-this-spring/)

### **Program offers teaching experience to HS students**

A program under the Franklin-Essex-Hamilton Board of Cooperative Educational Services in New York's North Country is expanding a local pipeline of teachers by helping HS students gain hands-on experience in the classroom. Under the New Vision Education Program, students work to support teachers in elementary-school classrooms.

Elena Barilla. "High school seniors get head start to becoming educators, a hope to solve teacher shortage." *WNYW-TV (NYC)*. October 5, 2021 [High school seniors get head start to becoming educators \(mynbc5.com\)](https://www.wnywtv.com/news/education/high-school-seniors-get-head-start-to-becoming-educators)

## **Governor vetoes nine bills seeking to steer funding to districts that missed deadlines**

Governor Hochul on October 8 vetoed nine bills passed by state lawmakers this year that aim to steer funding to local school districts despite paperwork errors or missed deadlines. This is a recurring bone of contention between the state Legislature and the Governor's office.

Zach Williams. "Gov. Kathy Hochul has issued her first vetoes." *City & State NY*. October 12, 2021

[Gov. Kathy Hochul has issued her first vetoes - City & State New York \(cityandstateny.com\)](https://www.cityandstateny.com/gov-kathy-hochul-has-issued-her-first-vetoes/)

## **Schools warn against TikTok challenges**

Schools are trying to prevent TikTok challenges by issuing their own TikTok warnings. They are calling on parents to talk to their kids about the dangers of so-called TikTok challenges before incidents arise. TikTok posts challenged students to vandalize school property, primarily in bathrooms, and to "slap your teacher."

Gary Stern. "Schools warn parents about the dangers of TikTok challenges and students about explosions." *Rockland/Westchester Journal News*. October 13, 2021

[Hudson Valley schools warn parents about dangers of TikTok challenges \(lohud.com\)](https://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/2021/10/13/rockland-westchester-schools-warn-parents-about-dangers-of-tiktok-challenges/7711170002/)