

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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October 8, 2021 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

Emotional, behavioral issues at forefront for schools

Social workers prepared for the behavioral challenges this school year would bring, but they say they underestimated how difficult student adjustments would be. Some teachers also are feeling tense and burned out as they've tried to support students and de-escalate conflict. Some schools are hiring staff to help teach students how to cope. Kalyn Belsha. "Stress and short tempers: Schools struggle with behavior as students return." *Chalkbeat*. September 27, 2021
[Schools struggling with behavior issues as students return - Chalkbeat](#)

Teachers see benefits of SEL

More than half of educators say their districts or schools are implementing social and emotional learning, according to the 2021 Social and Emotional Learning Report by McGraw Hill. Of those surveyed, 91% say they believe SEL will improve students' grades, and 96% say SEL will improve student behavior. David Nagel. "SEL Gaining Substantial Traction in K-12." *T.H.E. Journal*. September 30, 2021
[SEL Gaining Substantial Traction in K-12 -- THE Journal](#)

Teaching critical thinking is tough amid disinformation

Teachers have been grappling with how to help students consume information during the pandemic as social media has allowed falsehoods to spread. Some teachers are using lessons in conducting online research to help students discern fact from fiction. The task is made more difficult when students hear conspiracy theories outside of school. Daniella Silva. "Teachers grapple with combating misinformation in age of pandemic." *NBC News*. September 29, 2021
[Teachers grapple with combating misinformation in age of pandemic \(nbcnews.com\)](#)

How to keep restorative justice programs working

To create an effective and long-lasting restorative justice system, educators must avoid shortcuts and commit to slower but more sustainable long-term strategies. Read more in *Educational Leadership*. Mikhail Lubansky. "How to Keep Your Restorative Justice Program from Failing." *ASCD*. October 1, 2021
[How to Keep Your Restorative Justice Program from Failing - ASCD](#)

Weaving SEL into MS subjects

Asking students to describe what a book character feels or values and making time for book discussions are two ways to bring social and emotional learning into language arts classes, asserts this MS English teacher. She also offers ideas for including SEL in math, science, social studies and the arts. Kasey Short. "Tips for Integrating SEL in 5 Middle Level Subjects." *Middle Web*. October 3, 2021
[Tips to Integrate SEL Skills in 5 Middle Level Subject Areas \(middleweb.com\)](#)

Elementary school connects equity, literacy

A California ES is approaching literacy instruction as an issue of civil rights. The school has overhauled its approach to reading to focus on phonics and one-on-one intervention to ensure every student is reading at grade level. Ali Tadayon. "Inside one California school's approach to reading as a 'civil right'." *Ed Source*. October 4, 2021
[Inside one California school's approach to reading as a 'civil right' | EdSource](#)

Pandemic activity & screen time tied to children's mental health

A study in JAMA Network Open found that youths who had less screen time and engaged in more physical activity during the pandemic had better mental health outcomes, compared with peers. Brian P. Dunleavy. "Screen time rises, physical activity dives for U.S. kids, teens during pandemic." *United Press International*. October 1, 2021
[Physical activity loses out to screen time for U.S. kids, teens during pandemic, study says - UPI.com](#)

Free glasses-for-students program shows promise

A study of a program that provides vision screenings and free glasses to students in Baltimore found some benefits. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University found higher reading scores in g.3-7, but no improvement in math. Jill Barshay. "Focusing on glasses in schools." *Hechinger Report*. October 4, 2021
[PROOF POINTS: Focusing on glasses in schools - The Hechinger Report](#)

More than 120,000 American children lost caregivers during pandemic

The number of U.S. children orphaned during the pandemic is larger than previously estimated, and the toll has been far greater among Black and Hispanic Americans, a study suggests. More than 50% of those who lost a primary caregiver during the pandemic belonged to those two groups, which make up about 40% of the U.S. population, according to the study by the medical journal *Pediatrics*.

Mike Stobbe. "More than 120,000 US kids had caregivers die during pandemic." *Associated Press*. October 7, 2021
[More than 120,000 US kids had caregivers die during pandemic \(apnews.com\)](https://apnews.com/article/more-than-120000-us-kids-had-caregivers-die-during-pandemic)

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

FBI takes steps to curb threats against educators

The FBI will take steps to help curb the rise of violent threats against teachers, principals, school board members and other educators. U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland has directed federal authorities to meet with local law enforcement over the next month to discuss strategies for addressing the increase in "harassment, intimidation and threats of violence against school board members, teachers and workers" in public schools across the country. The FBI and U.S. Attorney's Offices are to meet with federal, state, Tribal, territorial and local law enforcement leaders over the next 30 days to open channels of communication for threat reporting, assessment and response.

Rachel Treisman. "The Justice Department will address threats against school officials and staff." *National Public Radio*. October 5, 2021
[Merrick Garland looks to tackle threats against school workers : NPR](https://www.npr.org/2021/10/05/1028888888/merrick-garland-looks-to-tackle-threats-against-school-workers)

Schools are increasingly targeted by ransomware attacks

Schools are particularly vulnerable to ransomware attacks, especially after the number of devices used in schools rose 74% due to the pandemic, according to a report from Absolute Software. A typical endpoint device in a school has 5.4 security controls on it, compared with an average of 11.7 on a corporate device.

Louis Columbus. "Educational targets hit by rising cyberattacks in 2021." *Venture Beat*. September 30, 2021
[Educational targets hit by rising cyberattacks in 2021 | VentureBeat](https://venturebeat.com/2021/09/30/educational-targets-hit-by-rising-cyberattacks-in-2021/)

Technology may have exposed students to hackers

A security bug in the Netop Vision Pro Education software that could allow hackers to take control of students' computers, webcams, and microphones, has been detected by McAfee, potentially affecting 3 million students and teachers in 9,000 schools worldwide.

Mark Keierleber. "New Research: Security Report Finds Ed Tech Vulnerability That Could Have Exposed Millions of Students to Hacks During Remote Learning." *The 74*. September 28, 2021
[New Research: Security Report Finds Ed Tech Vulnerability That Could Have Exposed Millions of Students to Hacks During Remote Learning | The 74 \(the74million.org\)](https://www.the74million.org/article/new-research-security-report-finds-ed-tech-vulnerability-that-could-have-exposed-millions-of-students-to-hacks-during-remote-learning/)

Can the US create UPK without repeating past mistakes?

A proposed \$450 billion investment in child care and preK could fundamentally change the nation's approach to early learning — but getting the right money to the right people is complicated.

Chabeli Carrazana. "Can the US Create Universal Pre-K Without Repeating Past Mistakes?" *Route Fifty*. October 4, 2021
[Can the US Create Universal Pre-K Without Repeating Past Mistakes? - Route Fifty \(route-fifty.com\)](https://www.route-fifty.com/article/can-the-us-create-universal-pre-k-without-repeating-past-mistakes/)

International study indicates value of public education

A new international organization has released five case studies of low- and middle-income nations, entitled "*Public education works: lessons from five case-studies in low- and middle- income countries*". The study shows that well-organized public education systems are possible and working everywhere, with political will and use of locally relevant practices. The cases—from Bolivia, Namibia, and Vietnam, among others—challenge the idea that public education needs privatization for quality, social inclusion, and equity. It concludes that **public education must be the way forward for building more equal, just and sustainable societies**. The research is available in three formats: a Working paper, Research brief and Policy brief. READ the Working paper or Research brief [here](#).

"Public education works - LAUNCH of new study." *Global Initiative for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR)*. September 28, 2021
[Public education works - LAUNCH of new study — GI-ESCR](https://www.gi-escr.org/public-education-works-launch-of-new-study/)

Fewer schools switch from in-person learning

About 2,238 schools in 45 states that began this school year with in-person learning have temporarily shifted to virtual or hybrid instruction. The figure rose by 38 schools last week, the smallest number of the school year, and comes as the President administration strives to improve vaccination rates among students and school employees.

Lauren Camera. "Coronavirus-Related School Closures Plateau." *U.S. News & World Report*. October 4, 2021
[Coronavirus-Related School Closures Plateau | Education News | US News](https://www.usnews.com/story/news/education/2021/10/04/coronavirus-related-school-closures-plateau)

Commentary: Ivy League lack of online degrees

Ivy League schools have been slow to offer online degree programs, though some offer a variety of courses and certificate programs. The schools might fear that online degrees could hurt their brands or offend their donors.

Some districts establishing panels of medical advisors

Some superintendents have set up expert panels to weigh in on districts' mitigation plans and get community buy-in as they cope with issues created by the pandemic.

Stephen Sawchuk. "Districts Are Leaning on Medical Advisors to Help With COVID Policies. It's Paying Off." *Education Week*. October 05, 2021
[Districts Are Leaning on Medical Advisors to Help With COVID Policies. It's Paying Off \(edweek.org\)](#)

Some schools use COVID aid to fund sports

The AP found some districts using federal pandemic relief to cover athletics projects they couldn't previously afford.

COLLIN BINKLEY and RYAN J. FOLEY

Collin Binkley & Ryan J. Foley. "Investigation: Flush With COVID Aid, Some Schools Steer Funding to Sports." *Associated Press*. October 06, 2021
[Flush with COVID-19 aid, schools steer funding to sports \(apnews.com\)](#)

Other wealthy countries spend much more on care for preschoolers

Rich countries contribute an average of \$14,000 per year for a toddler's care, compared with \$500 in the U.S. The Democrats' spending bill tries to shrink the gap.

Claire Cain Miller. "How Other Nations Pay for Child Care. The U.S. Is an Outlier." *NY Times*. October 7, 2021

[How Other Nations Pay for Child Care. The U.S. Is an Outlier. - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

How school leaders can improve diversity & equity

According to a report from a racial justice nonprofit group, tracking equity outcomes, not just efforts, is one of five recommendations for improving diversity, equity and inclusion in school districts. The education sector has made little headway in these areas, with Black staff members citing more negative workplace experiences than any other group, the report finds.

Matt Zalaznick. "5 ways schools can make better progress on diversity, equity and inclusion." *District Administration*. October 5, 2021

[5 ways schools can make better progress on diversity, equity and inclusion \(districtadministration.com\)](#)

NEW YORK STATE

How districts are spending their extra state aid

Senate Education Committee Chair Shelley Mayer recaps her recent hearing, via audiotape, that examined an influx of state and federal education dollars that school districts are getting this year.

David Lombardo. "State education officials work to distribute billions of federal dollars." *Capital Pressroom*. October 4, 2021

[State education officials work to distribute billions of federal dollars - The Capitol Pressroom](#)