

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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October 9, 2020 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

Social studies as reading tool

Only 33% of American students read proficiently at grade level, according to national tests; among low-income students it's only 20%. Research supports use of phonics when first teaching how to read words, but students need more than word recognition to become good readers. They also must learn about the world around them so they can grasp the meaning of what they are reading. Evidence that social studies can be used to boost reading achievement was shown in a September 2020 [analysis from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#), which directly linked minutes of social studies instruction to higher reading scores. For years, schools reduced social studies time to increase reading instruction, especially in low-income schools. Yet [reading achievement](#) has remained flat and low for the last 20 years. High-income children are more likely to travel, go to museums and attend performances, all of which help them read better. Proponents advise that it would be more effective to improve reading by encouraging schools to teach more history, geography and civics. The [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) is currently working with 13 states to encourage the use of [knowledge heavy curricula](#), as well as [promoting social studies](#) instruction.

Jill Barshay. "PROOF POINTS: Slightly higher reading scores when students delve into social studies, study finds." *Hechinger Report*. October 5, 2020 https://hechingerreport.org/slightly-higher-reading-scores-when-students-delve-into-social-studies-study-finds/?utm_source=The+Hechinger+Report&utm_campaign=e5-9f2108e-PP_2020_10_05&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d3eedc3e04-e5-9f2108e-322606321

Is the presidential election a teachable moment?

This year's election has introduced new challenges for teachers, who are trying to navigate a polarized political climate. The article highlights one teacher's experience in assigning a class to watch the first presidential debate.

Sarah Schwartz. "Is the election still a teachable moment?" *Education Week*. October 2, 2020

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/10/02/is-the-election-still-a-teachable-moment.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1&M=59710439&U=252955&UUID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

Education scholars support anti-racist education

The American Educational Research Association (the world's largest group of education researchers) and the National Academy of Education (an organization of education scholars dedicated to employing research to improve policy and practice) have issued, with 16 other scientific societies, a [Statement in Support of Anti-Racist Education](#). "We need in essence more and better education about race and racism without the imposition of a federal government view about what it can and cannot include...Despite the progress that the nation has made toward racial equality, we recognize that we still have a long way to go." The statement notes that [research evidence](#) suggests that "exposure to a diversity of ideas and open inquiry about them leads all persons to better learning, more consensual decision-making, and a deeper appreciation of oneself and others" and also that "we have much more work to do to elevate understanding of racism in U.S. society, which is critical to its eradication."

"Statement in Support of Anti-Racist Education." *American Educational Research Association & National Academy of Education*. September 24, 2020 <https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/Statement-in-Support-of-Anti-Racist-Education>

8 big ideas for dismantling systemic racism in schools

A growing number of Americans want the systemic inequities in our country and our education system eliminated. This article outlines the *Education Week* Big Ideas special report addressing anti-Black systemic racism in schools.

Elizabeth Rich. "Dismantling Systemic Racism in Schools: 8 Big Ideas." *Education Week*. September 23, 2020

https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/09/23/dismantling-systemic-racism-in-schools-8-big-ideas.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1&M=25%25MESSAGE_ID%25%25&U=%25%25CF_ICNACCOUNTNUMBER%25%25&UUID=%25%25MDS_EMAIL%25%25

Some lessons from districts that have resumed in-person learning

Leaders of four districts that opened with in-person learning share what's working and what's not.

Stephen Sawchuk. "As More Schools Resume In-Person Learning, Some Lessons From Districts That Did It First." *Education Week*. October 8, 2020

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/10/07/as-more-schools-resume-in-person-learning-some-lessons-from-districts-that-did-it-first.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1&M=59715262&U=252955&UUID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Agreement keeps federal government open until December 11

President Trump signed legislation on October 1 that prevents a government shutdown, ensuring funding for agencies, including the U.S.E.D., through December 11. The legislation also allows the Department of Agriculture to waive some requirements for school meals, granting more flexibility for school nutrition professionals.

Andrew Ujifusa. "Congress Averts Government Shutdown, Makes it Easier for Schools to Feed Hungry Kids." *Education Week*. October 1, 2020 <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2020/10/shutdown-deal-schools-feed-kids.html>

Districts face uncertain budget climate

School districts nationwide could be faced with changing their budgets several times over the school year, says a senior researcher and policy analyst at Learning Policy Institute. He and other experts say changes to expenses because of the coronavirus, coupled with changes to tax revenue, could affect school budgets.

Naaz Modan. "District budgets, expenses in flux while in-person learning remains uncertain." *Education Dive*. October 1, 2020 <https://www.educationdive.com/news/district-budgets-funding-flux-in-person-learning-uncertain-planning-reopening/586004/>

Education Week: Where candidates stand on education issues

Education Week's interactive tracker gives one-click access to where the candidates for president and vice president stand on key issues affecting K-12 education.

"Education in the 2020 Presidential Race." *Education Week*. October 2020

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/education2020/index.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2-rm&M=59711873&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

President Trump says no more COVID-19 aid until he wins

President Donald Trump has declared that he won't agree to a new coronavirus relief package before the presidential election on November 3, a setback for schools and educators seeking additional aid from Washington. In a series of tweets, Mr. Trump said he told administration officials involved in coronavirus talks with Congress to stop negotiating with lawmakers. He said that "immediately after I win," he would restart talks to pass a relief bill focused on "hardworking Americans and Small Business."

Andrew Ujifusa. "Trump: No More COVID-19 Aid, Including Billions for Schools, Until After I Win." *Education Week*. October 6, 2020 <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2020/10/trump-no-new-coronavirus-aid-election-blow-schools.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news3&M=59711873&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

Union exclusive representation stands

The U.S. Supreme Court just declined to take up a challenge to exclusive-bargaining arrangements for public employee labor unions. Justices declined review without comment in *Reisman v. Associated Faculties of the University of Maine*. Jonathan Reisman, a professor at the University, does not belong to the faculty union and objects to it representing him as the exclusive-bargaining agent for all employees in the bargaining unit. The Supreme Court lack of review means that the ruling of lower courts against Reisman will stand.

Mark Walsh. "Supreme Court Won't Hear Challenge to Union Exclusive Representation." *Education Week*. October 5, 2020

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/school_law/2020/10/supreme_court_wont_hear_challenge_union_exclusive_representation.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news3&M=59711873&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

NEW YORK STATE

New York's 'K-12 COVID-19 Toolkit' clarifies when to get tested or just stay home

A diagnosis of COVID-19 or something else can determine when a child may return to school. The NYS Department of Health has released a COVID-19 flowchart to help parents and school administrators decide if students should stay home and whether contact tracing is necessary.

Rachel Silberstein. "COVID-19 or something else? DOH releases flowchart to aid parents, school officials." *Albany Times Union*. October 5, 2020 https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/COVID-19-or-something-else-DOH-releases-1562072.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_DailyBrief&stn=rf&cid=5ae0930791d15c3ef666094a8