

# EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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## November 5, 2021 Education News Update

### TEACHING & LEARNING

#### Gifted education reconsidered by some districts

Gifted-education programs serve about 3.3 million students in schools nationwide, with students typically included based on IQ or standardized test scores, or on the recommendation of a teacher or parent. However, there is no federal mandate to offer gifted-education courses, and concerns about equity and conflicting research on the value of the programs have led some districts to rethink or eliminate them altogether. Vocal parents are blaming gifted and talented programs for worsening racial segregation and inequities in the country's education system.

Bobby Caina Calvano. "Schools debate: Gifted and talented, or racist and elitist?" Associated Press. October 28, 2021  
[Schools debate: Gifted and talented, or racist and elitist? \(apnews.com\)](https://apnews.com/Schools-debate-Gifted-and-talented-or-racist-and-elitist?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-gifted-talented%3Aor-racist-and-elitist%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-gifted-talented%3Aor-racist-and-elitist%3Ahomepage%2Fstory)

#### Personalized learning works better in some schools than others

Educators worry that changing up instruction to better fit students' interests could jeopardize their school's progress on state tests. Personalizing learning to students individual academic strengths and weaknesses and personal interests was hard to do during the pandemic, especially in remote or hybrid learning environments. Social distancing in physical classrooms added to the difficulties.

Alyson Klein. "Why Personalized Learning Works in Some Schools, But Not in Others. What Test Scores Say." *Education Week*. October 29, 2021  
[Why Personalized Learning Works in Some Schools, But Not in Others. What Test Scores Say \(edweek.org\)](https://www.edweek.org/education/why-personalized-learning-works-in-some-schools-but-not-in-others-what-test-scores-say/2021/10/29)

#### Most important SEL skills: Curiosity & Persistence

Want students to succeed in math and reading? Nurture their curiosity and persistence. Across 11 countries, those two skills tracked most closely with academic success for 10- and 15-year-olds in a first-of-a-kind study.

Sarah D. Sparks. "The SEL Skills That May Matter Most for Academic Success: Curiosity and Persistence." *Education Week*. October 29, 2021  
[The SEL Skills That May Matter Most for Academic Success: Curiosity and Persistence \(edweek.org\)](https://www.edweek.org/education/the-sel-skills-that-may-matter-most-for-academic-success-curiosity-and-persistence/2021/10/29)

#### Predicting Facebook's move to Meta will affect education

Facebook's rebrand as Meta includes some new developments for education as part of the company's "Metaverse." CEO Mark Zuckerberg's sweeping vision of creating a next-generation "embodied" internet was inspired by science fiction, where users, as [he described it](#), will be "in the experience, not just looking at it." And he is targeting education as one key part of that vision. What that metaverse will look like is vague, but the company gave some hints in prepared statements and in [an hour-long video](#). And it has committed real dollars to the educational part of its effort, promising that its Facebook Reality Labs will invest \$150 million in an education program to assist with tech development and to train people to use augmented and virtual reality tools.

Jeffrey R. Young. "As Facebook Changes Name to Meta, Company Wants to Pull Education Into Its 'Metaverse'." *Ed Surge News*. October 29, 2021  
[As Facebook Changes Name to Meta, Company Wants to Pull Education Into Its 'Metaverse' | EdSurge News](https://www.edsurgenews.com/as-facebook-changes-name-to-meta-company-wants-to-pull-education-into-its-metaverse/)

#### Commentary: How to boost students' SEL skills

Social and emotional learning should form the canvas for all teaching, according to the three researchers who wrote this article. They offer suggestions for enhancing students' social and emotional skills as well as for shoring up teachers in this stressful time.

Kim Schonert-Reichl, Jenna Whitehead and Jennifer Kitil. "SEL isn't one more thing on the plate -- it IS the plate." *Smart Brief/Education*. October 28, 2021  
[SEL isn't one more thing on the plate -- it IS the plate | SmartBrief](https://www.smartbrief.com/education/SEL-isn-t-one-more-thing-on-the-plate-it-IS-the-plate)

#### Research: PE helps overcome effects of social isolation

Physical activity, such as physical education, may help students recover from the effects of social isolation during the pandemic, according to research presented at the Society for Neuroscience's annual conference. Studies show that students, particularly teens, who experience social isolation have higher rates of anxiety, depression and stress.

Sarah D. Sparks. "Kids Are Feeling Isolated. P.E. May Help Them Bounce Back." *Education Week*. November 02, 2021  
[Kids Are Feeling Isolated. P.E. May Help Them Bounce Back \(edweek.org\)](https://www.edweek.org/education/kids-are-feeling-isolated-p.e.-may-help-them-bounce-back/2021/11/02)

#### How to support students with testing anxiety

Special educator Rachael Storey recommends five methods to help students with disabilities cope with testing-related anxiety, including verifying that they are receiving appropriate modifications and emphasizing things the

student has control over, such as getting a good night's rest before the exam. She stresses that students with anxiety often express it differently and that educators should be ready to tailor approaches to the student's individual needs. *Rachael Storey is a Consultant with Riverside Insights and a Former Special Education Teacher in Michigan.*  
Rachael Storey. "5 ways to help special education students manage testing anxiety." eSchool News. November 3, 2021  
[5 ways to help special education students manage testing anxiety \(eschoolnews.com\)](#)

## FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

### College enrollment falls again

Enrollment at U.S. colleges is on track to fall by another nearly 500,000 undergraduate students this fall, continuing the historic drops that began with the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The decline of 3.2% in undergraduate enrollment this fall follows a similar drop of 3.4% the previous year, according to the research from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. The numbers show there are now 240,000 fewer undergraduates enrolled this fall compared with the same time last year. Overall, enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs has been [trending downward since around 2012](#), but the pandemic accelerated the declines at the undergrad level. Community colleges have consistently been the hardest hit.

Elissa Nadworny. "College enrollment plummeted during the pandemic. This fall, it's even worse." *National Public Radio/Morning Edition* October 26, 2021  
[College enrollment continues to drop during the pandemic : NPR](#)

### GOP plans to amplify debate over race and education

Republicans plan to forcefully oppose race and diversity curricula — tapping into a surge of parental frustration about public schools — as a core piece of their strategy in the 2022 midterm elections, a coordinated effort to mobilize right-leaning voters that Democrats dismiss as race-baiting.

Thomas Beaumont, Aaron Morrison, & Will Weisser. "After Virginia, GOP amplifies debate over race and education." *Associated Press*. November 5, 2021. [After Virginia, GOP amplifies debate over race and education \(apnews.com\)](#)

## NEW YORK STATE

### Bus camera program bringing in \$250 per first offense

Nearly 5,000 school buses in 66 Suffolk County school districts are part of a monitoring program that has raked in \$3.1 million since May, more than the \$2.5 million projected for the year, according to Suffolk legislative documents. Those caught running school bus stop-arm cameras have started receiving \$250 fines or more after an initial two-month grace period.

Lorena Mongelli. "Suffolk bus camera program raking in money at \$250 for first offense." *Newsday*. October 30, 2021  
[Suffolk bus camera program raking in money, with fine of \\$250 per first offense | Newsday](#)

### Questar BOCES union leaders reimbursed themselves in cash for questionable expenses

Union officers representing mostly low-wage employees at the Questar BOCES headquartered in Albany allegedly used unreported dues for more than \$112,000 in questionable transactions over the course of six years, according to internal New York State United Teachers documents. An insurance claim filed by NYSUT states that from 2012 - 2018, leaders of the BOCES Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Special Support Services Federation (SSSF) spent members' money on unauthorized stipends, checks made out to themselves, holiday parties that no one attended, and hotel and airfare for conferences in Disney World and Las Vegas.

Rachel Silberstein. "BOCES union reps allegedly used membership dues on Vegas, Disney." Albany Times Union. November 3, 2021  
[BOCES union reps allegedly used membership dues on Vegas, Disney \(timesunion.com\)](#)