

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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November 9, 2018 News Round-up

TEACHING & LEARNING

The Bezos Montessori push

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos will help fund a network of "Montessori-inspired" schools in the US, but it's unclear whether they will gain traction in lower-income communities where many are unfamiliar with the approach. Public Montessori schools draw fewer low-income or black students, partially due to lack of access and lower recruitment.

Laura Meckler. "Montessori, long a favorite for wealthy families, struggles to expand its reach." *Washington Post*. November 5, 2018

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/montessori-long-a-favorite-of-wealthy-families-struggles-to-expand-its-reach/2018/11/05/51a5ae02-ccc9-11e8-920f-dd52e1ae4570_story.html?utm_term=.2a8fd18cc46e&wpisrc=nl_sb_smartbrief

School uses neuroscience to inform teaching

A school in Colorado is using neuroscience and knowledge of how the brain works to help students develop skills such as self-regulation, creativity and empathy. The school's principal says this approach helps make interactions with students more meaningful and allows students to understand how and why they learn.

Jenny Brundin. "Can A School Built On Brain Science Alter The Learning Landscape?" *Colorado Public Radio*. November 5, 2018

<https://www.cpr.org/news/story/can-a-school-built-on-brain-science-alter-the-learning-landscape>

NATIONAL / FEDERAL

Commentary: Schools most important task is building a sense of civic responsibility

The author argues that more important than test scores is the failure of young adults to vote. He states that the most important outcome of PK-12 education is citizens who vote to address "the current political quagmire and an inevitable slide into further divisiveness, deeper inequity, and an authoritarian state."

Arthur Camins. "Education alarm: Non-voting, not test scores." *Daily Kos*. October 26, 2018

<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/10/26/1807415/-Education-Alarm-Non-Voting-Not-Test-Scores>

The last 10 years a punishing decade for public school funding

This report by the AFT finds that 25 states still provide less total school funding per student than they did in 2008.

"A punishing decade for school funding." American Federation of Teachers (AFT). November 4, 2018

https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/decade-of-neglect-2018.pdf?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20181104&utm_campaign=ed&utm_term=nprnews

Justices Sotomayor and Gorsuch press for more civics education

Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Neil Gorsuch have partnered to advocate for more K-12 civics education. They say that the elimination of civics has helped to fuel the lack of civility in the political discourse.

Kevin Daley. "Supreme Court Odd Couple Push For Civility, Civic Education As Election Nears." *Daily Caller*. November 4, 2018

<https://dailycaller.com/2018/11/04/sonia-sotomayor-neil-gorsuch-cbs/>

Supreme Court rules that federal age-bias law applies to all local governments

In a decision that could affect small school districts, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 applies to political subdivisions no matter how many employees they have.

Mark Walsh. "Supreme Court says federal age-bias law applies to local governments of any size." *Education Week*. November 6, 2018

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/school_law/2018/11/supreme_court_rules_that_feder.html?cmp=soceml-twfdbltz-ewnow

The real reason for 'failing' schools in poorer communities

A recent report analyzed the gap between the schools that serve primarily wealthy white families and those that serve non-wealthy families of color. *The fact is, public schools in Black and Latino communities are not "failing." ... (T)hese schools have been sabotaged for years by policy-makers who fail to fully fund them, by ideologues who choose to experiment with them, by "entrepreneurs" who choose to extract public taxpayer dollars from education systems for their own pockets.* The report also rejects the notion that money doesn't matter.

Peter Greene has taught g.7-12 English in the same NW Pennsylvanian school district for more than 30 years.

Peter Greene. "Failing Brown v. Board of Education." *Curmudgucation* blog. November 2, 2018

http://curmudgucation.blogspot.com/2018/11/failing-brown-v-board-of-education.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+blogspot%2FORjvzd+%28CURMUDGUCATION%29

New book deals with real reasons for ‘failing’ schools

A new book, coauthored by Kara Finnigan, professor of education policy at the U of R Warner School of Education, and Jennifer Jellison Holme, associate professor of education policy at the University of Texas at Austin, looks closely at the racial and economic inequities contributing to the deepening segregation and inequality in K-12 schools nationwide. The tendency has been to blame schools, labelling them as “failing”, and requiring them to address their low performance. The authors state that blaming students, teachers, and schools in urban areas is a misdiagnosis of the problem. They argue that ‘failing’ schools can only be helped through a multi-prong approach that deals with patterns of racial and economic segregation. (The book is available in paperback for \$31.00.)

U of R press release: *Striving in Common: A Regional Equity Framework for Urban Schools*. November 5, 2018

<https://www.warner.rochester.edu/newsevents/story/2250>

Betsy DeVos likely to face push back from new House of Representatives

With newly empowered Democrats in charge of the House education committee, expect the education secretary to testify more on Capitol Hill as she and other Trump education officials go under the microscope.

Andrew Ujifusa. “Buckle up, Betsy DeVos: It looks like Democrats have won the house.” *Education Week*. November 7, 2018

<http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2018/11/democrats-win-house-looks-like-betsy-devos-buckle-up-education-civil-rights.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=58662946&U=252955&UUIID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

Education issues decided in the November 6 election

Education spending, teacher pay, school choice, and school safety played a huge part in the 2018 midterm elections, especially at the state level.

Alyson Klein. “Governors, state chiefs, and ballot measures: What voters decided.” *Education Week*. November 7, 2018

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/state_edwatch/2018/11/state-chiefs-governors-ballot-measures-2018.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=58662946&U=252955&UUIID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

A.G. Sessions' education track record

US Attorney General Jeff Sessions has left his mark on education policy in the country. Sessions disputed Obama administration-era guidelines on affirmative action and on protections for transgender students.

Alyson Klein. “Attorney General Jeff Sessions Resigned. Here's His Record on Children's Civil Rights.” *Education Week*. November 7, 2018

<http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2018/11/attorney-general-jeff-sessions-resigns-civil-rights-affirmative-action-transgender-immigration.html>

NEW YORK STATE

No school districts create foundations to help taxpayers avoid the cap on tax deductions

While a number of NYS school districts initially tried to set up charitable foundations to help taxpayers avoid the new cap on state and local tax deductions, none of the state’s nearly 700 public school systems have actually done so. Some municipalities have set up charitable foundations.

Rick Karlin. “Schools take a pass on starting foundations to offset SALT tax cap.” *Albany Times Union*. November 4, 2018

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Schools-take-a-pass-on-starting-SALT-compromises-13355205.php>

Winners and losers in NYS Senate election results

This article provides an in-depth look at changes coming to the NYS Senate due to the November 6 elections which resulted in Democrats holding up to 39 seats (once the final tallies are reached) in the 63-seat chamber. Among the changes affecting education are the following:

* Andrea Stewart-Cousins of Westchester County is set to become the first woman in state history to be part of the “three men in a room.” She is also the first Democratic leader of the state Senate since 1914 to live outside NYC.

That could bring a more suburban perspective on property taxes, while reflecting liberal views on social policy.

* NYSUT, a longtime ally of Senate Democrats, went all-in for Democrat candidates after Senate Republicans did not allow a vote on a NYSUT-backed bill to end the linkage between students' state exam results and teachers' evaluations. There should be plenty of votes now in the Senate to pass the union's priorities, especially given the defeat of the Independent Democratic Conference, which was friendly to (and funded by) charter school supporters.

* Current Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan will not only lose his title, but with much of the Long Island Senate Republican delegation now replaced by Democrats, he may well lose his position as GOP leader.

* Charter school supporters are among the losers. Deep-pocketed charter schools supporters did not offer their usual millions in outside support for their longtime allies in the Senate GOP. Instead, some major charter supporters gave major last-minute donations to Democrats for Education Reform, a group backing pro-charter Senate Democrats.

That group supported three Senate Democratic candidates, though only one of them seemed likely to be victorious.

Chris Bragg. “Analysis: Winners, losers of state Senate's historic power shift.” *Albany Times Union*. November 7, 2018

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Winners-losers-of-State-Senate-s-historic-power-13371755.php>

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[Improving Reading in Schools](#)

[Differentiated Instruction](#)