

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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December 17, 2021 Education News Update

This is the last issue of Education News Update until the new calendar year. Best wishes for a relaxing time with family and friends until then.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Debate over changing how to teach math

Steps to make math more inclusive are changing math education. Opponents say the movement dumbs down math. Some schools are emphasizing real world problems and collaboration, putting kids of all abilities in the same classes, and adding data science courses. However, some mathematicians worry that the changes in HS math instruction will result in more people admitted to college unprepared for a science or engineering courses. Many math educators want all the same math to be taught but with a stronger focus on access and equity. Erin Richards, Gary Stern, Emily Bloch and Christine Fernando, *USA TODAY*. "How to make math class more inclusive."

Democrat & Chronicle. December 10, 2021

https://www.democratandchronicle.com/in-depth/news/education/2021/12/10/schools-inclusive-math-instruction-diverse-students/6415620001/?for-guid=bc6a7c11-cfd4-4c73-9f96-b962856c9d54&utm_source=democratandchronicle-Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_briefing&utm_term=list_article_thumb&utm_content=1070DC-E-NLETTER65

Schools responding to increasing student behavioral issues

Schools nationwide are citing the transition from remote to in-person learning for an uptick in disciplinary issues and even violence. Some schools are responding to the disciplinary problems by dispatching more staffers to patrol school grounds or by hiring more counselors. Others are reducing student suspensions and increasing counseling. Some districts have enacted what they call mental-health days, closing schools around holidays to give students and administrators a break. School psychologists across the country have seen roughly the same volume of mental-health complaints and behavioral issues in the first three months of the school year that used to occur in an entire year.

Ben Chapman. "Schools Confront a Wave of Student Misbehavior, Driven by Months of Remote Learning." *Wall Street Journal*.

December 9, 2021

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/schools-student-misbehavior-remote-learning-covid-11639061247>

Classes in the arts help students connect, cope

Students are facing added challenges this year as they transition back to the classroom. National Art Education Association President James Haywood Rolling Jr. explains that classes in the arts, including theater, music and dance, can help students make sense of their feelings while connecting with others.

Elizabeth Blair. "For kids grappling with the pandemic's traumas, art classes can be an oasis." *National Public Radio*. December 10, 2021

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/09/1061027655/arts-education-kids-teens-pandemic-stress-help>

Schools serving vulnerable students, hit hardest by pandemic, face difficult recovery

A report from McKinsey & Company demonstrates that schools are beginning an uneven COVID recovery process. The main constant of pandemic schooling has been that there is no constant. And those affected most were those with the least constants. Schools serving vulnerable students will have more difficult recoveries.

Sarah Schwartz. "The Pandemic Hit Vulnerable Students Hardest. Now, Schools Have to Reckon With the Effects." *Education Week*.

December 14, 2021

https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-pandemic-hit-vulnerable-students-hardest-now-schools-have-to-reckon-with-the-effects/2021/12?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64245021&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfa

Arts enhance awareness of injustice

Participation by youth in arts programming can enhance awareness of social injustice and increase engagement in social action, according to a new study. Past research suggests that arts programming contributes to improved awareness of social justice and engagement in social action by facilitating self-expression, social interaction and collaboration, and improving skills such as empathy, tolerance, and critical thinking. "This study is the first to explicitly link youth's participation in general arts programming—such as the drama club, the school choir, etc.—to growth in critical consciousness. The study appears in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

Jade McClain, New York University. "Arts programs boost student social injustice awareness." *Futurity*. December 13, 2021

<https://www.futurity.org/arts-programming-teens-social-injustice-awareness-2668732-2/>

Teachers divided on teaching LGBTQ topics

Educators say a dearth of curriculum, lack of training, and fear of getting it wrong cause hesitation to teach about LGBTQ topics. Roughly half of educators believe they should teach about LGBTQ topics, according to a recent poll. Surveys have found safety and academic benefits to LGBTQ youth inclusive curriculum is available.

Ileana Najarro. "Teachers Are Divided on Teaching LGBTQ Topics." *Education Week*. December 15, 2021
https://www.edweek.org/leadership/educators-divided-on-whether-schools-should-teach-about-lgbtq-topics-survey-finds/2021/12?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64248070&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

Commentary: Math, reading, and social skills should be taught together

Both reading and math are based on the same skill set, researchers say, so why not teach them in the same lessons?

Hailey Gibbs is a postdoctoral researcher at Temple University. Elias Blinkoff is a developmental-psychology graduate student at Temple University. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek is a professor of psychology at Temple University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Hailey Gibbs, Elias Blinkoff & Kathy Hirsh-Pasek "Time for Bin Busting: Teach Math, Reading, and Social Skills Together." *Education Week*. December 15, 2021

https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-time-for-bin-busting-teach-math-reading-and-social-skills-together/2021/12?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64248070&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Steps to minimize harassment of public officials

The National League of Cities recommends the following measures to protect civic leaders:

- Improve de-escalation training for police and security officers.
- Have local law enforcement or security present at council meetings and public city events.
- Consider making changes to meeting spaces to keep public officials and municipal staff safe.
- Following meetings, make sure that relevant stakeholders engage in conversations.
- Connect staff to mental health professionals and resources for individual treatment.
- Develop a social media guideline or code of conduct for public officials to limit the spread of vitriolic language online and combat the spread of misinformation.

For more information from the NLC report [click here](#).

Andre Claudio. "How Governments Can Minimize Harassment of Public Officials." *Route Fifty*. December 9, 2021

<https://www.route-fifty.com/public-safety/2021/12/how-governments-can-lesser-harassment-local-officials/187422/>

Commentary: The 30-year anti-teaching-profession effort

The author provides an overview of the 30-year effort to replace the teaching profession with corporate models. She follows the 'reform' effort from 1992 when President H. W. Bush and a group of Fortune 500 CEOs planned an industrial venture to 'save' schoolchildren. The report titled, "A small circle of friends: Bush's new American schools", didn't discuss saving public schools or teachers. The organization fell apart, but corporations with deep pockets still seek reforms that will provide them with profits. These efforts have undercut public education and the teaching profession, not to mention programs for children, and left communities feeling disengaged in their schools.

Nancy Bailey was a special education teacher for many years, and has a PhD in educational leadership from Florida State University.

"Driving Teachers Out! The Longtime Plan to End A Great Profession." *Nancy Bailey's Education Website*. December 2, 2021

<https://nancybailey.com/2021/12/02/driving-teachers-out-the-longtime-plan-to-end-a-great-profession/>

Zero tolerance rules tied to lower feelings of safety

Despite widespread criticism from education authorities, nearly 75% of surveyed teachers support the use of "zero tolerance" as an effective discipline practice. Teacher support was linked to higher rates of out-of-school suspensions as well as lower feelings of safety at school among both students and teachers, research finds.

Brian Consiglio, University of Missouri, and Dewey Cornell, University of Virginia. "Teacher support for 'zero tolerance' rules tied to lower feelings of safety." *Futurity* (originally published in *School Psychology Review*). December 9, 2021

<https://www.futurity.org/zero-tolerance-schools-teachers-students-2667462/>

SEL seen by some as a way to introduce Critical Race Theory

As K-12 schools expand social-emotional learning programs, many are experiencing political pushback.

Arianna Prothero & Evie Blad. "Schools Face Fears of 'Critical Race Theory' as They Scale Up Social-Emotional Learning." *Education Week*. December 13, 2021

https://www.edweek.org/leadership/schools-face-fears-of-critical-race-theory-as-they-scale-up-social-emotional-learning/2021/12?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64245021&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

One reason students don't finish college: Lack of transportation

The vast majority of U.S. college students, urban and rural, are commuters, many of whom struggle with getting to and from classes. Transportation can amount to 20% of the cost of college for commuters. Transportation poses barriers because of the cost, the bus routes, the routes not being in sync college schedules, and unreliability.

Transportation barriers disproportionately affect low-income students and Black, Hispanic, Native American and some Asian students. Some colleges fund transportation passes with student fees, while others are using federal pandemic relief dollars to cover the cost. Some community colleges bring the education closer to students.

Transportation solutions in rural areas don't usually involve public transit. Instead, some colleges have their own vans or offer emergency grants to help students cover the cost of car repairs.

Charlotte West. "A surprising reason keeping students from finishing college: A lack of transportation." *Hechinger Report*. December 10, 2021

[A surprising reason keeping students from finishing college: A lack of transportation](#)

Critical Race Theory discussions daunting for school board candidates

The politics surrounding critical race theory are intense and divisive. Trying to discuss the issue in a way that works with voters can be very difficult.

Andrew Ujifusa. "Critical Race Theory Fights Have Made Life Miserable for School Board Candidates." *Education Week*. December 14, 2021 https://www.edweek.org/leadership/critical-race-theory-fights-have-made-life-miserable-for-school-board-candidates/2021/12?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eu&M=64246041&U=252955&UIID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca

Pandemic leads to public meetings being more public

The pandemic forced governments to have all virtual gatherings. There are disadvantages, government leaders say, but a hybrid meeting model might be here to stay.

Katherine Barrett & Richard Greene. "A Pandemic Silver Lining: Public Meetings Have Become More Public." *Route Fifty*. December 14, 2021 <https://www.route-fifty.com/management/2021/12/public-meetings-have-become-more-public-thanks-covid-19/359759/>

District hires students to ease staffing shortages

Like school districts across the country, one district in Missouri has had too few custodians, food-service and childcare workers. The district has now hired students to fill those jobs.

Catherine Gewertz. "Hiring Students to Ease Staffing Shortages: One School District's Unorthodox Solution." *Education Week*. December 16, 2021 [Hiring Students to Ease Staffing Shortages: One School District's Unorthodox Solution](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/hiring-students-to-ease-staffing-shortages-one-school-districts-unorthodox-solution/2021/12?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eu&M=64246041&U=252955&UIID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca)

NEW YORK STATE

Students and legislators want to eliminate SUNY & CUNY tuition

Education advocates say they're optimistic about their long-standing demands for the state to revert SUNY & CUNY back to their tuition-free origins, thanks to proposals that will increase its budget.

David Cruz. "Advocates Demand State Legislature Return CUNY To Tuition-Free Roots." *Gothamist*. December 11., https://gothamist.com/news/advocates-demand-state-legislature-return-cuny-tuition-free-roots?utm_source=First%20Read%20Newsletters&utm_campaign=725f6ea93d-First_Read_121321&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-725f6ea93d-34743040&mc_cid=725f6ea93d&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Issues facing SUNY

Higher education stakeholders say the successor to SUNYex-Chancellor Jim Malatras will need to unify the 64-campus public university system while dealing with immediate challenges, as well as workforce development, enrollment decline and accessibility. Meanwhile the governor is planning an overhaul of the state system.

Rachel Silberstein. "After chancellor's fall, what's next for SUNY?" *Albany Times Union*. December 12, 2021 https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Reeling-from-scandal-SUNY-officials-plot-next-16691354.php?IPID=Times-Union-HP-CP-Spotlight&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=tu_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af

Regents eliminating edTPA

The NYS Board of Regents has begun the process of eliminating the controversial edTPA as a requirement for certification. The New York State United Teachers applauded the decision. There is no evidence that the test is weeding out people who would not be good teachers. It has had a disparate racial impact.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1221hed3.pdf>

"NYSUT applauds Regents for plan to eliminate edTPA requirements." *NYSUT*. December 13, 2021

https://www.nysut.org/news/2021/december/media-release-edtpa?fbclid=IwAR2mBRneLJb4Jn31JBNK0wwA1mOzUOzKf5b5naMRiJWZHx2dpzrKyTMhk8#_YberVEqYBjY_facebook

Regents propose \$2.1 billion increase in state aid to education

The Regents and SED are proposing more than \$1 billion in direct aid to schools, along with \$463.9 million to reimburse expenses for programs like building and transportation, special needs programs, and student access to technology. Officials also want \$66.8 million to boost programs like BOCES and social service aids, along with \$16.2 million to help "shrink the digital divide." The Regents proposal is non-binding, but gives direction to lawmakers and the governor when negotiating the state budget.

Nick Reisman. "Education officials back \$2.1B spending increase for New York schools." *Spectrum/Albany*. December 14, 2021

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/ny-state-of-politics/2021/12/14/education-officials-back--2-1b-spending-hike-for-new-york-schools>

Rochester's SED-appointed monitor also works for charter management organization

Shelley Jallow, the state-appointed academic and fiscal monitor for the Rochester City School District, has been serving as regional superintendent for a charter management organization in Connecticut and New York City since August. Jallow is an independent contractor in Rochester, assigned by the SED, and her contract does not prohibit her from doing other work. RSCSD leaders were unaware of her second job until December 15. In her updated academic plan last week, Jallow recommended the district create a charter school coordinator position to handle the logistics of transportation, finances and other areas where district and charter concerns overlap. Rochester board members pushed back on that idea, saying the district should be directing its efforts to out-perform charter schools.

Justin Murphy. "RCSd monitor has second job with NYC charter school group." *Democrat & Chronicle*. December 16, 2021

https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2021/12/16/shelley-jallow-rsdc-rochester-schools-monitor-has-second-job-with-nyc-charter-school-group/8919415002?utm_source=democratandchronicle-Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_briefing&utm_term=list_article_thumb&utm_content=1070DC-E-NLETTTER65