

# EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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## February 11, 2022 Education News Update

Happy upcoming winter break. Your ed news update will also take a break next week and return on February 25.

### TEACHING & LEARNING

#### Commentary: Educational equity requires coherence

Helping teachers and school staff understand how systemic marginalization happens and the degree of advocacy required to make changes can help create a more coherent path to equity in schools, argues the author who offers some actions schools and leaders can take toward "transformational change."

*Dwayne Chism is a university education dean and former K-12 administrator.*

Dwayne Chism. "Paving a Coherent Path to Equity." *ASCD Express*. February 1, 2022

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/paving-a-coherent-path-to-equity>

#### Some teachers applying Wordle to classroom lessons

Some educators say the popular online word game, Wordle, has applications in the classroom. This article highlights how teachers are using the word-guessing game to support lessons in language, reading and even math.

Marina Whiteleather & Hayley Hardison. "Teachers Are Obsessed With Wordle, Too. See How They're Using It at School." *Education Week*. February 04, 2022

[https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/half-of-americans-dont-think-schools-should-teach-about-racisms-impact-today/2022/02?utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=eu&M=64298540&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca](https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/half-of-americans-dont-think-schools-should-teach-about-racisms-impact-today/2022/02?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64298540&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca)

#### How to power up teachers' professional learning

Transformative teacher-led professional learning can help increase instructional equity, asserts the author, who shares how teachers can "power-up professional learning" in four design phases.

*Jill Harrison Berg is a leadership coach, school improvement consultant, researcher and writer.*

Jill Harrison Berg. "Planning Powerful Teacher-Led Professional Learning." *ASCD Inservice*. February 2, 2022

<https://www.ascd.org/blogs/planning-powerful-teacher-led-professional-learning>

#### Why parents say they've had enough

Pandemic fatigue is hitting Americans hard, particularly parents. They want to see their children happy, healthy, and in school, and are growing increasingly weary of "never-ending" COVID-19 restrictions.

Story Hinckley. "'Democrats woke a sleeping giant': Why parents say they've had enough." *Christian Science Monitor*. February 3, 2022

<https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2022/0203/Democrats-woke-a-sleeping-giant-Why-parents-say-they-ve-had-enough?cmpid=ema:mkt:20220208&src=highlight>

#### Teachers of color linked to SEL, academic gains for all students

Teachers of color tend to bring specific practices and mindsets into the classroom that benefit all students, a new study finds—the latest addition to [the body of research that](#) emphasizes the importance of recruiting and retaining these teachers, who make up just 21% of the workforce. These effects appear driven, at least in part, by culturally responsive teaching.

Madeline Will. "Teachers of Color Are Linked to Social-Emotional, Academic Gains for All Students." *Education Week*. February 8, 2022

[https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teachers-of-color-are-linked-to-social-emotional-academic-gains-for-all-students/2022/02?utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=eu&M=64300437&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca](https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teachers-of-color-are-linked-to-social-emotional-academic-gains-for-all-students/2022/02?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64300437&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca)

#### Commentary: Why STEM pros may not fix the STEM teacher shortage

Recruiting STEM professionals, who may not be invested in students' success, into K-12 teaching positions may be misguided, argues the author. Coaching teachers, focusing on differentiation and highlighting relationship-building skills are the route to better STEM teachers, she asserts.

Christine Schepeler. "STEM teacher shortage isn't a STEM problem." *Smart Brief/Education*. February 7, 2022

[https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/02/stem-teacher-shortage-isnt-a-stem-problem?utm\\_source=brief](https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/02/stem-teacher-shortage-isnt-a-stem-problem?utm_source=brief)

#### Need to rethink preK programs

Dale Farran has been studying early childhood education for half a century. A recent study of former pre-K students in Tennessee found that as the children aged, their problems in school worsened. A statewide public pre-K program, taught by licensed teachers, housed in public schools, had a measurable and significant *negative* effect on children. Looking at the reasons for later failure, researchers found that preK programs for urban/poorer students were different from those offered to more wealthy children.

Poorer children are drilled on basic skills. They are required to use worksheets for tracing letters and numbers. They are lectured to while they are expected to sit still and listen. Families of means tend to choose [play-based](#) preschool programs with art, movement, music and nature. Children are asked open-

ended questions, and they are listened to. Farran notes that forcing preK children to sit and be quiet does not help them to learn internal control; the practice can actually lead to discipline issues later in life. Reprimanding kids for doing normal kid stuff at 4 years old, even [suspending them](#), could backfire as children experience school as a place of unreasonable expectations.

Anya Kamenetz. "A top researcher says it's time to rethink our entire approach to preschool." *National Public Radio*. February 10, 2022  
<https://www.npr.org/2022/02/10/1079406041/researcher-says-rethink-prek-preschool-prekindergarten>

### **Potential solutions to STEM teacher shortage**

The US is facing a STEM teacher shortage, with more than half of school districts across the country reporting they struggle to recruit and retain qualified STEM teachers. The way we train and support teachers, particularly those of color and those who specifically want to work in underserved communities, is a big part of the problem. We have been trying to recruit teachers from STEM professions, where people can get much more competitive salaries and may not love children and educating them. Kids need teachers who understand their cultures, the climate of their communities, the human side of education. We need more practical training for teachers and a greater focus on learning what people who are good at building relationships with students are doing differently. We all come to the teaching profession with different strengths and weaknesses, but teacher training and coaching programs don't offer much differentiation. Building in that differentiation would allow us to take an asset-based approach to teacher training, focusing on the strengths each individual brings to the table and preparing them for the challenges they are most likely to confront. Ultimately, we should be taking the lessons from our STEM classrooms about the way students learn best and applying them to our teacher training programs.

Christine Schepeler. "STEM teacher shortage isn't a STEM problem." *Smart Brief/Education*. February 7, 2022  
<https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/02/stem-teacher-shortage-isnt-a-stem-problem>

## **FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL**

### **Half of Americans don't think schools should teach about racism's impact today**

The public is divided on whether schools have a responsibility to ensure that all students learn about the ongoing effects of slavery and racism, [a new national survey shows](#). The public is also divided about who should have a say in curriculum matters.

Madeline Will. "Half of Americans Don't Think Schools Should Teach About Racism's Impact Today." *Education Week*. February 07, 2022  
[https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/half-of-americans-dont-think-schools-should-teach-about-racisms-impact-today/2022/02?utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=eu&M=64298540&U=252955&UID=def579af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca](https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/half-of-americans-dont-think-schools-should-teach-about-racisms-impact-today/2022/02?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=64298540&U=252955&UID=def579af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca)

### **Federal Court supports mask mandates in school**

Based on an appeal by parents of students with disabilities, a Federal Appeals Court has supported mask mandates in school. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit (Iowa) ruled on January 25 that the Americans with Disabilities Act requires schools to impose universal masking rules where necessary to ensure students with disabilities have access to public school education. The decision comes in a case brought by several groups on behalf of The Arc of Iowa and 11 parents of children with disabilities.

Veronica Fowler, Press release: "FEDERAL APPEALS COURT DECISION ENSURES IOWA SCHOOLS CAN REQUIRE MASKING TO PROTECT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES." *ACLU of Iowa*. January 25, 2022.

<https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/federal-appeals-court-decision-ensures-iowa-schools-can-require-masking-protect>

### **37% of largest school districts report leadership turnover**

Thirty-seven percent of the 500 largest school districts in the US have experienced -- or are experiencing -- leadership changes, according to a report from the ILO Group. The report finds that the strain of the coronavirus pandemic has worsened school leadership turnover.

Kara Arundel. "Report: Pandemic to blame for rising district leader turnover." *K-12 Dive*. February 7, 2022

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/pandemic-to-blame-for-rising-turnover-rate-in-district-leaders/618403/>

### **Colleges rethink recruitment for education programs**

College education programs are trying new strategies to recruit and train teachers as the ongoing pandemic has worsened already lagging enrollment. One college has launched a program to pay stipends to student-teachers.

Rebecca Koenig. "What It Takes to Recruit Future Teachers During the Pandemic." *Ed Surge*. February 7, 2022

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2022-02-07-what-it-takes-to-recruit-future-teachers-during-the-pandemic>

### **Cyberinsurance premiums expected to rise for schools**

An increase in the number of cyberattacks is expected to mean higher cyberinsurance premiums for schools, such as a 334% increase this year reported by one district. Insurers are apt to demand detailed information about a school or district's network security before deciding what level of risk to accept, experts say.

Rystal Kuykendall. "Experts: Schools Will Have to Step It Up, Pay More to Get Cyberinsurance This Year." *T.H.E. Journal*. February 4, 2022

<https://thejournal.com/articles/2022/02/04/schools-are-facing-skyrocketing-cyberinsurance-premiums-this-year.aspx>

# NEW YORK STATE

## Staffing shortages acute in Monroe County

Teacher shortages were a problem in schools prior to the pandemic, and now they have only gotten worse. With so many school staff absences, districts are forced to find anyone they can to run a classroom on a day-to-day basis. President of Monroe County Council of School Superintendents, Bo Wright, notes that administrators, intervention specialists, paraprofessionals, and librarians are covering classes so students could remain in schools. However, teachers said that commitment to keeping schools open only has a positive effect if the right educators are in place to make their impact. Local school districts are trying new ways to keep staffing numbers up, such as Greece's offer of a \$200 bonus to staff members who don't call out sick.

Amal Elhelw. " 'We're hurting even more now': Staffing shortages plague Monroe County school districts." *WROC-TV8*. February 5, 2022  
[https://www.rochesterfirst.com/news/local-news/were-hurting-even-more-now-staffing-shortages-plague-monroe-county-school-districts/?hss\\_link=big-story\\_1\\_title\\_3&email=5d13409406fc309325210ec455be4940065cc236&utm\\_source=SalIthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=WROC%20Daily%20News%202022-02-06&utm\\_term=Daily%20News](https://www.rochesterfirst.com/news/local-news/were-hurting-even-more-now-staffing-shortages-plague-monroe-county-school-districts/?hss_link=big-story_1_title_3&email=5d13409406fc309325210ec455be4940065cc236&utm_source=SalIthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WROC%20Daily%20News%202022-02-06&utm_term=Daily%20News)

## Hochul: Vaccinating more kids may be key to dropping school mask mandates

The governor faces a February 21 expiration date to either extend or end the schools mandate. The decision will be based on data, she said, including vaccination levels, which are lagging among ages 5-11. She said on February 3 that if more children get vaccinated against COVID-19, it may speed up the timeline for dropping a statewide mandate for masks inside schools.

Bart Jones. "Vaccinating more kids may be key to dropping school mask mandates, Gov. Hochul says." *Newsday*. February 4, 2022  
[https://www.newsday.com/news/health/coronavirus/virus-updates-1.50499475?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Top-Stories&ctg=7f80daea0ff17e08169c7036e559bbf4b9e7b92a72c79686b9188cc63f596bd4&utm\\_term=non](https://www.newsday.com/news/health/coronavirus/virus-updates-1.50499475?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Top-Stories&ctg=7f80daea0ff17e08169c7036e559bbf4b9e7b92a72c79686b9188cc63f596bd4&utm_term=non)

## Advocates urging lawmakers to broaden NYS sex education to be more inclusive

Dozens of progressive advocacy groups this month are urging state lawmakers to approve a measure to broaden NYS's sex education to become more inclusive, with the goal of reducing sexual harassment and assault.

Nick Reisman. "New York lawmakers urged to pass 'comprehensive' sex ed policy." *State of Politics*. February 7, 2022  
[https://nystateofpolitics.com/state-of-politics/new-york/ny-state-of-politics/2022/02/07/new-york-lawmakers-urged-to-pass-comprehensive-sex-ed/?utm\\_source=First+Read+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=bbde03a889-First\\_Read\\_020722&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_252d27c7d1-bbde03a889-34743040&mc\\_cid=bbde03a889&mc\\_eid=bc2625d4e3](https://nystateofpolitics.com/state-of-politics/new-york/ny-state-of-politics/2022/02/07/new-york-lawmakers-urged-to-pass-comprehensive-sex-ed/?utm_source=First+Read+Newsletters&utm_campaign=bbde03a889-First_Read_020722&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_252d27c7d1-bbde03a889-34743040&mc_cid=bbde03a889&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3)

Stop the Shaming is part of a coalition of reproductive health, LGBTQ, sexual violence prevention and civil rights groups that wrote lawmakers and legislative leaders seeking a comprehensive sex education bill that would require schools to provide age-appropriate, scientifically accurate and LGBTQ-inclusive instruction in every grade.

Rachel Silberstein. "Advocates: New York overdue for comprehensive sex education standards." *Albany Times Union*. February 4, 2022  
[https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Advocates-New-York-overdue-for-comprehensive-sex-16832371.php?PID=Times-Union-HP.state-package&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=headlines&utm\\_campaign=tu\\_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af](https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Advocates-New-York-overdue-for-comprehensive-sex-16832371.php?PID=Times-Union-HP.state-package&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=tu_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af)

## Governor: Student tests after break will inform decision on school mask mandate

Removing the school mask mandate on March 7 is "a very strong possibility," Governor Hochul said on February 9, after announcing that COVID-19 test kits will be given to students so they can test twice in the first week after they return from the winter break later this month. Public school students statewide are scheduled to be on break the week of Monday, February 21, and are scheduled to return to school on February 28. After the break, parents are asked to test their children the day after they return to school, then three days later. By March 4, Hochul said, the results — along with metrics including positivity rates, case numbers and hospital admissions — will help inform her decision on whether to extend or drop the mask mandate for schools. Hochul faced a renewed round of pressure this week from those calling for an end to the mask mandate as neighboring states New Jersey and

Dandan Zou. "Student COVID tests after winter break will inform decision on school mask mandate, Hochul says." *Newsday*. February 9, 2022  
[https://www.newsday.com/long-island/education/school-mask-mandate-new-york-1.50504289?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=no-briefs-afternoon-update&ctg=7f80daea0ff17e08169c7036e559bbf4b9e7b92a72c79686b9188cc63f596bd4&utm\\_term=non](https://www.newsday.com/long-island/education/school-mask-mandate-new-york-1.50504289?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=no-briefs-afternoon-update&ctg=7f80daea0ff17e08169c7036e559bbf4b9e7b92a72c79686b9188cc63f596bd4&utm_term=non)