

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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March 11, 2022 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

Inclusive STEM classes help teens feel like they belong

Making classrooms feel inclusive can help promote STEM education and make students feel capable of working on STEM subjects outside of the classroom, a new study shows. "Belonging makes them more likely to feel like they can use STEM to tackle real-world problems."

Matt Shipman, North Carolina State. "INCLUSIVE STEM CLASSES HELP TEENS SEE THEY BELONG." *Futurity*. March 3, 2022
MARCH 3RD, 2022 POSTED BY **MATT SHIPMAN-NC STATE**
<https://www.futurity.org/stem-classrooms-inclusion-teenagers-2706302/>

Ways to help students to enjoy learning math

Students' math anxiety and skills gaps are common stressors that can affect learning and instruction, writes Ranjani Iyer, an educator, researcher and curriculum developer. Ranjani offers five tips to help motivate students to explore math concepts, including hands-on activities and experiential learning exercises. Students generally feel less anxious and more excited to explore concepts when they connect the math they're learning to real-life situations.

Ranjani Iyer. "5 Ways to Motivate Students to Learn Math Effectively." *Edutopia*. March 4, 2022
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/5-ways-motivate-students-learn-math-effectively>

Commentary: Special ed teachers need more support than ever

Of 86% of parents of students in special education who reported some degree of learning loss or regression last year, only 18% said their student was receiving extra help to catch up, a recent survey found. To help these and other students requiring additional support, more special-education teachers are needed, as well as measures to support existing teachers, such as improved working conditions and better compensation.

John McKenna is Associate Professor of Special Education, UMass Lowell.

John McKenna. "Students with disabilities are not getting help to address lost opportunities." *The Conversation*. March 3, 2022
<https://theconversation.com/students-with-disabilities-are-not-getting-help-to-address-lost-opportunities-177431>

How three principals are guiding recovery efforts

Three principals outline strategies they use to help their communities handle challenges related to the pandemic, race relations and other issues. One of the principals, who works in Virginia, describes the social justice advisory councils he organized to help students, staff and families have honest, productive discussions about race relations.

Matt Zalaznick. "A look at how 3 innovative principals are softening the pandemic's blows." *District Administration*. March 4, 2022
<https://districtadministration.com/how-3-innovative-principals-soften-pandemics-blows/>

Book banning battles reflect conflicts from 1980s

A scholar compares the debates over banning books from schools today to a similar clash of ideas that took place during the Reagan era.

Fred L. Pincus is an emeritus professor of sociology, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Fred L. Pincus, *The Conversation*. "Battles Over Book Bans Reflect Conflicts From the 1980s." *Route Fifty*. March 7, 2022
<https://www.route-fifty.com/public-safety/2022/03/battles-over-book-bans-reflect-conflicts-1980s/362833/>

Research debunks myth about teacher improvement

The assumption that teachers' skills plateau after three years is a myth; teachers can continue to improve through at least the 15th year, according to analyses from researchers with the Research Partnership for Professional Learning. Researcher John Papay says teachers must be gauged by an ability to handle student mistakes, ask questions and encourage engaged discussion, rather than just student test scores. The Research Partnership for Professional Learning, reports that teachers continue to improve, albeit at a slower rate, well into their mid careers. Just because inexperienced teachers are improving the fastest also doesn't mean that professional development should be targeted at them. Teachers late in their careers might be improving student outcomes in ways that test scores or observations cannot capture, such as inspiring students to go to college or to become scientists or artists.

Jill Barshay. "Debunking the myth that teachers stop improving after five years." *Hechinger Report*. March 7, 2022
<https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-debunking-the-myth-that-teachers-stop-improving-after-five-years/>

Teaching history focuses more on critical thinking

Instruction in history has shifted from memorizing names and dates to focusing more on student inquiry, critical thinking and using facts to support their arguments. Part of that shift has been to integrate more diverse topics and perspectives to prepare students to fully participate in society and to develop their own opinions and learn to respect the perspectives of others.

Cheyenne Mumphrey & Annie Ma. "Teachers reimagine US history lessons with eye on diversity." *Associated Press*. March 6, 2022
<https://apnews.com/article/entertainment-music-arts-and-entertainment-education-race-and-ethnicity-921fe6ba9e58e3f510efcd3084a7b006>

Studies: Pandemic leads to further declines in reading

Several recent studies reveal the toll the pandemic is taking on children's reading skills. The declines are affecting students in every demographic, and schools are working to boost literacy with tutoring and other supports, but some say their efforts are hampered by a shortage of trained educators. As the pandemic enters its third year, several new studies now show that about a third of children in the youngest grades are missing reading benchmarks, up significantly from before the pandemic. Children are behind, and teachers trained in phonics are in short supply.

Dana Goldstein. "It's 'Alarming': Children Are Severely Behind in Reading." *NY Times*. March 8, 2022
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/08/us/pandemic-schools-reading-crisis.html>

Math manipulatives engage deeper learning

Manipulatives, a crucial part of the concrete-representational-abstract model of math teaching, can help students of all ages learn new math concepts, state the authors. Concrete manipulatives offer different access to the same lesson for students with varying learning styles and help cement foundations to allow for deeper learning, they write.

Maeve Mihan & Carol Buckley. "Concrete manipulatives: Irreplaceable math tools for young learners." *Smart Brief/Education*. MARCH 9, 2022
https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/03/concrete-manipulatives-irreplaceable-math-tools-for-young-learners?utm_source=brief

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

How wealthy oligarchs control response to COVID

This article outlines the campaign to open schools and eliminate mask mandates, regardless of the risks. The campaign by right-wing business interests aimed to keep the country open for profit making. The very groups that had celebrated remote learning as an opportunity for public school alternatives began demanding that schools reopen, citing concerns about learning loss as well as student mental health. These interests pushed to reopen schools, then fought in-school safety measures, even as COVID case numbers rose and children were hospitalized. These groups have promoted questionable science and created wedges between parents, teachers, and administrators to get schools open. The tight labor market workers demanding more flexibility and better work-life balance. Companies were forced to respond by raising wages. These groups downplayed the risks of the virus and slammed teachers' unions for holding up the return to normalcy. As schools started reopening, these groups opposed in-school masking rules for students and teachers and encouraging grassroots groups seeking an end to mask rules.

Walter Bragman & Alex Kotch. "How Dark Money Shaped The School Safety Debate." *Daily Poster*. March 8, 2022
<https://www.dailyposter.com/how-dark-money-shaped-the-school-safety-debate/>

Study confirms value of masking during the pandemic

Mask requirements still offer one of the best tools to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks in schools, say new studies. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a new nationwide study published in *t Pediatrics*. In the *Pediatrics* study, researchers analyzed masking policies and infection rates in 61 districts involving more than 1.1 million students and adults in 9 states. Schools that required universal masking for adults and students saw 72% fewer secondary infections, in which students infected with COVID-19 in the community spread the virus to others in school, than did schools that had no or partial mask requirements. Once school size, vaccination rates, and other data were taken into account, schools with universal masking had nearly 90 % lower infection rates.

Sarah D. Sparks. "Mask Mandates Cut COVID-19 Spread in Schools, Studies Find." *Education Week*. March 09, 2022
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/mask-mandates-cut-covid-19-spread-in-schools-studies-find/2022/03>

Ed. Sec. Cardona: Education due for a reset

Education is closer to a reset than ever before, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said on March 9 during a keynote address. With few details, he said part of this shift must include providing more support for students and meeting the needs of teachers.

Emily Tate. "With Few Details But Big Ideas, Sec. Cardona Pushes Total Reimagining of Education." *Ed Surge*. March 9, 2022
<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2022-03-09-with-few-details-but-big-ideas-sec-cardona-pushes-total-reimagining-of-education>

NEW YORK STATE

Bill seeks to halt IDAs from waiving school taxes

Senator Sean Ryan, D-Buffalo, has introduced S.8395 to prevent town, city or county Industrial Development Agencies from waiving school taxes as a way of increasing school district revenues above and beyond the increases already proposed in the 2022-23 state budget. Ryan is critical of IDAs, which report to the state job creation and economic benefit information. He is critical of the lack of information legislators receive about the effectiveness of industrial development agencies. Rather than simply advocate for additional state aid, Ryan wants to see PILOT payments no longer include school taxes. NYS 'is experiencing a teacher shortage, and many schools lack the resources to attract and retain educators,' Ryan wrote in his legislative justification. 'State officials have estimated that NYS will need 180,000 new teachers in the next decade. This bill proposes a simple means of increasing funding to school districts. While the impact of IDAs remains largely unknown, we cannot overstate the importance of education and the impact of good teachers and a strong school district. Preventing IDAs from waiving school taxes will have a massive impact on our state's children, and the amount of money is negligible to the large, multi-national corporations that benefit from agreements with IDAs.'

John Whittaker, *Jamestown Post-Journal*. "Bill would bar IDAs from waiving school taxes." *Democrat & Chronicle*. March 7, 2022
<https://rochesterdemocrat-ny.newsmemory.com?selDate=20220307&goTo=A03&artid=1>

State legislature approves absentee voting in school elections

The Legislature voted on March 7 to allow voters to request an absentee ballot on the basis of pandemic concerns in school district elections this year, even as the latest strain of the coronavirus dwindles across the state. The state Senate version of the legislation was passed in January amid heightened concerns over the omicron variant. Around the same time, the Legislature agreed to a bill that would allow voters to request absentee ballots because of the pandemic during the general election; Gov. Kathy Hochul swiftly signed that measure. Assembly Democrats said a significant number of New Yorkers remain anxious about contracting the coronavirus at the polls.

Joshua Solomon. "Legislature agrees to extend coronavirus excuse for absentee ballot in school district elections." *Albany Times Union*. March 7, 2022
https://www.timesunion.com/state/article/Legislature-agrees-to-extend-coronavirus-excuse-16984527.php?IPID=Times-Union-HP-state-package&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=tu_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af

Advocates seek increase in preK funding

Governor Hochul's executive budget keeps pre-K funding flat at \$952 million. A coalition of lawmakers, advocates and school leaders is asking for an additional \$500 million to expand access to high-quality full-day pre-K to all children in the state, as well as \$240 million for preschool special education.

Rachel Silberstein. "Advocates: Funding for early pre-K in New York antiquated." *Albany Times Union*. March 9, 2022
https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Advocates-Funding-for-early-pre-K-antiquated-16986123.php?IPID=Times-Union-HP-CP-spotlight&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=tu_capitolconfidential&sid=5931844424c17c09a3f115af

SED proposes that private schools get options to show 'substantially equivalent' instruction

The state Education Department is proposing that private schools, including yeshivas, be allowed several options to show that their academic instruction is "substantially equivalent" to public schools, as required by state law. The regulations would allow Commissioner Rosa to investigate the noncompliance of private schools and, after giving them opportunities to comply, to sanction them, including with a loss of state aid.

Gary Stern. "NY state would allow private schools to use test scores, more to show academic equivalency." *Rockland/Westchester Journal News*. March 10, 2022
<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/education/2022/03/10/new-york-would-give-private-schools-yeshivas-options-show-equivalency/6987969001/>