

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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March 18, 2022 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

Student mental health days + or -

The stressors from the pandemic and school closures have led some states to allow students to take mental health absences to recharge, which several experts say encourages self-care habits and stresses the equal importance of physical and mental health. However, some experts question whether the practice keeps students from using on-site mental health resources or encourages school avoidance and absenteeism.

Kevin Mahnken. "More States Are Allowing Students to Take 'Mental Health Days.' But Could the Practice Backfire?" *The 74*. March 8, 2022 <https://www.the74million.org/article/more-states-are-allowing-students-to-take-mental-health-days-but-could-the-practice-backfire/>

Interventions to help improve student behavior

In this blog post, the author presents "Gentle Guidance Interventions" to help de-escalate challenging student behavior using five strategies.

Scott Ervin is a former school leader, consultant and founder of Ervin Educational Coaching.

Scott Ervin. "5 Ways to De-Escalate Challenging Student Behavior." *ASCD Inservice*. March 8, 2022

<https://www.ascd.org/blogs/5-ways-to-de-escalate-challenging-student-behavior>

Value to students of intrinsic rewards from teachers

Some teachers have tried using small rewards to help engage students who have returned to school after pandemic-related closures, but research shows that extrinsic rewards, if used, are most useful when unexpected. Intrinsic rewards that come from teachers' feedback are the best choice to use with students. The author explains how to turn feedback into a motivator in class.

Dr. Debbie Silver. "'What Do I Get If I Do It?' The Cost of Rewards." *Middle Web*. March 9, 2022

<https://www.middleweb.com/46745/what-do-i-get-if-i-do-it-the-cost-of-rewards/>

Value of community schools

The community schools model is the path to genuine educational reform, rather than 'reforms' such as privatization, "no-excuses discipline", or harsh pedagogy of control. By emphasizing communication and trust-building with the families they serve, they offer a solution for repairing the frayed relationship between parents and schools.

Jeff Bryant. "Community Schools Could Fix a Major Problem in Education." *The Progressive Magazine*. March 2, 2022

<https://progressive.org/public-schools-advocate/community-schools-could-fix-major-problem-education-bryant-220302/>

HS girls have aptitude for, but little interest in, STEM fields

A new study of [YouScience](https://www.youscience.com) aptitude assessments completed by 116,372 female HS juniors and seniors nationwide shows that female students had 10 times more aptitude than interest in careers in architecture and engineering, and nearly four times more aptitude than interest for careers in computers and mathematics. However, female students' aptitude scores for STEM careers "far outweighed their self-defined interest in them." In contrast, the same students had career preferences for which they had less aptitude. Providing students early career exposure in key industries and providing insights as to where their natural talents lie can help reduce or eliminate the country's talent shortage.

YouScience is a provider of aptitude assessments, personalized career guidance, and industry certifications.

Kristal Kuykendall. "YouScience Report: Female Juniors and Seniors Have Far More Aptitude Than Interest in STEM Fields." *T.H.E. Journal*. March 14, 2022

<https://thejournal.com/articles/2022/03/14/youscience-report-shows-vast-gap-between-stem-aptitude-and-interests-of-female-students.aspx>

How school leaders can support teachers

Teachers are facing rising rates of burnout and need meaningful support from school leaders. The authors share eight ways to offer support, including by asking teachers for input and integrating "wellness development" into professional development.

Sonny Thadani & Tara Karch. "Teachers are burned out. Here's how you can support them." *Smart Brief/Education*. March 16, 2022

https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/03/teachers-are-burned-out-heres-how-you-can-support-them?utm_source=brief

How to combine academics, activities for summer school

One Maryland school district is combining academics with dance, cooking, robotics and other activities as part of its summer school program, embedding each with literacy and math instruction. Along with catching up on math and literacy, students can build robots, learn dance and practice outdoor survival. Curriculum and Instruction Associate Superintendent Gary Willow says, "You can build literacy all around a fishing camp -- what's the best type of bait, what's the best type of hook, what's the best time to go fishing,"

Matt Zalaznick. "How districts can make summer school more like summer camp." *District Administration*. March 14, 2022
<https://districtadministration.com/schools-can-make-summer-school-more-like-summer-camp-unfinished-learning/>

How to de-escalate challenging student behavior

All students deserve to be included in their classrooms and treated with respect, especially students who have experienced high levels of trauma, who are likely to be the ones who "explode" in reaction to demands. The author offers five Gentle Guidance Interventions to positively redirect students without escalating poor student behavior.

Scott Ervin is the author of "The Classroom Behavior Manual."

Scott Ervin. "5 Ways to De-Escalate Challenging Student Behavior." *ASCD Inservice*. March 8, 2022
<https://www.ascd.org/blogs/5-ways-to-de-escalate-challenging-student-behavior>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Analysis: Teacher turnover stable, but stress still high

Teachers aren't quitting en masse, as had been predicted early in the pandemic, due in part to uncertainty about economic conditions and job prospects, according to an analysis of data from 19 large school districts and five states. Teacher-turnover rates were largely comparable to pre-pandemic years, but burnout remains a challenge.

Matt Barnum. "Uptick but no exodus: Despite stress, most teachers stay put." *Chalkbeat/The Associated Press*. March 9, 2022
<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/3/9/22967759/teacher-turnover-retention-pandemic-data>

Organized 'pro-parent' groups seek to affect elections

Many of those who have been disrupting local school board meetings not only do not have children enrolled in those schools, they don't have school-aged children. The closure of most public schools due to COVID frustrated many parents. Politicians on the right feel that being 'pro-parent' is a winning position, although barely 20% of households have school age children—and hope that the other 80% without children will be outraged by claims of indoctrinating children and vote to support rightwing goals.

John Merrow. "'Parents' Rights' & the War on Public Schools." *Network for Public Education*. March 10, 2022
<https://networkforpubliceducation.org/blog-content/john-merrow-parents-rights-the-war-on-public-schools/>

Opinion: Who is left behind when a school desegregates

School districts that actively desegregate their students are still an anomaly. Only about 59 districts in the country currently take significant action to do so. Almost all people say they believe public schools should reflect the racial and economic demographics of the surrounding population. For the most part, however, no people are willing to do much to accomplish this. The author uses an example of a California family and school district to highlight the difficulty of school integration in an environment ruled by scarcity and constant threat of defunding and closures.

Jay Caspian Kang. "Opinion: When a School Desegregates, Who Gets Left Behind?" *NY Times*. March 10, 2022

https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/10/opinion/school-desegregation-california.html?unlocked_article_code=AAAAAAAAAAAAACEIPuomT1JKdGj17Vw1eRCFTTMQmoxCdw_P1xfm3Wka3DODm8aIOMNAo6B_EGKqfFYnW3mjiW9JOKfCtBrzekANEVpSsevuJ2FkdIFPvAs48vVb18B4qjd_o-4CO4KS5wMvt-z7my-B6kb2TzW6PzXwnllp6eZBIIEEX623UL2q3DF6v43oYq2_YhDotoBmVPF8hPpAsh-P9ID0ucvIFwA7eFLGmVyd2M6LsAcxFOC0bFTx594WU74dBBpAHLfU1b5gKId3-JnWIE_J5vnpBpYxW4HSI71pLL0obCGo8awr04kad-RL27q5SwVKOy-q7U3A8smid-url-shar

10 teams take on challenge of boosting digital literacy

Educators face the increasingly important challenge of helping students identify what's fact-based and credible, and what's not. The office of educational technology at the U.S.E.D. has launched a program to find ways to improve digital literacy. Ten teams, including K-16 faculty members, are developing projects to improve students' skills to think critically about information found on the internet, as well as to promote civil discourse and combat online misinformation. Last fall, 10 teams were selected to participate. Teams earn \$500 for each milestone they complete in the design process, and they have a chance to win a minimum \$2,000 prize. Teams retain their intellectual property and grant the agency's office of ed tech a few select rights to reproduce and talk about the projects.

Jolie Radunich. "Digital Illiteracy Is a Rising Threat. A New Department of Education Program Seeks Solutions." *Education Week/Market Brief*.

March 11, 2022. <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/digital-illiteracy-rising-threat-new-department-education-program-seeks-solutions/>

NAEP might link its assessments to those used by school districts

The National Assessment Governing Board is considering proposals to link results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) with local and state tests and formative assessments to provide broader context and utility. Some school districts and educators are advocating for this change. Others caution that policymakers would need to consider the many differences across state assessments and their tolerance for imprecision in linking them.

Naaz Modan. "NAGB weighs linking NAEP with other assessments as COVID-19 fast-tracks innovation." *K-12 Dive*. March 4, 2022

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/nagb-weighs-linking-naep-with-other-assessments-as-covid-19-fast-tracks-inn/619837/>

Study: Child well-being declines in US

The mental and physical well-being of children declined between 2016 and 2020, according to a study by researchers at the US Health Resources and Services Administration. The researchers found greater physical inactivity, higher rates of depression and anxiety, more unmet health needs, and a 21% spike in children with behavior or conduct problems, alongside increased parental stress.

Evie Blad. "Are the Kids Alright? What New Federal Data Say About Child Well-Being." *Education Week*. March 14, 2022
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/are-the-kids-alright-what-new-federal-data-say-on-child-well-being/2022/03>

Report: Leadership on race needed in schools

The debate over critical race theory has highlighted the need for school leaders to make clear statements on race and curriculum. New research from the UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access, finds that strong district leadership on such issues can boost teachers' confidence when teaching these topics. The institute's report highlights the perspectives of teachers who say confusion damages morale and student learning. Districts can be proactive in supporting their teachers by communicating with concerned parents and school boards about what curricular policies state specifically, and why. This current study signals that without clear guidelines set forth by district leadership, "vocal minorities" can have outsized influence over administrative policies and instructional practice.

Noble Ingram. "How Leaders Can Create Clarity on Race and Curriculum." *Educational Leadership* magazine. March 10, 2022
<https://www.ascd.org/blogs/how-leaders-can-create-clarity-on-race-and-curriculum>

Commentary: Hypocrisy of 'parent choice' movement

Discussion of parental rights in education depend on *which* parents are involved. A prime example from Texas involves a bill targeting parents of transgender children: instead of *protecting* parents, the bill aims to *prosecute* them. The irony is not lost on students, teachers, librarians and parents. This restriction of parent rights reveals the hypocrisy of the fight and shows that the goal is to support the rights of only some parents, those who politicians hope will vote. These moves to limit parental and student rights have led to push back by new organizations seeking to protect schools and libraries.

Liz Willen. "A lesson in hypocrisy — what's really behind the 'parent choice' movement." *Hechinger Report*. March 15, 2022
<https://hechingerreport.org/column-a-lesson-in-hypocrisy-whats-really-behind-the-parent-choice-movement/>

Effects of the pandemic on learning worldwide

During the early days of the pandemic about 90% of students worldwide were not in the classroom, according to UNESCO. This article examines some early predictions about the effect of the pandemic on teaching and learning and whether they came to fruition two years later.

Anya Kamenetz. "Two years ago schools shut down around the world. These are the biggest impacts." *National Public Radio*. March 15, 2022
<https://www.npr.org/2022/03/15/1086054482/covid-school-shutdown-biggest-impacts>

U.S.E.D. receives \$76.4 billion in federal budget

The U.S.E.D. will receive \$76.4 billion under a spending package for fiscal year 2022 signed into law Tuesday by President Biden. This article includes highlights from the spending package, such as an increase in discretionary spending, and shows trends in spending since 2019 which indicate that a fiscal cliff remains likely.

Naaz Modan. "Fiscal 2022 K-12 spending explained in 6 charts." *K-12 Dive*. March 15, 2022
<https://www.k12dive.com/news/fiscal-2022-k-12-spending-explained-in-6-charts/620378/>

Commentary: Federal education budget disappoints

Although schools received large grants to get them through the pandemic, other big education budget promises evaporated. Private school choice programs still drain money from public schools that educate the vast majority of children. The scandal-scarred federal Charter Schools Program was once again funded at \$440 million. Charter school advocates in the Senate fought to keep supporting charters and also removed a provision banning the funding of for-profit charter companies. So, despite President Biden's promise to get rid of for-profit charters, they will continue. To prevent a federal government shutdown, the president approved a federal budget that funds K-12 public education far below his goal. On the plus side, the education budget increases the U.S.E.D.'s largest programs, such as Title I, IDEA Grants, Educator Professional Development and Support, School Safety and Student Health, and Mental Health Professionals in Schools, in particular. Full Service Community Schools will receive \$75 million, which is disappoints those who hoped to expand the federal investment in such schools which provide wraparound medical and social services for students and families as well as enriched after school and summer programs.

Jan Resseger. "Final FY 2022 Federal K-12 Education Budget Disappoints." *World Press*. March 15, 2022
<https://janresseger.wordpress.com/2022/03/15/final-fy-2022-federal-education-budget-disappoints/>

NEW YORK STATE

Board of Regents revamping regulations for private schools

Private schools, including Jewish yeshivas, may have to demonstrate they meet state academic requirements under revised regulations proposed by SED officials. The proposed regulations are intended to settle a dispute that arose after yeshiva alumni complained that they had not received enough secular instruction. The complaint led to debate over the state's authority to require nonpublic schools to provide instruction "substantially equivalent" to that found in public education. The requirement is embedded in an 1895 compulsory education law. Many Orthodox Jewish educators protest that the state is overstepping constitutional boundaries by trying to identify the sort of lessons yeshivas can provide. The revised plan offers multiple options for private schools to demonstrate "equivalence" such as recognition from Middle States or other accrediting agencies, or administration of state-sponsored tests to measure proficiency in English, math and other secular subjects. SED officials will post the draft regulations and accept public comments until May 30. Final regulations are expected to come before the Regents in the fall.

John Hildebrand. "Board of Regents revamping regulations for private schools, Jewish yeshivas." *Newsday*. March 14, 2022

https://www.newsday.com/long-island/education/board-of-regents-new-regulations-1.50536547#utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=non-subs-Morning-Update&lctg=7f80daea0ff17e08169c7036e559bbf4b9e7b92a72e79686b9188cc63f596bd4&utm_term=non