

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

Compiled by Judy Wadsworth, Alpha Alpha, for the Monroe County School Boards Association and shared by permission. Send comments to judithw@frontiernet.net

March 25, 2022 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

School opens shelter for families

A school in California established a family homeless shelter in its gymnasium, known as the Stay Over Program, available to families with a student enrolled in the San Francisco Unified School District. After some initial pushback, the public elementary school is believed to be the first in the country to open a shelter, and officials say it is improving academic outcomes for students.

Gail Cornwall. "A school created a homeless shelter in the gym and it paid off in the classroom." *Hechinger Report*. March 17, 2022
<https://hechingerreport.org/a-shelter-in-a-school-gym-for-students-experiencing-homelessness-paid-off-in-classrooms/>

Buddy program supports student inclusion

The LINKS program at a Michigan HS pairs students with disabilities and classmates in general education to boost inclusion and help students navigate social situations while also teaching compassion and empathy. Besides sitting together in the classroom, student pairs go on monthly outings.

Margaret Cahill. "Special education program at Okemos schools brings students together." *WSYM-TV* (Lansing, Mich.). March 15, 2022
<https://www.fox47news.com/neighborhoods/east-lansing-okemos/special-education-program-at-okemos-schools-brings-students-together>

Graphing exercises teach observation, reasoning

Fourth-grade students in one Michigan district are learning about geology and meteorology through graphing. The visual data presentations make it easier for them to note trends and patterns, such as where volcanoes tend to be located, and daily weather tracking -- using a weather station with barometers, thermometers and other tools funded by a grant -- is hoped to improve their reasoning skills.

Erin Albanese. "Weather? Volcanoes? Data unveil patterns in science." *School News Network* (Grand Rapids, Mich.). March 14, 2022
<https://www.schoolnewsnetwork.org/2022/03/14/weather-volcanoes-data-unveil-patterns-in-science/>

How one district is making gains with co-teaching

Adding co-teachers to K-6 classes has helped students gain foundational skills they missed during the pandemic and has spurred larger math and reading gains than in previous years in one urban Ohio district. Increasing one-on-one time led to the improvements which were supported by Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds.

Michael D. Clark. "Two-teacher approach in Hamilton City Schools classrooms is paying off, leaders say." *Journal-News* (Hamilton, Ohio). March 15, 2022
<https://www.journal-news.com/news/two-teacher-approach-in-hamilton-city-schools-classrooms-is-paying-off-leaders-say/CI55TM6VENHSZDHW67TXAH6O3M/>

Both personal finance, economics classes are beneficial

Forty-seven US states require schools to provide personal finance education in some form, while only 23 require a personal finance course for graduation. Stronger requirements are needed to ensure equitable personal finance lessons for students from lower-income households, says the president of the Council for Economic Education, who adds that school leaders and policymakers shouldn't forget the importance of a separate economics education.

Carmen Reinicke. "Personal finance education is gaining momentum but economics is falling by the wayside, study finds." *CNBC*. March 17, 2022
<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/17/personal-finance-education-is-gaining-momentum-across-the-us.html>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

The battle over content in schools is not new

The author outlines the history of attacks on public schools over the last century. In the 1920s, legislatures in 20 states considered 37 anti-evolution measures. A century later, the battle over public education is over the teaching of American history. Since 2020, 17 states have made efforts to expand the teaching of anti-racist history, while 36 states have made efforts to restrict that kind of instruction. Parents are harassing school boards and reporting on teachers, while teachers are exhausted by remote instruction, pandemic mandates, and witnessing, without being able to repair, the damage the pandemic has inflicted on students. The real fight isn't about history, but about political power...how the controversy can be used to win elections, and eliminate public education.

Jill Lepore is a historian at Harvard University.

Jill Lepore. "Why the School Wars Still Rage." *The New Yorker*. March 21, 2022

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/03/21/why-the-school-wars-still-rage?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=NY_Daily_Control_031522&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_medium=email&utm_term=ny_daily_recirc&bid=5be9de532ad9c72dc2a1b9a&cid=24457067&hash=ab3178722e644a5ea1b695f8d9dcd1b1&hashb=c2c3b8e1c179ce09742361143011b09229279347&hashc=65d8fff9f0e1f0b9f02ca0958e9bb2ce42ccc0fe1e3468226661b5d211a0b6&esrc=bonmxcx

Charter schools received unneeded \$ billions in pandemic funds

Craig Harris of *USA Today* wrote an expose of the money taken by charter schools from federal COVID funds. He writes that charter schools received at least a \$1 billion windfall during the pandemic, an unneeded cash infusion for most from a federal program intended to bail out struggling small businesses. More than 1,000 of the publicly funded but privately operated schools collected forgivable loans up to \$10 million after Congress created the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) in March 2020. That program was designed to save small businesses during the pandemic by helping them cover employee salaries and other costs. And charter schools, even though they continually received funding from taxes like traditional public schools, qualified for free money because they are considered a business. A *USA TODAY* investigation found 93% of the charter schools may not have needed the money. These schools also had access to federal COVID grants. The article questions why, if charter schools are “businesses,” how can they also be “public” and receive public funding.

“*USA Today: Charter Schools Collected \$1 Billion in COVID Funds They Did Not Need.*” *Diane Ravitch’s Blog*. March 20, 2022
<https://dianeravitch.net/2022/03/20/usa-today-charter-schools-collected-1-billion-in-covid-funds-they-did-not-need/>

Public schools a political battleground

The culture wars over schools have produced an unlikely coalition: populists on the right and affluent, educated white parents on the left.

Jennifer C. Berkshire and Jack Schneider. “If You Think Republicans Are Overplaying Schools, You Aren’t Paying Attention.” *NY Times*. March 21, 2022
https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/21/opinion/democrats-public-education-culture-wars.html?campaign_id=2&emc=edit_th_20220322&instance_id=56353&nl=todaysheadlines®i_id=18877907&segment_id=86175&user_id=dcf379af08119fa8d853cd6f688bfca

Mothers pushing for more electric school buses

Proponents of electric school buses just got a boost from Vice President Kamala Harris, after she announced the EPA would distribute \$17 million to convert diesel school buses to electric and low emission buses.

Jessica Kutz, *The 19th*. “There’s a Push to Get More Electric School Buses on the Streets—Moms Are Driving It.” *Route Fifty*. March 21, 2022
<https://www.route-fifty.com/tech-data/2022/03/theres-push-get-more-electric-school-buses-streets-moms-are-driving-it/363407/>

States consider allowing HS athlete endorsements

In a handful of states, HS athletes make endorsement deals with pizza parlors, apparel companies, smartphone apps, etc., cashing in on their status as star players. In much of the country, such deals would still cause students to forfeit their athletic eligibility, but the rules are changing. Eight state athletic associations now allow high schoolers to profit from their name, image and likeness, known as NIL. About a dozen states are considering similar changes.

Alex Brown, *Stateline*. “States Grapple With Allowing High School Athlete Endorsements.” *Route Fifty*. March 24, 2022
<https://www.route-fifty.com/finance/2022/03/states-grapple-allowing-high-school-athlete-endorsements/363404/>

Superintendent survey: Pay up, board relations good

At least 80% of school superintendents reported raises of up to 5% last year, with most leaders reporting earning salaries of between \$95,000 and \$149,000, a survey of almost 900 school leaders shows. The survey also finds that 60% of superintendents rated their relationships with the school board an “A,” while 30% gave it a “B.”

Matt Zalaznick. “Did superintendents get big raises during year 3 of COVID?” *District Administration*. March 22, 2022
<https://districtadministration.com/superintendents-get-big-salary-raises-during-covid-school-board-relations/>

NEW YORK STATE

NYS prepares for COVID-19 tests in schools

NYS plans to have more than 20 million COVID-19 tests ready for the opening of the new school year, said Governor Hochul. The tests will be an early-warning system for any increase in COVID-19 infections, Hochul said. Nick Reisman. “Hochul: New York stockpiling COVID-19 tests for schools.” *NY 1 TV (NYC)*. March 17, 2022

<https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/ny-state-of-politics/2022/03/17/hochul--new-york-stockpiling-covid-tests-for-schools>