

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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April 21, 2023 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

K-12 schools tap AR, VR in CTE courses

Some K-12 career and technical education classes in schools across the US are using immersive technologies, which allow students to participate in realistic simulations of work that they would do in certain careers, bridging the gap between classroom and hands-on experience. Rachael Mann, a former board member of the Association for Career and Technical Education and current CTE director in a private school in Pennsylvania, says AR (artificial reality) and VR (virtual reality) can do things that are impossible in real life and can help engage in public safety exercises. Erika Gimbel. "K-12 Schools Use Mixed and Virtual Reality to Immerse Students in Future Careers." *Ed Tech*. April 13, 2023
[K-12 Schools Use Mixed and Virtual Reality to Immerse Students in Future Careers | EdTech Magazine](#)

Framework helps schools support student mental health

The AASA, The School Superintendents Association, and The Jed Foundation launched The District Comprehensive Approach -- a framework to help school districts support students' mental health. The framework provides best practices, expert support, and data-driven guidance about how to best support students' mental health and prevent suicide. At the HS level the guidance focuses on seven themes, including life skills, social
If you or anyone you know is struggling with thoughts of self-harm or suicide, help is available. **Call or text 988** to reach the confidential National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or check out these [resources from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#). Caitlynn Peetz. "A District Playbook to Address Students' Growing Mental Health Needs." *Education Week*. April 10, 2023
[A District Playbook to Address Students' Growing Mental Health Needs \(edweek.org\)](#)

Study seeks ways to expand advanced course enrollment

There are several strategies schools can adopt to encourage students to take advanced courses (honors, Advanced Placement and dual enrollment), according to college-readiness research at the University of Delaware. Researchers say simple encouragement is one of the most effective supports, including at some schools that allow a trial period for students to test out advanced classes, which can lead more students to take the opportunity. Sarah D. Sparks. "How to Get Students to Take Advanced Courses Sooner: Strategies for Schools." *Education Week*. April 13, 2023
[How to Get Students to Take Advanced Courses Sooner: Strategies for Schools \(edweek.org\)](#)

How principals can ease teachers' stress

School principals can do a lot to help teachers cope with the stresses of their job, according to researchers who presented at the American Educational Research Association conference. Researchers said principals can support teachers by listening to them, nurturing a climate of self-care and adopting a trauma-informed approach. Sarah D. Sparks. "What School Leaders Can Do to Ease Teacher Stress." *Education Week*. April 17, 2023
[What School Leaders Can Do to Ease Teacher Stress \(edweek.org\)](#)

Letting students co-lead schools helps learning

When three HS juniors were invited to a staff leadership retreat this year, they proposed ways of giving other students a greater sense of belonging. It's just one example of how listening to students also encourages deeper learning and improves academic performance. Here are five major ways to empower students with co-leadership. Beth Fertig. "Why Letting Students Co-Lead High Schools with Adults Is Critical." *The 74 Million*. April 19, 2023
[Why Letting Students Co-Lead High Schools with Adults Is Critical -- The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Taking notes more effective than photographing slides

New research has found that students who take notes outperform students who photograph slides during an online lecture. Note-takers remembered more information from the lectures than photo-takers or no-note-takers, and photo-takers performed just as poorly on the test as their peers who didn't take any notes at all. Erik Ofgang. "Taking Notes vs. Photographing Slides." *Tech & Learning*. April 18, 2023
[Taking Notes vs. Photographing Slides | Tech & Learning \(techlearning.com\)](#)

Carnegie Foundation plans overhaul of "Carnegie Unit"

Influential institutions are seeking to bring competency-based education to HS and college. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching -- the organization that developed the "Carnegie Unit," a time measurement used in degree programs -- plans to shift to a focus on skills, rather than seat time. The Foundation will

collaborate with the Educational Testing Service on the new approach to assessing learning, which will consider that learning takes place outside of school too.

Rebecca Koenig. "What If We Measured Learning Through Skills Gained, Not Time Spent in the Classroom?" *Ed Surge*. April 18, 2023
[What If We Measured Learning Through Skills Gained, Not Time Spent in the Classroom? | EdSurge News](#)

Survey: Math curricula needs a relevancy overhaul

Teachers and parents believe math instruction needs reinvention, to focus on engaging lessons that borrow from real-world scenarios, according to a survey for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Respondents said those changes, as well as a problem-solving approach, could improve student outcomes and interest in STEM fields.

Kayla Jimenez. "Most Americans are unhappy with the math taught in classrooms, new survey shows." *USA TODAY*. April 17, 2023
[Families are unsatisfied with the way the US teaches math \(usatoday.com\)](#)

Oklahoma college leads math recovery pilot program

Researchers recommend high-dosage tutoring as a powerful intervention for struggling learners. Yet many schools have difficulty establishing in-house tutoring, given the strain on finances and staff. Now in its second pilot year, a program at the University of Oklahoma has homed in on a local solution: partnering colleges with surrounding K-12 schools. Of the ninth-graders working with university tutors, 42% more than doubled the average expected growth on the NWEA MAP math test.

Marianna McMurdock. "In Oklahoma, Squad of College Students Lead Math Recovery." *The 74 Million*. April 19, 2023
[In Oklahoma, Squad of College Students Lead Math Recovery – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

New way to measure learning

Influential institutions are throwing their weight behind the idea of competency-based education in HS and college, arguing that what really matters are the skills students gain, not the time they spend studying. The article looks at what it might take to set aside desk time when measuring learning, and who might benefit.

Rebecca Koenig. "What If We Measured Learning Through Skills Gained, Not Time Spent in the Classroom?" *Ed Surge News*. April 18, 2023
[What If We Measured Learning Through Skills Gained, Not Time Spent in the Classroom? | EdSurge News](#)

Ed tech remains risky

Ed tech has become inseparable from the education system. But K-12 school districts are not prepared to handle the privacy and security risks that these tools bring, according to an expansive new study.

Daniel Mollenkamp. "Student Privacy Is at More Risk Than Ever Before. Can K-12 Schools Keep It Safe?" *Ed Surge News*. April 17, 2023
[Student Privacy Is at More Risk Than Ever Before. Can K-12 Schools Keep It Safe? | EdSurge News](#)

Many 3rd graders not reading well

Many American third graders aren't reading well, presenting an urgent problem. They were kindergarteners when the pandemic first hit, and some missed most of first grade, the foundational year for learning to read.

Bianca Vazquez Toness. "'Too much to learn': Schools race to catch up kids' reading." *Associated Press*. April 19, 2023
[Schools race to teach reading to third graders disrupted by pandemic | AP News](#)

New edtech tool promises to make student data anonymous

Global Grid for Learning is claiming a breakthrough in the edtech field with a solution that allows sharing of data while protecting students' privacy by anonymizing personal information. School Passport 2.0 was developed in response to a severe upturn in ransomware incidents involving educational institutions.

Kristal Kuykendall. "School Passport 2.0 Puts Schools In Control of Data, 'Seamlessly Anonymizes' PII Shared with Ed Tech." *T.H.E. Journal*. April 18, 2023.
[School Passport 2.0 Puts Schools In Control of Data, 'Seamlessly Anonymizes' PII Shared with Ed Tech -- THE Journal](#)

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Despite crisis, states and districts slow to spend \$1 billion in mental health funds

Nearly a year ago, following the shooting at a Texas ES, President Biden signed a bipartisan gun safety law that provided \$1 billion to states for school-based mental health services. But most states haven't even begun considering applications and distributing the money. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said he wants the funds "drawn down quicker," while some experts are calling for more permanent sources of financial support.

Linda Jacobson. "Despite 'Crisis,' States and Districts Slow to Spend \$1B in Mental Health Funds." *The 74 Million*. April 15, 2023
[Despite 'Crisis,' States and Districts Slow to Spend \\$1B in Mental Health Funds – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

"Swatting" calls continue to target schools

Hundreds of schools nationwide have been targeted for nearly a year by so-called "swatting" -- fake reports of a school shooting or bomb threats that prompt heavy police responses and panic. The hoax calls, being investigated by the FBI, have in some cases also included deliberate misinformation campaigns on social media, with users purporting to have video footage and information from the scene.

Jenna McLaughlin. "What could make a hoax call reporting a school shooting worse? Social media." *National Public Radio*. April 14, 2023
[What could make a hoax call reporting a school shooting worse? Social media : NPR](#)

Districts face challenges tracking school technology

School districts in NYC did not properly keep track of 22% of district-owned IT devices -- worth about \$280,000 -- according to a recent report from the NYS Comptroller that conducted an audit of July 1, 2019, to March 31, 2022. Other districts have faced similar issues, with one director of technology in Virginia, saying the district has not "come up with a way to validate continuously that the students have the devices we gave them." Lauraine Langreo. "Why Schools Struggle to Keep Track of Students' Laptops." *Education Week*. April 17, 2023 [Why Schools Struggle to Keep Track of Students' Laptops \(edweek.org\)](https://www.edweek.org/technology/why-schools-struggle-to-keep-track-of-students-laptops/2023/04/17)

Report: Student privacy consistently falls short

Websites and services routinely used by schools might encroach on students' privacy, and those schools usually aren't capable of confronting the problem head-on, according to researchers at New York University and the University of Chicago. Privacy standards set by states have been helpful to schools lacking resources to investigate. Daniel Mollenkamp. "Student Privacy Is at More Risk Than Ever Before. Can K-12 Schools Keep It Safe?" *Ed Surge News*. April 17, 2023 [Student Privacy Is at More Risk Than Ever Before. Can K-12 Schools Keep It Safe? | EdSurge News](https://www.edsurgenews.com/student-privacy-is-at-more-risk-than-ever-before-can-k-12-schools-keep-it-safe/)

School meal debt exposes need for universal access

Nearly 850 school districts have accrued \$19.2 million in school meal debt, the School Nutrition Association reports. In this interview, Crystal FitzSimons from the Food Research and Action Center, shares how the end of universal school meals adopted during the coronavirus pandemic affected school districts, students and families. Ali Rogin & Kaisha Young. "Schools, families feel the pinch after end of federal free meal program." *Public Broadcasting System*. April 16, 2023 [Schools, families feel the pinch after end of federal free meal program | PBS News Weekend](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/schools-families-feel-the-pinch-after-end-of-federal-free-meal-program/)

Trade programs, unlike other areas of higher ed, are in big demand

While almost every sector of higher education is seeing fewer students registering for classes, many trade school programs are booming. Students seeking certificates and other short-term credentials, not associate degrees, are part of that upswing. Many young people choose to pursue short-term credentials over traditional college because they see them as a quicker and a more affordable path to a good job. Mechanic and repair trade programs saw an enrollment increase of 11.5% from spring 2021 to 2022. Enrollment in construction trades courses increased by 19.3%, while culinary program enrollment increased 12.7%. Meanwhile, enrollment at public two-year colleges declined 7.8%, and enrollment at public four-year institutions dropped by 3.4%. Olivia Sanchez. "Trade programs — unlike other areas of higher education — are in hot demand" *Hechinger Report*. April 17, 2023 [Why many students are choosing trade school programs \(hechingerreport.org\)](https://www.hechingerreport.org/why-many-students-are-choosing-trade-school-programs/)

Report: Expansion of Federal Facilities Funding for Public School Equity

State and local governments invest in the infrastructure of almost 100,000 schools across the U.S. It is now recognized that expanded federal funding will be needed to address shortfalls and inequities. The Urban Institute recently released *Assessing the National Landscape of Capital Expenditures for Public School Districts*, which analyzes equity patterns of school capital investment. Confirming other studies, the report finds that school district capital expenditures vary from year to year and from state to state, that each state has its own approach and policies governing state support for local capital outlay, and that capital outlay is rarely equal or progressive. The report also finds that states with policies to equalize capital spending are more likely to provide capital outlays for students from low-income backgrounds that are equal to or greater than outlays in wealthier communities. These findings are all well-supported, and the report's recommendations, including increasing funding, accounting for student economic need, and continuing assessment of building quality, provide useful insights for state and federal policy that will promote more progressive capital spending.

Find *Assessing the National Landscape of Capital Expenditures for Public School Districts*, written by Kristin Blagg, Fanny Terrones, and Victoria Nelson at <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/assessing-national-landscape-capital-expenditures-public-school-districts>. "Solid Report Examines Expansion of Federal Facilities Funding for Public School Equity." *National Education Policy Center* (U.Colorado/Boulder). April 20, 2023 <https://www.icontact-archive.com/archive?c=1748247&f=3100&s=3172&m=288088&t=683ff6e55fceb8d669aa5ea6b8253ac84d14528c98c4873195440427f0ff88d5>

Education Dept. outlines options for school safety funds

A U.S.E.D. document finalized in April notes that metal detectors, active shooter drills and student threat assessments all can be paid for with money made possible in last year's Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. School-based police officers, surveillance cameras and emergency plans also are covered. Micah Ward. "4 federally approved ways to use funds for school security." *District Administration*. April 18, 2023 [4 federally-approved ways to use funds for school security \(districtadministration.com\)](https://www.districtadministration.com/news/4-federally-approved-ways-to-use-funds-for-school-security/)

Commentary: The state of education 40 years after "A Nation at Risk"

The release of "A Nation at Risk" in April 1983 marked a pivotal point in American education. The report lamented that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." The report ushered in four decades of reforms at the state and federal levels—No Child Left Behind, the Race to the Top, and major state initiatives. The results are mixed. Education outcomes have improved, but progress has slowed or reversed in the past decade. Students from all racial,

ethnic and socioeconomic groups have made achievement gains and gaps have narrowed since the 1970s, yet low levels of achievement and achievement gaps remain. The nation has also made tremendous progress in outcomes beyond academic tests, such as decreasing dropout rate. The reforms did not address the root causes of the problems—poverty and other factors outside of school, as well as highly decentralized educational systems that thwart meaningful school improvement. The political coalitions that brought reform have fallen apart now that Americans are more polarized. Red state reform will likely emphasize school choice and a back-to-basics curriculum focused on reading, math and avoiding controversial topics. Blue state reform will likely emphasize whole-child supports like mental health, social-emotional learning and curriculum that reflects the culture of the nation’s increasingly diverse student body. National leaders should continue to improve educational opportunity and performance for America’s children because of the benefits it would provide to the students and the nation. But 40 years after the report, policymakers don’t seem to have learned the lesson that schools alone won’t solve the nation’s educational problems. And if that’s true, the nation remains at risk.

Morgan Polikoff. “40 Years Ago ‘A Nation at Risk’ Flagged a ‘Rising Tide of Mediocrity’ in Schools.” *The 74 Million*. April 20, 2023
[40 Years Ago ‘A Nation at Risk’ Flagged a ‘Rising Tide of Mediocrity’ in Schools – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Bill Gates turns to math education

Bill Gates may wield more influence over U.S. schools than any other figure. In the past 20 years, his massive philanthropic efforts have promoted small schools, fueled the spread of the Common Core standards, and supported experimentation in teacher evaluations—all of which were controversial. Now, his foundation is making a billion-dollar commitment to ‘revive’ math learning.

Kevin Mahnen. “‘U.S. Education Is a Challenged Space’: Bill Gates Talks Learning Recovery, AI and His Big Bet on Math.” *The 74 Million*. April 20, 2023
[‘U.S. Education Is a Challenged Space’: In Exclusive 74 Interview, Bill Gates Talks Learning Recovery, AI and His Big Bet on Math – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Commentary: Vouchers hurt students

In recent months, state legislatures across the country have broadened efforts to subsidize private school tuition with taxpayer dollars. As an *analyst* who has studied these and other forms of school choice for nearly two decades, the author argues that voucher programs are unambiguously negative in effect. Those students who benefit are existing private school students. For students who do transfer from public schools via vouchers, the academic results in the recent scaled-up statewide voucher programs are catastrophic, showing some of the largest test score drops ever seen in the research record. That’s on par with what the pandemic did to test scores, and larger than Hurricane Katrina’s impacts on academics in New Orleans. Elite private schools with strong academics and large endowments often decline to participate in voucher plans. Instead, the typical voucher school is a financially distressed, sub-prime private provider using a tax bailout to stay open a few extra years. For most students, using a voucher is a temporary choice to begin with. Roughly 20% of students leave voucher programs each year, either because they give up the payment or because schools push them out. Plus, private schools can decline to admit children for any reason, and rarely enroll children with special academic needs. Special education children tend to need more resources than vouchers provide, which can be a problem in public schools too. When we look at all the challenges to accessing education with these programs it’s clear that actually winning admission to a particular private school is not about parental school choice. It’s the school’s choice. That is what research on school vouchers tells us. Vouchers are largely tax subsidies for existing private school families, and a tax bailout for struggling private schools. They have harmful test score impacts that persist for years, and they’re a revolving door of school enrollment. They’re public funds that support a financially desperate group of private schools, including some with active discriminatory admissions in place. And *public support* for these programs is tenuous at best, highly dependent on state contexts.

Joshua Cowen is Professor of Education Policy at Michigan State University.

Joshua Cohen. “How School Voucher Programs Hurt Students.” *TIME Magazine*. April 19, 2023

[How School Voucher Programs Hurt Students | Time](#)

NEW YORK STATE

ACT, SAT test scores no longer required to apply to SUNY schools

SUNY will no longer require standardized testing for admissions to its 64 undergraduate programs at its 64 schools. SUNY has said that it will continue the test-optional guidelines that were first introduced during the height of the pandemic. Students will still be able to submit their scores if available, but it will no longer be a requirement. SUNY also sighted research from the Rockefeller Institute of Government that found that colleges across the country are moving towards making the pandemic-era policy permanent. SUNY also mentioned that fewer NYS HS students are taking the SAT, especially among historically underrepresented groups. SUNY noted that since giving students the option to submit standardized test scores, the retention rate gap between test-takers and non-test takers has remained the same or in some cases, shrunk.

Adeja Shivonne. “SUNY drops SAT, ACT admission requirement.” *Fox 5 News (NYC)*. April 15, 2023

[SUNY drops SAT, ACT admission requirement \(fox5ny.com\)](#)

Board of Regents officially bans use of indigenous mascots at all NYS public schools

On April 18, the NYS Board of Regents unanimously voted without discussion to ban mascots that use names and images of indigenous people. The proposal was announced by the NYSED in November, and officials have been urging school boards to change mascot images and names ever since. Some districts have already made the change. Kathleen Moore. "New York Board of Regents officially bans mascots related to Indigenous people." *Albany Times Union*. April 18, 2023 [New York officially bans Indigenous school mascots \(timesunion.com\)](https://www.timesunion.com/news/story/new-york-officially-bans-indigenous-school-mascots/2023/04/18/)

New bill would cap NY charter school grade offerings

New legislation would bar New York's charter schools from expanding their grade offerings as a budget fight between Hochul and the Legislature continues over charters. The new legislation would bar New York's charter schools from expanding their grade offerings. Just 460 charters are allowed statewide, but they can add new grade levels as students grow older — a loophole their opponents in the Legislature want to close. The timing of the bill's introduction in the Assembly is notable since Hochul and legislative leaders are locked in budget talks with the governor holding out for concessions on charters. The intensity of the renewed anti-charter offensive has made an impression on some legislators. But supporters are holding out hope that Hochul might somehow secure at least some charter gains for NYC.

Zach Williams. "New bill would cap NY charter school grade offerings as Albany budget fight rages." *NY Post*. April 20, 2023 [New bill would cap charter school grades as Albany budget fight rages \(nypost.com\)](https://nypost.com/2023/04/20/new-bill-would-cap-charter-school-grades-as-albany-budget-fight-rages/)