

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

May 19, 2023 Education News Update

Since next Friday begins the Memorial Day weekend, the next issue of Education News will be published on June 2. Enjoy the holiday!

TEACHING & LEARNING

Commentary: Adversity in Early Childhood Can Impair Brain Development

Adverse early childhood experience leaves persisting traces in brain structure, highlighting the importance of preventive measures for healthy brain development.

Cordula Hölig, Brigitte Röder, Ramesh Kekunnaya. "Adversity in early childhood can impair brain development." *Scientific American*. May 12, 2023

[Adversity in Early Childhood Can Impair Brain Development - Scientific American](#)

Education groups launch Teach AI partnership

The education partnership TeachAI has formed to help develop guidelines, resources, and tools for using AI in education, as well as recommendations for professional development and more. The partnership includes the World Economic Forum, National Association of State Boards of Education, National School Boards Association, Code.org, Educational Testing Service, Khan Academy, and ISTE.

Jeffrey R. Young. "Educators Team Up to Respond to Sudden Rise of ChatGPT." *Ed Surge News*. May 11, 2023

[Educators Team Up to Respond to Sudden Rise of ChatGPT | EdSurge News](#)

How principals can ease teacher stress

Recent studies show that principals can adopt five key practices to ease stress for classroom teachers by: providing sufficient resources, listening, promoting self-care, and giving teachers opportunities to support one another.

Sarah D. Sparks & Debra Viadero. "5 Ways Principals Can De-Stress Teachers' Work Lives." *Education Week*. May 11, 2023

[5 Ways Principals Can De-Stress Teachers' Work Lives \(edweek.org\)](#)

Survey: School leaders say tech supports DEI efforts

Technology can help students grasp complex issues and strengthen social and emotional learning, according to a survey of school and district leaders. In particular, those surveyed believe technology can help students and teachers understand diversity, equity and inclusion.

Alexandria Ng. "Technology Seen as a Bridge to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." *Education Week/Market Brief*. May 11, 2023

[Technology Seen as a Bridge to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Market Brief \(edweek.org\)](#)

School librarian: Use audiobooks in reading instruction

Quality audiobook are among the most effective tools in her "librarian toolbox" writes a PK-6 librarian. She writes that audiobooks can help students navigate texts they cannot yet "decode" on their own and support more independent reading. Audiobooks allow students to enjoy books above their reading level, introducing them to engaging stories that will hook them for life.

Kimberly Rues. "How Audiobooks Help Emerging Readers and Inspire a Love of Books." *Edutopia*. May 11, 2023

[How Audiobooks Help Emerging Readers and Inspire a Love of Books | Edutopia](#)

Advancing social justice learning via data literacy

Students need "critical data literacy" skills to help make sense of the multitude of information available to them, especially as it relates to high-stakes issues of social justice. This article discusses two curriculum modules—one on income equality, one on immigration—that help students learn to analyze data in order to shed light on complex social issues and evaluate claims about those issues.

Josephine Louie, et alia. "Advancing Social Justice Learning Through Data Literacy." *ASCD Education Leadership*. May 1, 2023

[Advancing Social Justice Learning Through Data Literacy \(ascd.org\)](#)

District supports students with live translation devices

A Texas school district is using live translation devices to support non-English speaking students. The earbuds and connecting software offer translation services in 90 languages.

Kristine Guevara. "Whitehouse ISD to use live translation earpieces to communicate with non-English speakers." *KLTV* (Tyler, TX).

May 8, 2023

[Whitehouse ISD to use live translation earpieces to communicate with non-English speakers \(kltv.com\)](#)

AAPI history has increasing role in more US schools

US teachers are incorporating more Asian American and Pacific Islander history into their classrooms as the movement to acknowledge the contributions of AAPI people has prompted more inclusion as well as mandates in states including Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey and Rhode Island. The Illinois chapter of Asian Americans Advancing Justice has organized curricular resources to use with students, such as teaching kindergartners about AAPI holidays and teaching fourth-graders the history of Larry Itliong, the Filipino American labor organizer. Jennifer Liu. "The movement to teach AAPI history in public schools is growing—here's the impact, from educators to students." *CNBC*. May 11, 2023 [The movement to teach AAPI history in public schools is growing—here's the impact \(cnbc.com\)](#)

AI can help teachers engage with students

Artificial intelligence can help improve the way teachers engage with their students, providing feedback on their interactions in class, new research shows. The study in the journal *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* found that the automated feedback tool improved instructors' use of a practice known as uptake, where teachers acknowledge, reiterate, and build on students' contributions. The findings also provided evidence that, among students, the tool improved their rate of completing assignments and their overall satisfaction with the course. The tool offers a low-cost complement to conventional classroom observation—one that doesn't require an instructional coach or other expert to watch the teacher in action and compile a set of recommendations. The tool was not designed for surveillance or evaluation purposes, but to support teachers by helping them to reflect on their practices. AI provides information for its users' own benefit. The tool also was not designed to replace human feedback but to complement other professional development resources.

Carrie Spector, Stanford University. "Artificial intelligence could improve how teachers engage with students." *Futurity*. May 15, 2023 [Artificial intelligence could improve how teachers engage with students - Futurity](#)

Getting results: Letting students help run their high schools

Involving students in major school decisions improves their HS learning environment and academic performance. When three high school juniors were invited to a staff leadership retreat at their Washington, D.C., school 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. This recent feature suggests five ways schools can empower students with co-leadership.

Beth Fertig. "Taking the Lead: What Happens When Students Help Run Their High Schools. *The 74 Million*. April 19, 2023 [Taking the Lead: What Happens When Students Help Run Their High Schools – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Teaching math facts

Multiplication tables, timed tests, fluency drills—are all necessary parts of math instruction. Helping students learn their basic math facts is at the heart of some of the disagreements in math education. But cognitive science indicates students really do need to develop fluency with basic skills because having these facts at their beck and call frees up working memory to attend to more difficult problem-solving. But some students don't get as much practice in developing math fluency as they might need, sometimes because teachers don't want to bore them. The central role of math fluency anchors a new [special report on early math instruction](#) that attempts to bring clarity to debates. The report states that as challenging as they are, [word problems are central](#) to uniting conceptual understanding with mathematical procedures. But kids may need to be taught how to solve them. A parent need not be "a math person" to help a child master the subject, according to researchers. All parents can model a positive attitude and willingness to work through challenging ideas that will benefit their children. Large numbers of students severely struggle with math, but only a fraction get screening or support for math disabilities, or dyscalculia. Researchers and educators are trying to leverage [links between dyscalculia and better-known dyslexia](#) to identify ways to improve math learning.

Stephen Sawchuk. "What Is Math 'Fact Fluency,' and How Does It Develop? *Education Week*. May 1, 2023 [What Is Math 'Fact Fluency,' and How Does It Develop? \(edweek.org\)](#) (behind a paywall)

Chronic absenteeism severe, especially among marginalized groups

An analysis of data from more than 325,000 preK–12 students found that chronic absenteeism has reached severe levels between 2022 and 2023 and that disparities between demographic groups are growing. The analysis found that 1/3 of students had missed 10% or more of the school year. Further, "Historically marginalized student groups continue to have higher rates of absenteeism and the differences in attendance rates by student groups are growing. This has implications for equity when considering academic recovery." Attendance is a significant predictor of student success so targeting families with interventions early on can have a positive impact on student attendance.

David Nagel. "Chronic Absenteeism Severe, Especially Among Historically Marginalized Groups." *T.H.E. Journal*. May 16, 2023 [Chronic Absenteeism Severe, Especially Among Historically Marginalized Groups -- THE Journal](#)

Many factors affect school attendance

There are 27 factors that affect student attendance, according to a report from Attendance Works and FutureEd. This article highlights five key strategies for encouraging attendance, including effective communication with parents, school-based telehealth, availability of clean clothes and home visits for students who need additional support. Evie Blad. "These Factors Are Linked to High Student Attendance. Does Your School Have Them?" *Education Week*. May 16, 2023

Student reading scores soar in Deep South states

Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana have seen a promising turnaround in their student reading scores after passing a series of similar literacy reforms. The success has grabbed the attention of educators nationwide by showing rapid progress is possible in areas that have struggled for decades with poverty and dismal literacy rates
Sharon Lurye. “‘Mississippi miracle’: Kids’ reading scores have soared in Deep South states.” *Associated Press*. May 17, 2023
[‘Mississippi miracle’: Kids’ reading scores have soared in Deep South states | AP News](#)

AIA, NASA to launch youth STEM programs

The Aerospace Industries Association is working with NASA to advance STEM in schools by expanding AIA's American Rocketry Challenge program and connecting to Artemis and other NASA programs. The partnership will launch this summer with a 2nd- 6th-grade program designed for summer camps and clubs working with under-represented groups, where students will learn about rocketry, aerospace and other STEM careers.
Eric Brothers. “AIA, NASA agree to inspire future workforce.” *Aerospace Manufacturing and Design*. May 13, 2023
[AIA, NASA agree to inspire future workforce - Aerospace Manufacturing and Design](#)

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

State legislatures weigh retention of 3rd-graders

State legislatures have formulated a wide variety of responses to the question of whether third-graders who do not pass a standardized test in reading should be held back, an issue that has gained additional urgency due to pandemic-era learning losses. Michigan has stopped holding back third-graders altogether after a study found that students from underrepresented groups and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were disproportionately affected, while new legislation in Arkansas makes it more likely that many students might repeat the grade.
Elaine S. Povich. “Debate over holding back third graders roils state legislatures.” *Stateline*. May 5, 2023
[Debate over holding back third graders roils state legislatures - Stateline](#)

Minneapolis school security plans leaked online

Sensitive, detailed campus security information was leaked after the district suffered a massive ransomware attack. The specific locations of surveillance cameras and other closely held details about security infrastructure are now attainable online. Their release, experts said, puts students and staff at risk of physical danger and comes as mass school shootings have reached record highs.
Eamonn Fitzmaurice. “How Leaked School Security Maps Could Put Minneapolis Kids in Danger.” *The 74 Million*. May 15, 2023
[How Leaked School Security Maps Could Put Minneapolis Kids in Danger – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

What Schools Leaders Need to Know About Embracing AI

AI will transform education in many ways and school leaders need to be on board and driving the evolution of education. To date, discussions with school leaders have revolved around whether it should be blocked. “As a principal and district leader for the last 18 years, I know there have been many evolutions with tech, and the ‘Is that cheating?’ conversations go back to spellcheck, then YouTube, then Alexa, and now AI chatbots,” writes the Director of Evaluation and Supervision in Brockton, Mass. He says AI can transform education and school leaders need to embrace it and explore the possibilities for enhancing learning.
Matthew X. Joseph. “What Schools Leaders Need to Know About Embracing AI.” *Tech & Learning*. May 15, 2023
[What Schools Leaders Need to Know About Embracing AI | Tech & Learning \(techlearning.com\)](#)

Study: Data about COVID-19 learning loss

Learning loss associated with the coronavirus pandemic was driven more by factors within schools and districts than students' circumstances at home, according to a study by researchers at Harvard, Stanford, Dartmouth, and Johns Hopkins universities. The study found, for example, that in the average school district, learning losses were about the same among white and affluent students as they were for Black and Hispanic students.
Kalyn Belsha. “COVID learning loss driven more by school and community factors than household ones, research finds.” *Chalkbeat*. May 12, 2023
[COVID learning loss likely to linger without intensive work, research says - Chalkbeat](#)

NEA: Pay & stress are factors in teacher attrition

Factors like burnout, pandemic stresses, and low pay are causing some teachers to leave the profession and making it more difficult to recruit and retain new teachers. National Education Association President Becky Pringle says teacher pay has technically risen, but not as fast as inflation, so teacher pay actually has fallen over the last decade.
Nicole Ellis & Casey Kuhn. “Teachers are burned out. Here’s why there’s no quick fix.” *PBS News Hour*. May 12, 2023
[Teachers are burned out. Here’s why there’s no quick fix | PBS NewsHour](#)

Commentary: Some legislatures seek to remove college tenure

Several state legislatures have introduced bills seeking to eliminate or constrain tenure for college faculty, although such bills have stalled in most places. Florida has passed such a law; Texas and Ohio are expected to follow suit. These bills target job protection for professors to eliminate their freedom of thought and insulation from political attacks, part of a trend among conservative legislatures attacking perceived liberal teachings. The partisan divide between those who go to college and those who do not is one of the *firmest divides in American politics today*, and it has reinforced diverging attitudes about the value of higher education itself and the role it plays in American life. Monica Potts. "Why Republicans Are Targeting Professors' Job Security." *Five Thirty Eight*. May 11, 2023 [Why Republicans Are Targeting Professors' Job Security | FiveThirtyEight](#)

Interview: Lingering effects of 'Brown v Board on education

From school funding to testing, historian Dr. Juontel White believes racial inequities persist in K-12 education as a result of decisions made following the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. White explored this through her contribution to Columbia Journalism School's *Uncovering Inequality* research project, which dissects racial justice issues. Dr. White maintains that "Racial inequality not only exists, but in every layer of our society there's opportunity and necessity for us to enact a solution."

Joshua Bay. "74 Interview: Education Advocate Juontel White on Schools' Enduring Inequalities 69 Years After Brown v. Board." *The 74 Million*. May 15, 2023 [74 Interview: Education Advocate Juontel White on Schools' Enduring Inequalities 69 Years After Brown v. Board - The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Inequity widens while affirmative action and diversity come under attack

Graduates of HSs in economically poorer areas are not offered helps to get into college that more affluent students receive, such as AP courses or help with college and financial aid applications. And, if they are accepted by a college, these same students find when they get to school that their more affluent classmates had previously covered some of the college material in HS.

Jon Marcus. "The college-going gap between Black and white Americans was always bad. It's getting worse." *Hechinger Report*. May 16, 2023 [As affirmative action and diversity come under attack, inequity is widening \(hechingerreport.org\)](#) This story also appeared in *USA Today*.

Science museums teach scientific literacy as science denial grows

As the U.S. faces both growing science-related challenges (climate change and a pandemic, for example) and an increase in science denial, programs at some museums are training teachers to help students navigate complicated scientific topics in their classrooms. Across party lines, the public supports museums, rating them as one of the most *trustworthy* institutional sources of information in the nation — more credible than local newspapers, nonprofit organizations and the U.S. government. Science museums are taking on a bigger role in supporting teachers and helping learners think critically about science. From providing free field trips to creating new, education-focused spaces, and expanding teacher professional development, they are promoting scientific literacy and filling gaps in science education. Their mission is even more important now that science denial is more virulent and widespread. Rossilynne Skena Culgan. "As science denial grows, science museums fight back by teaching scientific literacy." *Hechinger Report*. May 11, 2023 [As science denial grows, science museums fight back by teaching scientific literacy - The Hechinger Report](#)

APA: New guidance for social media use by youth

The American Psychological Association has issued recommendations on social media use in children, highlighting the need to provide social media literacy training, minimize teens' exposure to content that depicts illegal or harmful behavior, and limit social media use so as not to interfere with sleep or physical activity. "Because young people mature at different rates, some are more vulnerable than others to the content and features on many social media platforms that science has demonstrated can influence healthy development," said APA President Thema Bryant. Kalie VanDewater. "APA recommends literacy training for adolescents before social media use." *Healio*. May 15, 2023 [APA recommends literacy training for adolescents before social media use \(healio.com\)](#)

New U.S.E.D. guidance on religious expression in public schools

The U.S.E.D. has issued *updated guidance* on religious expressions in public schools, following last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision *Kennedy vs. Bremerton*, which held that a district could not stop a football coach from praying on the 50-yard line after games because such prayer was a personal religious observance and that preventing someone from engaging in such a practice violated the First Amendment. The new guidance says school employees may not encourage or discourage private prayer or other religious activity. It says the U.S. Constitution allows school employees themselves to engage in private prayer during the workday. But it warns that they may not "compel, coerce, persuade, or encourage students to join in the employee's prayer or other religious activity." The guidance also says a school may take reasonable measures to ensure students aren't pressured to join in their teachers' or coaches' prayers. Jason DeRose. "The Department of Education updates guidance on public school prayer." *National Public Radio*. May 16, 2023:14 PM ET <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/16/1176476800/the-department-of-education-updates-guidance-on-public-school-prayer>

PreK enrollment nearly bounces back

Public pre-K programs saw a rebound last year as enrollment nearly reached pre-pandemic levels, according to a new report from the National Institute for Early Education Research. While less than a third of the nation's 4-year-olds and only 6% of 3-year-olds attend public pre-K, researchers are encouraged by the recent push in several states to expand universal programs.

Linda Jacobson. "Pre-K Enrollment Nearly Bounces Back From Pandemic Amid Push for Universal Access." *The 74 Million*. May 18, 2023
[Pre-K Enrollment Nearly Bounces Back From Pandemic Amid Push for Universal Access – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](https://www.the74million.org/article/pre-k-enrollment-nearly-bounces-back-from-pandemic-amid-push-for-universal-access)

As number of ed tech companies grows, concern for student privacy also grows

The number of edtech products schools access in a typical month has tripled since the pandemic to more than 1,400 tools. And the companies that provide these tools aren't always protecting the student information they collect. 96% of apps used and recommended by U.S. educational institutions share data with third parties (such as advertisers), even though school or parents or students didn't know or consent to it. Looking at a company's privacy policy will give a sense of whether the company understands privacy. But rather than forcing edtech companies to get better at handling data, perhaps schools should keep them from accessing the data. Meanwhile, federal laws for safeguarding student data — COPPA and FERPA — haven't been updated in decades.

Daniel Mollenkamp. "As Number of Edtech Providers Grow, Some Say Student Privacy Needs a Reset." *Ed Surge*. May 18, 2023
<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2023-05-17-as-number-of-edtech-providers-grow-some-say-student-privacy-needs-a-reset>

Debate re: learning loss due to pandemic

A recent article by Thomas Kane of Harvard and Sean Reardon of Stanford lamented that parents had no idea how much the pandemic had set back their children's education. ("[Parents Don't Understand How Far Behind Their Kids Are in School](#)"). Kane and Reardon concluded that the pandemic exacerbated economic and racial educational inequality, that test scores declined more where schools were closed longer, and that educational impacts were affected by disruption in children's lives. David Berliner, one of the nation's pre-eminent education research experts, responds to the Kane-Reardon article, noting that - Students now will be back where students were a few years ago on tests like NAEP and likely all state tests. But, students who score lower on such tests have helped the US economy remain one of the strongest in the world. And as college enrollments have fallen over the last few years, students stand a good chance of getting into a reputable college. American kids are behind where they were but attending school again will catch them up. The real issue is that many kids were already way behind, and they seem to almost all be poor! That's Americas' real problem, not a slightly lower score on a current state test whose predictive power of future achievements and earnings is quite limited.

David Berliner is Regents' Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University. His research areas are teaching and educational policy.
"David Berliner Comments on Gloomy Report by Kane and Reardon About Learning Loss," *Diane Ravitch's blog*. May 18, 2023
[David Berliner Comments on Gloomy Report by Kane and Reardon About Learning Loss | Diane Ravitch's blog](https://dianeravitch.net/2023/05/18/david-berliner-comments-on-gloomy-report-by-kane-and-reardon-about-learning-loss/)

Report: US textbooks found lacking on Latino history

A study of six US History textbooks conducted by the Racial Equity Initiative at Unidos US and Johns Hopkins University's Institute for Education Policy has found that the books largely fail to include in-depth coverage of significant topics, events, and people in Latino history. Researchers found the books lacking in acknowledgement of notable Latino public figures, politicians, artists and others, while often only mentioning Latinos in the context of US foreign policy and depicting them as passive agents.

Sarah Schwartz. "Latino History Is U.S. History. High School Textbooks Neglect It." *Education Week*. May 16, 2023
[Latino History Is U.S. History. High School Textbooks Neglect It \(edweek.org\)](https://www.edweek.org/education/latino-history-is-u-s-history-high-school-textbooks-neglect-it/2023/05/16)

2 publications regarding the effects of charter schools and vouchers on public schools

[Charter Schools and Fiscal Impact](#) describes some of the most common causes and types of fiscal impact and offers suggestions for how local or state officials might address this concern. It also explains why funding public education is so important: The report concludes with a comprehensive list of charter fiscal impact studies.

"Charter Schools & Fiscal Impact." *In the Public Interest*. May 2023
https://inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/0523-Fiscal-Impact_4.pdf?emci=a3d925f2-a8f5-ed11-907c-00224832eb73&emdi=9131ed0a-b0f5-ed11-907c-00224832eb73&ceid=12098846

A recent report, from [Public Funds Public Schools](#), looks at how voucher programs divert public funds for private use, and its impact on educational outcomes. [The Fiscal Consequences of Private School Vouchers](#) examines the growth in voucher programs and spending in seven states in the decade since the Great Recession. Among its findings: While funding for vouchers climbed significantly in these states, the portion of state budget allocated to K-12 public education decreased, even though public school enrollment grew over the same period in 5 of the 7 states. Samuel E. Abrams and Steven J. Koutsavlis. "The Fiscal Consequences of Private School Vouchers." *Public Funds Public Schools*. March 2023
[PFPS Report](https://www.pfpps.org/reports/the-fiscal-consequences-of-private-school-vouchers/)

NEW YORK STATE

School board races turn on diversity, book access

Elections in several local districts are turning on issues regarding diversity, inclusion and the public nature of public education. Certain candidates are running on platforms of restoring school safety, ensuring parental rights, transparency, and mending community division. The specifics of these campaigns would in some cases upend public education norms as well as recent commitments to better serving all students. They would give parents, not educators, the final word on what materials belong in the library and classroom, and would walk back pledges to focus on diversity. This article provides specific examples.

Justin Murphy. "School board races turn on diversity, book access." *Democrat & Chronicle*. May 15, 2023
<https://rochesterdemocrat-ny.newsmemory.com?selDate=20230515&goTo=A01&artid=0>

School district budgets and propositions approved in regional school district votes

Voters in the central western New York region headed to the polls on Tuesday to vote on the 2023-2024 school district budgets. All the budgets and propositions proposed by districts were approved by their voters.

Hayden Wentworth. "Local school districts budget votes for 2023-2024 school year." *WROC/Rochester First*. May 17, 2023
[Local school districts budget votes for 2023-2024 school year | RochesterFirst](#)