

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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June 5, 2020 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

Opinion: Racism is endemic in schools

How many "isolated" incidents of racism in schools will it take before we admit that they aren't isolated? It's time to acknowledge racism is systemic in American schools, argues the author

Bettina L. Love. "OPINION: How Schools Are 'Spirit Murdering' Black and Brown Students." *Education Week*. May 24, 2020
<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/05/24/how-teachers-are-spirit-murdering-black-and.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=59586086&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cd6f688bfca>

How educators try to support black students following protests

Protests against police brutality have erupted across the country over the past three days, leading to tough classroom conversations about race, racism, and police violence. Teachers, already struggling to reach students during the coronavirus pandemic, are now searching for ways to help them work through their feelings about the protests and the police killings of other unarmed black men and women—without being with their students in person. It's a daunting conversation to have through a screen, many teachers said. One Minnesota teacher was quoted as saying, "We need more teachers of color, but we also need, as white teachers, to examine ways in which we're complicit in the institutions that are perpetrating this violence against our students."

Madeline Will. "As Protests Erupt After George Floyd's Death, Teachers Grieve With Students From a Distance." *Education Week*. June 1, 2020
http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2020/06/as_protests_erupt_after_george_floyds_death_teachers_grieve_with_students_from_a_distance.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1-rm&M=59586924&U=252955&UID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cd6f688bfca

Project-based learning adapts to online learning

Project-based learning is receiving renewed interest during this remote-learning period as teachers consider engaging ways to end the school year and reimagine education in the fall. The American Federation of Teachers posted its Culminating Capstone Projects on its Share My Lesson site, and the materials have been downloaded or viewed about 10,000 times.

Linda Jacobson. "Projects cap school year disrupted by coronavirus and defined by remote learning." *Education Dive*. June 1, 2020
<https://www.educationdive.com/news/habitats-baking-blogs-shoobox-theater-the-projects-capping-off-the-covi/578546/>

Survey: Pandemic has led to learning lags and students left behind

The rapid transition to remote learning amid the coronavirus pandemic has changed education, with schools reporting dramatically fewer interactions between teachers and students, changes to grading and attendance, and reductions in services that many students rely on, such as school meals, according to a survey of nearly 60 school districts nationwide. The survey provides hard evidence confirming parents' fears: Distance learning is no substitute for in-class teaching, with students missing classes, meals and hands-on instruction.

M.B. Pell, Kristina Cooke, & Benjamin Lesser. "With schools shuttered, learning lags and students left behind, Reuters survey shows." *Reuters*. June 2, 2020
<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/health-coronavirus-usa-schools/>

Student online learning devices still lacking

Only 24% of US public-school teachers say all of their students have a tablet or computer to complete school assignments during this time of remote instruction, according to a May survey by Educators for Excellence. Procuring devices has been challenging in some areas because of supply chain disruptions and delivery delays.

Javeria Salman. "Hundreds of thousands of students still can't access online learning." *Hechinger Report*. June 4, 2020
<https://hechingerreport.org/hundreds-of-thousands-of-students-still-cant-access-online-learning/>

Black Lives Matter offers free, educator-designed lessons on race, justice, & Diversity

Black Lives Matter at School offers [free K-12 curriculum](#) for teachers covering racism, social justice and diversity. The lessons, created by educators, are designed for students of all ages, from early childhood to high school, and also include resources in multiple languages.

Matt Zalaznick. "Black Lives Matter offers teachers a free social justice curriculum." *District Administration*. June 3, 2020
<https://districtadministration.com/black-lives-matter-free-curriculum-george-floyd-protests-racism-diversity-social-justice/>

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

DeVos, Mnuchin sued on behalf of student debtors

Betsy DeVos and Steven Mnuchin and the federal departments they run have been sued in a class-action lawsuit for illegal seizures of thousands of student borrowers' tax refunds during the coronavirus pandemic, which has left over 40 million Americans jobless and families struggling.

Jessica Corbett. "Mnuchin and DeVos Sued for Unlawful Seizure of Student Loan Borrowers' Tax Refunds During Pandemic." *Common Dreams*. May 29, 2020 <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/05/29/mnuchin-and-devos-sued-unlawful-seizure-student-loan-borrowers-tax-refunds-during>

Archive: Research on vouchers finds voucher schools to be inferior, segregated, unaccountable, and often fraudulent

A wide range of research shows that private school voucher programs are an ineffective use of public funds. Studies of voucher programs nationwide have found that students who participate in private school voucher programs fare worse academically than those educated in public schools. Voucher programs undermine already struggling public schools, remove civil rights protections, increase segregation, erode the separation of church and state, and lack accountability and transparency, yet cost millions of public dollars.

Public Funds Public Schools is a national campaign supported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, SPLC Action Fund, Education Law Center, and Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP that strives to ensure that all public funds for education are used to maintain and support public schools. "Research | Public Funds Public Schools." *Southern Poverty Law Center/Public Funds Public Schools*. May 2020. <https://pfps.org/research/>

School meal programs face budget challenges

Hundreds of school districts providing food for children during the pandemic have lost \$626.4 million in revenue, according to a School Nutrition Association survey. The losses stem from increased need during prolonged school closures and higher prices of food and personal protective gear for those serving meals. Schools may continue to face challenges in the fall if more free or reduced-price meal applications must be processed.

Daphne Duret. "School lunch programs are losing millions feeding hungry kids; they could be broke by fall." *USA Today*. May 31, 2020 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2020/05/31/coronavirus-school-lunch-programs-going-broke-because-kids-hunger/3101507001/>

Two largest teachers' unions join push to overhaul police practices

The two national teachers' unions have joined an effort to get Congress to change police practices after the recent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other black people at the hands of law enforcement.

Andrew Ujifusa. "AFT and NEA Join Push for National Overhaul of Police Practices." *Education Week*. June 2, 2020 <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2020/06/AFT-NEA-teachers-unions-police-practices-national-overhaul.html?cmp=soceml-twfdbltz-ewnow>

How districts & states can survive the pandemic recession

The deep collapse of revenue brought on by the pandemic could devastate school district budgets. Here's what veteran education and finance experts say can be done to prepare for a prolonged downturn and limit the damage.

- [Find Out How Your State Ranks on School Finance](#)
- [Read the Full Report: Quality Counts 2020: School Finance](#)

Daarel Burnette II. "How districts, states can survive the COVID-19 recession." *Education Week*. June 2, 2020 <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/06/03/how-districts-states-can-survive-the-covid-19.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=59587894&U=252955&UUID=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfca>

College Board abandons plans for online SAT

The College Board is postponing plans to offer an online version of the SAT for HS students to take at home this year. The Board states that students would have required three hours of uninterrupted internet access, which may not be possible for all students. In May, many students using the Board's digital versions Advanced Placement exams were not able to submit their answer sheets electronically, and their tests were disqualified.

Collin Binkley. "SAT drops plans for home exam amid internet access concerns." *Associated Press*. June 2, 2020 <https://apnews.com/2f1a4b63b1309a2ba7910027208e5ccf>

NEW YORK STATE

Assembly preparing to prevent major cuts to education, other groups

Speaker Carl Heastie said Assembly members are prepared to prevent major cuts to education, local governments and hospitals that could be proposed by Cuomo if the state doesn't receive federal aid.

Dan Clark. "Assembly Ready to 'Respond' to Major Cuts from Cuomo, Speaker Says." *NY Now/WMHT*. May 29, 2020 https://nynow.wmht.org/blogs/economy/assembly-ready-to-respond-to-major-cuts-from-cuomo-speaker-says/?mc_cid=b923c07945&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Lawmakers approve property tax installment payments

NYS lawmakers have passed a measure that would let school districts, counties and other entities that levy property taxes allow installment payments, or up to a 120-day grace period. If signed by the governor, the measure could create cash crunch for schools and municipalities.

Rick Karlin. "Lawmakers pass property tax relief option, allowing installment or late payments." *Albany Times Union*. May 29, 2020 https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Lawmakers-pass-property-tax-relief-option-allows-15304121.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon&stn=nf

About ‘reimagining’ education in NYS

Governor Cuomo and Bill Gates are “reimagining” education based on lessons learned during the pandemic, and futurists see the opportunity for change – if the effort can overcome resistance. Some of the ideas being explored are online tools that could narrow the achievement gap between wealthier suburban schools and urban and rural schools by making the best teachers available to all; students grouped by achievement rather than age; smaller class sizes; virtual reality and 3D printers; classes held in schools for as little as two or three days a week; and eliminating lost instruction time because of disasters, viruses, or even snow days. The Gates Foundation says it wants to engage teachers and education experts along with its own experts to use best practices and technology to improve instruction to be ready for the next unplanned shutdown of schools and to plan for a better way to educate while maintaining social distance measures. No details on what that might entail have yet been released.

Michael Gormley. “Cuomo, Gates try to re-imagine schools, but opposition awaits.” *Newsday*. June 1, 2020

https://www.newsday.com/news/health/coronavirus/cuomo-gates-education-covid-19-new-york-1.45061806?mc_cid=0e0584fce9&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

Myers-Small begins job with advantage of former ties to district

This article summarizes the interactions that new superintendent Lesli Myers-Small has had with the Rochester district over the years – as an employee and advisor—before her appointment to her new role.

Justin Murphy. “Superintendent Lesli Myers-Small begins job with deep experience of Rochester city schools.” *D & C*. June 1, 2020

https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/education/2020/06/01/new-rsd-superintendent-lesli-myers-small-begins-job-deep-city-school-context-wilson-magnet/5774126002?utm_source=democratandchronicle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily-briefing&utm_term=.list-article-thumb

Issues with school district voting by mail

The mail-in absentee ballot school board election and budget vote, intended to make it easy to cast ballots by June 9, has taken a troubling turn since dozens of districts statewide failed to get timely delivery of absentee ballots.

David McKay Wilson. “Some school districts still don't have absentee ballots to mail out for June 9 vote.” *Rockland/Westchester Journal News*. June 1, 2020

https://www.lohud.com/story/money/personal-finance/taxes/david-mckay-wilson/2020/06/01/school-budget-vote-june-9-mail-absentee-ballot/5310641002?mc_cid=b6b4eca3d6&mc_eid=bc2625d4e3

With budget votes just a week away, a shortage of the official envelopes left school districts scrambling to get absentee ballots out to voters.

Rachel Silberstein. “Envelope snafu creates last-minute problems for New York schools.” *Albany Times Union*. June 1, 2020.

https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Envelope-snafu-creates-last-minute-problems-for-15308182.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon&stn=nl

Difficult summer coming for district leaders

From the time teachers and students power down remote instruction in mid- to late-June, NYS’s school districts will have about 10 weeks to prepare for a fall no one can yet envision. It's unknown when the governor will say when schools can reopen or what state agencies will require for doing so safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

Gary Stern. “For school leaders, summertime 2020 will be anything but easy.” *Rockland/Westchester Journal News*. June 2, 2020

<https://www.recordonline.com/news/20200602/for-school-leaders-summertime-2020-will-be-anything-but-easy>