

EDUCATION NEWS UPDATE

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August 10, 2018 News Round-up

In July and August this update will come every second week, so the next edition will come on August 24.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Analysis: Book on issues with history texts is republished

The best-seller, *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American History textbook got wrong*, originally released in 1995, is being re-released in the age of "alternative facts."

Valerie Strauss. "It's back in the age of 'alternative facts': 'Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American History textbook got wrong.'" *Washington Post/Answer Sheet* blog. July 26, 2018

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/07/26/its-back-in-the-age-of-alternative-facts-lies-my-teacher-told-me-everything-your-american-history-textbook-got-wrong/?utm_term=.83cf3e455d5d&wpisrc=nl_answer&wpm=1

Inclusion not enough to boost special ed results

Allison Gilmour, a professor at Temple University, argues that schools need to look more at what services are provided to students with disabilities, not just the setting where those students are educated.

Christina Samuels. "Inclusion Alone Not Enough to Boost Special Education Results, Expert Says." *Education Week*. July 27, 2018

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2018/07/inclusion_and_academic_achievement.html?cmp=e-ml-enl-eu-news2&M=58561454&U=252955

Teachers falling out of middle class in some states

Red-state teachers are walking out, not just over low pay but the erosion of their profession as a valued, white-collar occupation. Some teachers are driving forklifts and tending bar to pay off loans and make ends meet. Some teachers are walking out and raising their voices in protest and frustration as they describe why they are striking and what's next for their activism.

E. Tammy Kim. "Are teachers losing their grip on the middle class?" *Hechinger Report*. July 31, 2018

https://hechingerreport.org/are-teachers-losing-their-grip-on-the-middle-class/?utm_source=The+Hechinger+Report&utm_campaign=6b4a1a5bb6-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_07_31_02_38&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d3ee4c3e04-6b4a1a5bb6-322606321

N.D. district to phase out grade levels

A North Dakota school district is moving away from grade levels and the seat-time approach to school in favor of competency-based education, which allows students to move at their own pace and advance when they have demonstrated proficiency. The goal is to transform the traditional way of thinking about school: "If we're going to do this, we're going to have to manage without grade levels."

Chris Burdik. "What's school without grade levels?" *Hechinger Report*. July 30, 2018

<https://hechingerreport.org/whats-school-without-grade-levels/>

Strategies to support students with dyslexia

Students with dyslexia benefit most from "structured literacy," asserts a reading and dyslexia specialist who suggests four ways schools can support students with dyslexia, including by training teachers and using technology.

Donell Pons. "Helping students tackle dyslexia." *Smart Brief/Education*. July 31, 2018

http://www.smartbrief.com/original/2018/07/helping-students-tackle-dyslexia?utm_source=brief

Teachers' discomfort with tech

Most teachers are uncomfortable with tech-based teaching practices, including facilitating student collaboration using digital devices, according to a survey of more than 33,000 US teachers. Those surveyed said more time to collaborate with fellow educators and more professional development would help them implement new practices.

David Nagel. "Educators Largely Uncomfortable with Newer Tech-Based Teaching Practices." *T.H.E. Journal*. July 30, 2018

<https://thejournal.com/articles/2018/07/30/educators-largely-uncomfortable-with-newer-tech-based-teaching-practices.aspx>

Whole-brain teaching discussed

Some educators are adopting whole-brain teaching, in which teachers use practices to engage all parts of students' brains by mirroring words and using certain physical movements.

Sydney Johnson. "Whole Brain Teaching Is Weird — and Weirdly Viral." *EdSurge*. July 31, 2018

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-07-31-whole-brain-teaching-is-weird-and-weirdly-viral>

How educators can support traumatized students

About 150 aspiring educators attended a recent training session designed to help them support students who have experienced trauma. In this interview, a psychologist discusses the traumas that some students have experienced and how those experiences affect classroom learning.

Adeshina Emmanuel. "Trauma can make it hard for kids to learn. Here's how teachers learn to deal with that." *Chalkbeat/Chicago*. August 1, 2018
<https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/chicago/2018/08/01/trauma-can-make-it-hard-for-kids-to-learn-heres-how-teachers-learn-to-deal-with-that/>

Mental health and the need for recess

Michael Hynes, superintendent in the Patchogue-Medford public schools on Long Island, writes about the toxic environment caused by federal and state mandates and the mental health crisis in K-12.

Michael Hynes. "The existential mental health crisis in K-12 and the need for play, recess." *Patchogue Newsletter*. July 24, 2018
<https://patchogue.greaterlongisland.com/2018/07/24/89437-the-existential-mental-health-crisis-in-k-12-and-the-need-for-play-recess/>

Good and bad news about dual credit

Two new studies raise questions about widespread claims that taking dual-enrollment courses in HS can save students time and money in college.

Catherine Gewertz. "Dual Credit: The Good News and the Bad News." *Education Week*. August 3, 2018
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/high_school_and_beyond/2018/08/dual_credit_save_money_time_college.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=58569440&U=252955

Initiative to train new teachers in high-poverty schools

Denver is testing a strategy for preparing new teachers: having them serve for a year as "associate teachers" in highly rated, high-poverty schools.

Brenda Iasevoli, "New Teachers Are Often Assigned to High-Poverty Schools. Why Not Train Them There?" *Education Week*. August 3, 2018
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2018/08/denver_new_teacher_pilot_program.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2&M=58569440&U=252955

Commentary: LeBron James school in Akron a lighthouse effort

A school funded by LeBron James in Akron, Ohio, is a beautiful example of what all our public education should look like.

Dave Zirin. "LeBron's Education Promise Needs to Become This Country's Promise." *The Nation*. August 1, 2018
<https://www.thenation.com/article/lebrons-education-promise-needs-become-countrys-promise/>

What teachers look for in principals

How principals interact matters more than what they know. The behaviors of school leaders can motivate teachers, including good communication, affirmation and orderly management of the school.

Naphtali Hoff. "Soft skills for strong school leadership." *Smart Brief/Education*. August 7, 2018
http://smartbrief.com/original/2018/08/soft-skills-strong-school-leadership?utm_source=brief

Teachers colleges trying to change

Colleges of education continue to prepare too many elementary teachers and not enough special education and foreign language teachers to meet districts' needs, a new report finds.

Madeline Will. "Enrollment Is Down at Teacher Colleges. So They're Trying to Change." *Education Week*. August 9, 2018
<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/08/09/enrollment-is-down-at-teacher-colleges-so.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1-rm&M=58574385&U=252955>

NATIONAL / FEDERAL

Study confirms that private schools no better than public schools

Many people still think that private schools do a better job, with superior standardized test scores and outcomes. It is a claim made in arguing that the public should pay for private school education. University of Virginia researchers who looked at data from more than 1,000 students found that all of the advantages supposedly conferred by private education evaporate when socio-demographic characteristics are factored in. There was also no evidence found to suggest that low-income children or children enrolled in urban schools benefit more from private school enrollment.

Valerie Strauss. "Analysis: No, private schools aren't better at educating kids than public schools. Why this new study matters."

Washington Post/Answer Sheet blog. July 26, 2018

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/07/26/no-private-schools-arent-better-at-educating-kids-than-public-schools-why-this-new-study-matters/?wpisrc=nl_answer&wpm=1

Nebraska proposes strategy to improve assessments

Rather than rely on end-of-year assessments, Nebraska officials are considering strategies to align testing with classroom lessons, according to the state's education commissioner. The proposal calls for a series of assessments throughout the year, and the data from the tests could be used to track students' progress and inform instruction.

Tara Garcia Mathewson. "State tests don't have to be disconnected from classroom practice." *Hechinger Report*. July 26, 2018

<https://hechingerreport.org/state-tests-dont-have-to-be-disconnected-from-classroom-practice/>

Survey data on millions of HS students for sale

College-planning surveys give a peek into the opaque and little-regulated market of data-mining of minors.

Natasha Singer. "For Sale: Survey Data on Millions of High School Students." *NY Times*. July 29, 2018

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/29/business/for-sale-survey-data-on-millions-of-high-school-students.html?emc=edit_th_180730&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=188779070730

Amazon profits growing in K12

Amazon is teed up to receive up to \$5.5 billion over the next 11 years through a cooperative purchasing contract used by cities and school districts alike.

Michelle Molnar. "Amazon's Footprint Grows in K-12 Purchasing. Should We Be Worried?" *Education Week/Market Brief*. July 30, 2018

<https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/amazons-footprint-grows-in-k-12-purchasing-should-we-be-worried/?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1&M=58563543&U=252955>

Trump signs Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act

This legislation is a reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, a \$1.2 billion program last overhauled by Congress in 2006. The Trump administration made updating the federal career and technical education law a priority, while its other plans, such as expanding school choice, have stalled.

Andrew Ujifusa. "Donald Trump Signs First Major Education Policy Bill of His Presidency." *Education Week*. July 31, 2018

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/07/31/donald-trump-signs-career-technical-education-bill.html?cmp=soceml-twfdbltz-ewnow>

U.S.E.D. shifts focus of Office for Civil Rights

The U.S.E.D.'s Office for Civil Rights has adopted a more individualistic understanding of discrimination. The department no longer considers whether student outcomes differ by race and no longer considers systemic bias.

Laura Meckler. "How do you enforce civil rights? Under Betsy DeVos, a stark shift in approach." *Washington Post*. July 30, 2018

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/how-do-you-enforce-civil-rights-under-betsy-devos-a-stark-shift-in-approach/2018/07/30/0ebf6e3e-8eb2-11e8-bcd5-9d911e784c38_story.html?utm_term=.32bb545c7b6d&wpisrc=nl_sb_smartbrief

Is Amazon giving districts good deals?

Schools may not be getting the best prices on supplies through Amazon, according to a report on the company's public-sector contracts by the nonprofit Local Self-Reliance. At issue, the report finds, is a reliance on dynamic pricing, rather than fixed rates.

Tina Nazerian. "When School Districts Buy From Amazon, Are They Getting the Best Deal? Maybe Not." *Ed Surge*. August 1, 2018

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-08-01-when-school-districts-buy-from-amazon-are-they-getting-the-best-deal-maybe-not>

Education Secretary DeVos may bypass Congress to eliminate office for ELL

The U.S.E.D. plans to scrap the federal office of English-language acquisition by folding the office of English-language acquisition, or OELA, into the office for elementary and secondary education. Federal law requires that OELA have a director who reports directly to the education secretary. So it appears that the U.S.E.D. would need the approval of Congress to enact the plan.

Corey Mitchell. "DeVos May Bypass Congress to Get Rid of the Office for English-Learners. Can She?" *Education Week*. August 6, 2018

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2018/08/could_devos_scrap_the_federal_ELL_office.html?cmp=soceml-twfdbltz-ewnow

What to do about school re-segregation

School segregation is on the rise in America according to data from the National Center on Education Statistics.

Causes of re-segregation include the termination of hundreds of court-ordered desegregation plans, the secession of white neighborhoods and cities from large, diverse Southern school districts, and the expansion of highly segregated charter schools that are exempt from desegregation efforts. An **NEPC policy brief** recommends that the nation create and sustain more racially and ethnically diverse schools that emphasize the benefits of diversity. The article lists a number of strategies to reach this goal.

"As School Segregation Intensifies, What Can We Do About It?" *National Education Policy Center (NEPC) Newsletter*. August 7, 2018

<http://www.icontact-archive.com/cygVNOqY6pi4994qjjAO6PkOHixBu4uj?w=4>

Racist hate in schools

Data on hate-related incidents in schools are skimpy, but when slurs are scrawled on bathroom stalls and threatening notes are put in backpacks, it's clear that hate and intolerance are being boldly expressed in some schools.

Francisco Vara-Orta. "Hate in schools." *Education Week*. August 6, 2018

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/hate-in-schools.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1&M=58570545&U=252955>

Why principals are running for elected office

Principals, like their teacher colleagues seeking elected office this year, want a bigger voice in shaping state education policy and other issues that directly affect schooling.

Denisa Superville. "Principals Are Running for Elected Office. Here's Why." *Education Week*. August 7, 2018

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/08/07/principals-are-running-for-elected-office-heres.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1-rm&M=58571927&U=252955>

U.S.E.D. School Safety Commission seems to muzzle gun-control debate

Critics say that nearly five months after its creation, the cabinet-level panel is failing to tackle gun control as part of the federal response to school shootings and shutting out proponents of that strategy.

Eliza Fawcett, LA Times. "Is Trump's School Safety Commission Muzzling Gun-Control Debate?" *Education Week*. August 7, 2018

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/08/07/is-trumps-school-safety-commission-muzzling-gun-control.html?cmp=e-ml-enl-eu-news2-rm&M=58571927&U=252955>

Lawmakers question affirmative action decision

A group of 21 Democratic lawmakers sent a letter to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos seeking additional information about why and how affirmative action guidelines for schools were rescinded in July. In response, representatives for both departments said the move was guided by Supreme Court decisions.

Daniella Diaz. "Senate Dems want answers on rescinded affirmative action guidance." *CNN*. August 7, 2018

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/07/politics/senate-democrats-jeff-sessions-betsy-devos-affirmative-action/>

How new ESSA school-spending transparency requirement will work

This article answers questions about the federal law's mandate that states report school-by-school spending data, and what that means for the debate over K-12 funding at the local level.

Daarel Burnett II. "What Is ESSA's New School-Spending Transparency Requirement, and How Will It Work?" *Education Week*. August 9, 2018

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/08/09/what-is-essas-new-school-spending-transparency-requirement.html?cmp=e-ml-enl-eu-news2-rm&M=58574385&U=252955>

NEW YORK STATE

Long Island district gets better results with problem-based curriculum

For the last two years, the Comsewogue HS (on Long Island) experimented with a problem-based learning curriculum for small groups of interested 9th and 10th graders, an alternative to the traditional focus on assignments and assessments. In all subjects, Comsewogue students in PBL classes passed 2018 Regents exams, scoring 65 or better, at a higher rate than those in traditional classrooms. On chemistry, geometry, algebra II, global history and English 11 exams, PBL students achieved mastery level, scoring 85 or better.

Alex Petroski. "Comsewogue students in pilot program outperform peers in traditional classes." *Times Beacon Record* (East Setauket).

July 17, 2018

<http://tbrnewsmedia.com/comsewogue-students-pilot-program-outperform-peers-traditional-classes/>

Aid officers lack guidance on Excelsior scholarships

SUNY college aid officers claim a lack guidance on the Excelsior scholarship program and want to be absolved of any blame regarding confusion on part of students and parents. They say they can't get answers from the state

Rick Karlin. "Aid official: Excelsior scholarship has lots of unanswered questions." *Albany Times Union*. August 1, 2018

https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Aid-official-Excelsior-scholarship-has-lots-of-13124209.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon

NYSED mistakenly gave charters \$12 million that should have gone to public schools

The \$12 million misallocation is about 7.8% of the \$153 million the state distributed to its Local Educational Agencies in 2017-18 for Title IIA, which supports professional development initiatives such as teacher training, recruitment and retention. The state distributed additional funds to 275 charter schools and three school districts, and under-allocated funds to 677 school districts and 10 Special Act schools. The majority of those school districts will be repaid the gap from last year, in addition to their correct allocations for the 2018-19 school year. But because the underfunding at the larger districts of Buffalo (\$382,610), Rochester (\$317,452), East Ramapo (\$208,311) and Syracuse (\$168,317), their reallocations will be spread out over a two-year period. NYC's repayment of \$7,085,650 will be made up over a four-year period. The charter schools and three districts will not be forced to repay the extra money they received last year, but will see reductions in their Title IIA funding over the course of up to five years.

Anna Gronewold & Madina Toure. "State education department mistakenly distributed \$12M in federal funds toward charters." *Politico*. August 3, 2018

<https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2018/08/03/state-education-department-mistakenly-distributed-12m-in-federal-funds-toward-charters-539628>

Joseph Spector, Gannett Albany. "Oops! NY incorrectly allocated \$12M for schools. What it means for your district." *Journal News/Lower Hudson*. August 3, 2018

<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/politics/albany/2018/08/03/oops-ny-incorrectly-allocated-12-m-schools-what-means-your-district/897144002/>

DFER spending millions to support pro-charter, pro-testing candidates

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) promotes high-stakes testing and charter schools while showing hostility to public school teachers and unions. DFER has been condemned by resolution by the Democratic party conferences in Colorado and California for using the word "Democrat" to promote a corporate agenda that is hostile to public schools. Other Democrats think that DFERs are Republicans pretending to be Democrats. DFER is funded by Wall Street hedge fund managers. In NYS, hedge funders supporting charter schools are pouring \$\$ millions into races for State Senate, to support the charter school industry and to ensure that Republicans retain control of the State Senate.

Carl Campanile. "Hedgies are emptying pockets for GOP, charter school advocates." *NY Post*. July 17, 2018 | 5:32pm

https://nypost.com/2018/07/17/hedgies-are-emptying-pockets-for-gop-charter-school-advocates-amp/?amp_js-v=0.1&asq-mj331AOGCAEoATGAEoAz&forizim=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&prerenderSize=1&visibilityState=prerender&paddingTop=54&p2r=0&horizontalScrolling=0&csi=1&ah=15335941181832&viewerUtl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Famp%2F&ch=2Fwww.post.com%2F2018%2F07%2F17%2Fhedgies-are-emptying-pockets-for-gop-charter-school-advocates%2F&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DFER&utm_term=.

Caitlin Emma. "First look: Education reform group bets big on governor's races." *Politico*/Morning Education. August 6, 2018

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-education/2018/08/06/first-look-education-reform-group-bets-big-on-governors-races-306859>

NYSUT not endorsing a gubernatorial candidate

The NYS United Teachers has opted not to endorse any gubernatorial candidate this year. The union is backing 37 Democratic candidates for state Senate.

Rick Karllin. "NYSUT makes no endorsement for governor." Albany. *Times Union*. August 8, 2018

https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/NYSUT-makes-no-endorsement-for-governor-13141916.php?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Timesunion_Capcon