

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

September 17, 2021 Education News Update

TEACHING & LEARNING

NASA seeks to engage students in planned missions

NASA is providing resources to help engage students in the organization's planned missions. Resources include a STEM toolkit to help teach about the James Webb Space Telescope and NASA's Artemis Student Challenges. Rebecca Sohn. "NASA helps students launch into new school year with space-related educational resources." *SPACE*. September 10, 2021 [NASA helps students launch into new school year with space-related educational resources | Space](#)

Students benefit from pandemic flexibility

Amid the negative effects and loss associated with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic are unexpected upsides for students -- school flexibility and reinforced familial relationships. Almost half of the 150 grades 9-12 students surveyed said the pandemic either positively affected their lives or their lives remained the same. The authors are faculty in the Department of Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School for Public Health. Laura Clary & Tamar Mendelson. "How to Preserve the Good Parts of Pandemic Schooling." *Education Week*. September 10, 2021 [How to Preserve the Good Parts of Pandemic Schooling \(Opinion\) \(edweek.org\)](#)

Food literacy helps cut health inequities, boost outcomes

Infusing some school lessons with food literacy (awareness of food systems, nutrition and cooking) can help reduce inequities in health and improve academic achievement, researchers say. This article highlights 29 initiatives that offer culinary and agricultural programs and support environmental education in schools, in the US and elsewhere. *Food Tank is a not-for-profit group focused on building a global community for safe, healthy, nourished people.* "29 Organizations Promoting Food Literacy in Schools." *Food Tank*. September 9, 2021 [29 Organizations Promoting Food Literacy in Schools – Food Tank](#)

Outdoor learning is safer so why aren't more schools doing it?

Teachers and advocates tout the benefits of outdoor learning, but there are barriers for some schools, including the risk of gun violence. Madeline Will. "If Outdoor Learning Is Safer During COVID, Why Aren't More Schools Doing It?" *Education Week*. September 14, 2021 [If Outdoor Learning Is Safer During COVID, Why Aren't More Schools Doing It? \(edweek.org\)](#)

Eyeglasses are a way to improve student reading scores

Schools need to do more than just vision screenings, new research says, especially after students have spent so much time learning on screen this past year. The research shows how learning could improve if schools help students identify and swiftly correct developing vision problems. Sarah D. Sparks. "Here's One Way to Improve Students' Reading Scores: Get Them Eyeglasses." *Education Week*. September 14, 2021 [Here's One Way to Improve Students' Reading Scores: Get Them Eyeglasses \(edweek.org\)](#)

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Why bus driver shortages nationwide

During the pandemic there was no opportunity to recruit new drivers or test them. Add to those delays, it takes time to actually hire a bus driver. Plus, former drivers have left for many reasons, both pandemic-related and personal. Ally Peters. "Bus driver shortages are an issue all over the country: What's the problem?" *WROC-TV*. September 9, 2021 [Bus driver shortages are an issue all over the country: What's the problem? | RochesterFirst](#)

Morelle seeks lift of federal CDL requirements to help with school bus driver shortage

Representative Joe Morelle (D-25) is calling on U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to waive the Commercial Drivers License (CDL) requirement for school bus drivers. Matt Driffill. "Rep. Morelle calls for lift of CDL requirement to help with school bus driver shortage." *WROC-TV*. September 9, 2021 [Rep. Morelle calls for lift of CDL requirement to help with school bus driver shortage | RochesterFirst](#)

Fewer students submit SAT, ACT scores on applications

Approximately 40% of students submitted SAT or ACT scores when applying to college this year, and they weren't required to at nearly 90% of institutions that are members of the Common Application. Most of those opting out were first-generation and underrepresented minority applicants, the Common App reported.

Principals bear brunt of parent anger, staff fatigue

Principals are front and center in battles over masks, quarantines, and other hot-button COVID issues. The author describes a number of instances of intimidation, attacks, and rallies initiated by unhappy parents and others.

Andrew Ujifusa. "Principals Bear the Brunt of Parental Anger, Staff Fatigue as COVID Drags On." *Education Week*. September 10, 2021
[Principals Bear the Brunt of Parental Anger, Staff Fatigue as COVID Drags On \(edweek.org\)](#)

Seeking money to improve school buildings

Efforts to increase pandemic-related safety in schools are coming as many schools struggle with basic infrastructure safety issues and an \$85 billion financing gap, according to a report from the National Council on School Facilities and two other groups. The report offers recommendations for increased funding for improvements, such as funneling 15% of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund money into buildings in high-need areas.

Matt Zalaznick. "\$85 billion gap: 12 actions for improving health and safety of school facilities." *District Administration*. September 10, 2021
[55 strategies for making schools healthier and safer \(districtadministration.com\)](#)

Some states aim to improve Native American curriculum

Several states have adopted new requirements for schools to teach Native American history and culture. The National Congress of American Indians says a 2019 report found that 90% of states with federally recognized tribes said there was movement toward improving their Native American curriculum.

Susan Haigh. "Push for Native American curriculum in schools makes gains." *Associated Press*. September 14, 2021
[Push for Native American curriculum in schools makes gains \(apnews.com\)](#)

Right-wing groups seek to take over school boards

A right-wing campaign to control teaching about American racism is mobilizing conservative voters to take over local boards of education. The Leadership Institute, which has trained generations of right-wing activists, is promoting a 20-hour online course to train conservatives how to run for their local school boards.

Peter Montgomery. "The Right-Wing Political Machine Is Out to Take Over School Boards by Fanning Fears of Critical Race Theory." *Right Wing Watch/People for the American Way*. August 6, 2021

[The Right-Wing Political Machine Is Out to Take Over School Boards by Fanning Fears of Critical Race Theory | Right Wing Watch](#)

Education groups unite to resist bans of racism discussions

Some of the country's most prominent education groups are organizing against efforts to restrict teaching students about racism. A new coalition has formed to help educators respond to community critique of curricula or anti-racism initiatives. The [Learn From History coalition](#) plans to publicize "accounts of the harm and costs of efforts to restrict what is taught in classrooms." Inaugural partners include AASA(Superintendents' Association), American Federation of Teachers, American Historical Association, The Education Trust, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Council for the Social Studies, National School Boards Association, News Literacy Project, Organization of American Historians, Stand for Children, and Teach for America.

Sarah Schwartz. "Teachers' Union, Education Groups Unite to Resist Critical Race Theory Bans." *Education Week*. September 9, 2021
[Teachers' Union, Education Groups Unite to Resist Critical Race Theory Bans \(edweek.org\)](#)

More is expected of schools now than ever before: How much is too much?

Schools are increasingly being saddled with new responsibilities. At what point do we decide they are being overwhelmed? If we are not asking too much, schools are not getting the money they need to do what is expected.

Mark Lieberman. "Are We Asking Schools to Do Too Much?" *Education Week*. September 14, 2021
[Are We Asking Schools to Do Too Much? \(edweek.org\)](#)

Changing politics behind charter schools

Democratic support for charter schools, once led by many Democrats, is waning. Charter schools educate more than 3.3 million K-12 students in 7,500 schools across the country. Yet today the charter school movement is perhaps more vulnerable than it has ever been. Unlikely allies in the best of times, its coalition of supporters—which has included progressives, free-market Republicans, and civil rights advocates, and which has been handsomely funded by deep-pocketed donors and Silicon Valley moguls—is unraveling. One pundit argues that the GOP's increasing hostility to public schools could ultimately harm charters as well.

Jennifer C. Berkshire. "Charter Schools' Scary Future." *The New Republic*. September 10, 2021
[Charter Schools' Scary Future | The New Republic](#)

Fauci: Vaccine EUA for kids could come this fall

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said the FDA could authorize COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5-11 sometime this fall if Pfizer and Moderna can submit sufficient data for an emergency use authorization.

Madeline Holcombe, Holly Yan, & Christina Maxouris. "Covid-19 vaccines for younger children could be authorized sometime this fall, Fauci says." *CNN*. September 14, 2021
[US coronavirus: Vaccines for younger children could be authorized sometime this fall, Fauci says - CNN](#)

Districts unprepared for COVID-19 disruptions

Bad state policy, exhaustion, misplaced optimism, and a rush to open full-time virtual schools led districts to shelve last year's hybrid learning models and has left districts scrambling to educate quarantined students.

Benjamin Herold. "Why School Districts Are Unprepared for COVID-19 Disruptions, Again." *Education Week*. September 14, 2021
[Why School Districts Are Unprepared for COVID-19 Disruptions, Again \(edweek.org\)](#)

Support for COVID vaccine mandates rising

The Delta variant is changing opinions about the need for vaccine mandates. Nearly 60% of educators say students who are old enough to receive COVID vaccines should be required to get them to attend school.

Holly Kurtz. "Educators' Support for COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates Is Rising Dramatically." *Education Week*. September 16, 2021
[Educators' Support for COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates Is Rising Dramatically \(edweek.org\)](#)

India's caste system & racism in U.S. schools

Born and raised in India, reporter Eesha Pendharkar isn't convinced that America's anti-racist efforts are enough to make students of color feel like they belong.

Eesha Pendharkar. "What the Indian Caste System Taught Me About Racism in American Schools." *Education Week*. September 14, 2021
[What the Indian Caste System Taught Me About Racism in American Schools \(edweek.org\)](#)

NEW YORK STATE

Poll: Majority of NYS registered voters support vaccination requirements in schools

A majority of registered voters in both major political parties in NYS support public schools requiring all teachers and staff to be vaccinated and for businesses, including restaurants and gyms, to require customers to show proof of vaccination, according to a Siena College poll. (TU)

Joshua Solomon. "Siena Poll: Majority of New Yorkers, regardless of party, say teachers should be vaccinated." *Albany Times Union*. September 14, 2021
[Siena Poll: Majority of New Yorkers, regardless of party, say teachers should be vaccinated \(timesunion.com\)](#)

Some GOOD news: HS student smoking rate way down

The smoking rate among high school students in NYS stood at 27% in 2000. But 21 years later, the smoking rate among high schoolers has dropped to less than 3%, according to a survey released by the NYS Health Department.

Nick Reisman. "Youth cigarette smoking rate hits new low in New York." *NY State of Politics/Spectrum News*. September 13, 2021
[Youth smoking rate hits new low in New York \(nystateofpolitics.com\)](#)