

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

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As we begin another school year, your Education News Update will resume its weekly schedule.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Teacher's math program goes nationwide

Scott Burke, a Colorado math teacher, began an experiment 15 years ago called Geometry in Construction which teaches students math through building Habitat for Humanity houses. His program has expanded to 700 schools in 16 states and educators can use it to show students how math can be put to use in skilled labor.

Shawn Boyd. "Lakewood High School Teacher Changing How Geometry Is Taught Nationwide." *KCNC-TV* (Denver). August 18, 2021
[Lakewood High School Teacher Changing How Geometry Is Taught Nationwide – CBS Denver \(cbslocal.com\)](#)

Are schools ready for disruptions to in-person learning?

Many school districts have stricter quarantine rules than those required by the CDC, according to an analysis by the Center on Reinventing Public Education. Districts without solid planning for more strict quarantines will risk having students at home with little to no resources to learn remotely.

Kalyn Belsha & Matt Barnum, "As quarantines send students home, what's the plan to keep them learning?" *Chalkbeat*. August 17, 2021
[What's the plan to keep quarantined students learning? - Chalkbeat](#)

Parents like Social-Emotional Learning but want a different name

Parents want their children to be taught social-emotional skills but prefer a different name such as life skills, according to a survey from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and YouGov.

Arianna Prothero. "Parents Like Social-Emotional Learning, But Not the Name." *Education Week*. August 20, 2021
[Parents Like Social-Emotional Learning, But Not the Name \(edweek.org\)](#)

Attention deficit rates soar in HS

Twice as many students are diagnosed with ADHD in HS as in ES, yet their supports are fewer, a study says. Most children with attention deficits don't just grow out of them; early HS supports, such as mentoring, may help them avoid academic problems.

Sarah D. Sparks. "Attention Deficit Rates Skyrocket in High School. Mentoring Could Prevent an Academic Freefall." *Education Week*. August 23, 2021
[Attention Deficit Rates Skyrocket in High School. Mentoring Could Prevent an Academic Freefall \(edweek.org\)](#)

Tutoring key to recover learning loss

As educators consider strategies to help students recover learning lost during the pandemic, research points to intensive daily tutoring as one of the most effective ways. Researchers found little benefit to after-school programs, and remedial courses historically have been ineffective.

Jill Barshay. "The science of catching up." *Hechinger Report*. August 25, 2021
[The science of catching up - The Hechinger Report](#)

Praise improves outcomes with middle-school students

MS students respond more to praise than criticism, especially when dealing with problem behaviors, a study by researchers at Brigham Young University found. By making a point of praising desired behaviors at least as much as reprimanding undesirable behaviors, teachers improved overall class conduct by up to 70%, researchers noted.

Curt Gresseth. "Praising students works better than scolding, study finds." *KSL-AM/FM* (Salt Lake City). August 23, 2021
[Praising students works better than scolding, study finds \(kslnewsradio.com\)](#)

Students, families want better virtual options

Students throughout the country who are, or who have family members who are, at risk for severe medical complications if they contract COVID-19 are asking for better remote learning options. Some states have removed virtual learning options for public school students this school year, making homeschooling through different means the only other choice, families say.

Susan Haigh. "Students with at-risk families fight to get remote options." *Associated Press*. August 19, 2021
[Students with at-risk families fight to get remote options \(apnews.com\)](#)

Survey: Changes wanted for classrooms post-pandemic

Parents and teachers say the coronavirus pandemic revealed changes that are needed to teaching and learning, according to a recent survey. More hands-on activities are needed, according to 61% of teachers, and more flexible learning environments, according to 55% of respondents.

Alyson Klein. "Changes Come Out of the Pandemic, Survey Says." *Education Week*. August 24, 2021
[Parents and Teachers Want to See Big Changes Come Out of the Pandemic, Survey Says \(edweek.org\)](#)

Myths about student suspensions

New longitudinal research shows that longer in- and out-of-school suspensions have severe consequences for students. HS students who get suspended out of school are significantly less likely to earn academic credits in the following year—and their peers get no academic benefit from their absence.

Sarah D. Sparks. "4 Myths About Suspensions That Could Hurt Students Long Term." *Education Week*. August 26, 2021
[4 Myths About Suspensions That Could Hurt Students Long Term \(edweek.org\)](#)

Community schools providing safety net for students

There is growing momentum for the community school model, which represents between 6% - 8% of US schools. President Biden's budget resolution includes \$442 million for schools that want to become community schools -- about 15 times more federal aid than currently received. Linda Darling-Hammond, president and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute, said the nation's "tattered safety net for children" makes community schools preferable. Lauren Camera. "'Community Schools' See Revival in Time of Heightened Need." *U.S. News & World Report*. August 25, 2021
['Community Schools' See Revival in Time of Heightened Need | Education News | US News](#)

Opinion: Outdoor learning improves outcomes

Outdoor learning, whether for a class period or on a multiday trip, is credited with improving outcomes for students, including academic performance and health, according a director of outdoor education in California. In this article, that director shares a guide to help educators establish outdoor learning programs

Mike Chapman. "8 Simple Steps to Launching an Outdoor Learning Program." *Edutopia*. August 26, 2021
[8 Simple Steps to Launching a Middle or High School Outdoor Learning Program | Edutopia](#)

Teachers rally against limiting discussions about racism

As state lawmakers introduce legislation to limit teaching about racism and sexism, some teachers are pushing back and speaking out. But others are holding back, for fear of repercussions.

Sarah Schwartz. "Teachers Rally Against Laws Aimed at Limiting Classroom Discussion of Racism." *Education Week*. August 30, 2021
[Teachers Rally Against Laws Aimed at Limiting Classroom Discussion of Racism \(edweek.org\)](#)

How one district created a more reliable supply of substitute teachers

The pandemic has turned the sub shortage into a crisis in many communities, and some school districts are investing more creative thinking and financial resources into solutions. This article describes how one Rhode Island school district has successfully tackled this problem.

Elizabeth Heubeck. "This District Built a Better, More Reliable Supply of Substitute Teachers. Here's How." *Education Week*. September 2, 2021
[This District Built a Better, More Reliable Supply of Substitute Teachers. Here's How \(edweek.org\)](#)

FEDERAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

School vaccination clinics slow going

Districts are heeding President Biden's call to host pop-up vaccination clinics. But promoting vaccines is politically difficult, and persuading parents isn't easy.

Sheryl Gay Stolberg. "As childhood covid cases spike, school vaccination clinics are slow going." *NY Times*. August 20, 2021
[As Childhood Covid Cases Spike, School Vaccination Clinics Are Slow Going - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

Commentary: The end of 'education reform' in one of our largest school districts

The author documents the end of education 'reform' in Chicago. Chicago's Board of Education has voted to end its school turnaround program and return the 31 schools operated by a private management company to the district. Also, the Illinois state legislature voted to rescind mayoral control of Chicago schools in favor of an elected school board. Plus, in December 2020, Chicago's largest charter school chain, [disavowed](#) its "no excuses" approach to educating Black and brown students, and other charter chains followed suit. Other policies being discarded include [state takeovers](#) of low-performing schools, evaluating teachers [based on student test scores](#), and [flunking third-graders](#) who score below a certain threshold.

Jeff Bryant. "The end of school 'reform'." *The Progressive*. August 11, 2021
[Comment: The End of School 'Reform' - Progressive.org](#)

Federal aid a flash point in disagreements for mask policies

As tensions escalate over school mask policies, the Biden administration reassures schools they can use federal aid to make up for penalties for defying state bans on mask mandates.

Evie Blad. Federal COVID Aid a Flash Point as Tensions Escalate Over School Mask Policies. *Education Week*. August 23, 2021

Federal COVID Aid a Flash Point as Tensions Escalate Over School Mask Policies ([edweek.org](https://www.edweek.org))

Poll: Majority of Americans support school mask and vaccine mandates

A majority of Americans say they support K-12 school mask mandates, but their views are sharply divided along political lines, according to a new poll. About 60% of those polled say students and teachers should be required to wear face masks while in school, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Similar shares say teachers and eligible students should also be required to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The poll found a wide partisan divide. About 30% of Republicans favor mask requirements for students and teachers, compared with about 80% of Democrats. There was a similar split over vaccine mandates in schools.

Collin Binkley & Hannah Fingerhut, Associated Press. "AP-NORC poll finds school mask, vaccine mandates supported in U.S." *Associated Press/PBS News Hour*. August 23, 2021

AP-NORC poll finds school mask, vaccine mandates supported in U.S. | [PBS NewsHour](https://www.pbs.org/newshour)

More colleges dropping application fees

Colleges that are dropping application fees are finding more students are applying. And students are applying to several colleges when they don't have to pay the fees, which can range from \$30 to \$90.

Scott Jaschik. "Fee-Free College Applications Gain Popularity." *Inside Higher Education*. August 23, 2021

More colleges embrace fee-free applications ([insidehighered.com](https://www.insidehighered.com))

Tax limits set by states can hamper local fiscal stability

States should consider adjusting policies that tightly restrict budget flexibility for cities and counties, according to a report from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Jean Demeo. "State tax limits can hamper local fiscal stability." *Route Fifty*. August 25, 2021

State Tax Limits Can Hamper Local Fiscal Stability - [Route Fifty](https://www.route-fifty.com) ([route-fifty.com](https://www.route-fifty.com))

U.S.E.D.: Schools must identify students with disabilities

Despite challenges raised by the pandemic, schools must meet their obligations under federal law to identify and serve children with disabilities, the U.S.E.D. said in [new guidance](#) Tuesday. The guidance stresses schools' responsibilities to those with disabilities, while noting that federal COVID aid can be used to address backlogs.

Evie Blad. "Schools Must Identify Students With Disabilities Despite Pandemic Hurdles, Ed. Dept. Says." *Education Week*. August 24, 2021

Schools Must Identify Students With Disabilities Despite Pandemic Hurdles, Ed. Dept. Says ([edweek.org](https://www.edweek.org))

Half of the world's children face extreme climate threat

About one billion children (nearly half of all children globally) face extremely high threats from climate change as well as inadequate essential services, such as water and sanitation, healthcare and education. Almost all the world's children are at risk from either heat waves, floods, storms, disease, drought or air pollution, a UN report indicates.

"UN Report: Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis." *Voice of America*. August 20, 2021

UN Report: Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis | [Voice of America - English](https://www.voanews.com) ([voanews.com](https://www.voanews.com))

Damien Carrington. "A billion children at 'extreme risk' from climate impacts - Unicef." *The Guardian* (London). August 20, 2021

A billion children at 'extreme risk' from climate impacts - Unicef | [Climate crisis](https://www.theguardian.com) | [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com)

U.S.E.D. investigating states with mask-mandate bans

The Education Department is investigating five states with mask-mandate bans, saying the rules may violate laws protecting students with disabilities. State education leaders in Iowa, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah, were informed that the department's Office for Civil Rights would determine whether the prohibitions are restricting access for students who are protected under federal law.

Erica Green & Daniel Slotnick. "The U.S. Education Department is investigating five states over their mask mandate bans." *NY Times*. August 30, 2021

https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/30/us/politics/biden-masks-investigations-special-education.html?campaign_id=60&emc=edit_na_20210830&instance_id=0&nl=breaking-news&ref=cta®_id=18877907&segment_id=67623&user_id=dcf379af08119fa8d853cdc6f688bfc

Evie Blad. "Education Department Opens Civil Rights Probes in 5 States That Ban School Mask Mandates." *Education Week*. August 30, 2021

Education Department Opens Civil Rights Probes in 5 States That Ban School Mask Mandates ([edweek.org](https://www.edweek.org))

Andrew Kreighbaum & Courtney Rozen. "U.S. Opens Civil Rights Probes Over Mask Rules in GOP States." *Bloomberg Report*.

August 30, 2021

Mask Mandate Bans: U.S. Opens Civil-Rights Review of States - [Bloomberg](https://www.bloomberg.com)

UNICEF & WHO: Keeping schools open a priority

The pandemic has caused a significant disruption to education around the world, and keeping schools open must be a priority to protect students' mental health and social development, UNICEF and the World Health Organization warn. Teachers and other school staff should get priority access to vaccines to help ensure schools can remain open.

Jon Henley. "Schools across Europe must stay open, say WHO and Unicef." *The Guardian* (London). August 30, 2021

Schools across Europe must stay open, say WHO and Unicef | [Coronavirus](https://www.theguardian.com) | [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com)

Federal \$\$ earmarked for student mental health

President Biden's administration announced \$85 million to help support students' mental health. The announcement comes as the CDC reports a 31% increase in mental health-related emergency room visits among youth.

Shawna De La Rosa. "Biden administration pledges \$85M to support student mental health." *K-12 Dive*. August 30, 2021

[Biden administration pledges \\$85M to support student mental health | K-12 Dive \(k12dive.com\)](#)

Support for school choice wanes

A new public opinion poll from *Education Next* finds that public support for charter schools and school vouchers has dropped significantly in the last year.

Michael B. Henderson, David Houston, Paul E. Peterson, & Martin R. West. "Hunger for Stability Quells Appetite for Change." *Education Next*.

August 30, 2021

[Hunger for Stability Quells Appetite for Change - Education Next](#)

Educators stressed and want to quit

Half of teachers and staff say they feel stressed and burned out and more than a third say they want to quit, according to a new survey. K-12 teachers and staff are more stressed, burnt out and anxious compared to other state and local employees, according to [a new study](#) by the MissionSquare Research Institute. More than one-third (37%) of K-12 employees surveyed say the pandemic is to blame for them considering a job change.

Jean Dimeo. "Educators Want to Leave Their Jobs More Than Other Government Workers Do." *Route Fifty*. August 30, 2021

[Educators Want to Leave Their Jobs More Than Other Government Workers Do - Route Fifty \(route-fifty.com\)](#)

U.S. public-school enrollment drops by 2%

Enrollment in U.S. public schools dropped by about 1.1 million students (2%) in the 2020-21 school year, according to a paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research. Researchers say the greatest losses were among younger students, which is likely to have lasting effects.

David Nagel. "Public Schools Lost 1.1 Million Students During 2020–2021 School Year." *T.H.E. Journal*. August 31, 2021

[Public Schools Lost 1.1 Million Students During 2020–2021 School Year -- THE Journal](#)

Commentary: Charter schools not underfunded

The claim is repeatedly made that district schools have a huge revenue and spending advantage over charter schools. Certain authors engage in a circle of self-citation and reiteration of findings from the same analyses that fail to appropriately assign or attribute revenues allocated to relevant children served, and fail to compare schools providing services of similar scope to similar populations. Studies performed by competent researchers find the reverse to be true. One study found "after accounting for differences in accounting structures and cost factors, **charter schools receive significantly more state and local funding compared to traditional public schools with similar structural characteristics and student demographics.**" It is NOT true that charter schools are shorted large amounts of funding compared to their district school counterparts serving similar populations.

Bruce Baker. "What does research say about Charter – District School Spending Differences?" *School Finance 101*. September 2, 2021

<https://schoolfinance101.wordpress.com/2021/09/02/what-does-research-say-about-charter-district-school-spending-differences/>

NEW YORK STATE

NYS Health Department: Masks required in all preK-12 schools

Face masks are to be required inside all public and private school buildings serving students preK-12 under an emergency regulation filed by the state health department, a spokeswoman said.

Matthew Chayes & Craig Schneider. "NY health department mandates masks in all pre-K to Grade 12 schools." *Newsday*. August 30, 2021

[NY health department mandates masks in all pre-K to Grade 12 schools | Newsday](#)

Regents call for discussion of racism & diversity

The state's Board of Regents has called for school districts to discuss in classrooms the role racism plays in America, to diversify their staffs, and to teach in ways that respond to the increasing diversity of student bodies.

Nicholas Spangler. "Regents urge discussion of racism, diversity in classrooms." *Newsday*. August 25, 2021

[NYS Regents urge discussion of racism, diversity in classrooms | Newsday](#)

NYS bus driver shortage is severe

School districts and private contractors in NYS are reporting a 15% to 20% shortage in the bus driver force as the pandemic prompted many drivers to choose not to come back because of concerns over their health.

Barbara O'Brien. "School districts struggling with 'severe' bus driver shortage." *Buffalo News*. August 30, 2021

[School districts struggling with 'severe' bus driver shortage | Education | buffalonews.com](#)

Governor negotiating with unions regarding shots for educators

Governor Hochul is open to letting school personnel and faculty take time off to get vaccinated as she negotiates a COVID-19 shot mandate for teachers and faculty in NYS.

Nick Reisman. "Hochul: Getting school workers vaccinated part of negotiations." *NY State of Politics/Spectrum News*. August 31, 2021
[Hochul: Getting school workers vaccinated \(nystateofpolitics.com\)](https://www.nystateofpolitics.com)

State approves two COVID regulations for schools

The state Public Health and Health Planning Council approved two emergency regulations for schools – a requirement that all public and private schools report COVID-19 positive test results daily to the state Department of Health and a potential testing requirement for unvaccinated staff.

Joie Tyrrell and Craig Schneider. "NY health panel approves COVID-19 reporting for schools, possible staff testing." *Newsday*. September 2, 2021
[NY health panel approves COVID-19 reporting for schools, possible staff testing | Newsday](https://www.newsday.com/ny-health-panel-approves-covid-19-reporting-for-schools-possible-staff-testing)

Governor mandates COVID testing for all unvaccinated school staff

The mandate came after a state health panel had unanimously approved two emergency regulations for NYS schools — testing unvaccinated school staff and reporting COVID-19 cases daily to the state health department.

Joie Tyrrell and Craig Schneider. "Hochul: Weekly COVID-19 tests for all unvaccinated school staff in New York." *Newsday*. September 2, 2021
[Hochul: Weekly COVID-19 tests for all unvaccinated school staff in New York | Newsday](https://www.newsday.com/hochul-weekly-covid-19-tests-for-all-unvaccinated-school-staff-in-new-york)

NYS Health Department releases guidance for schools on COVID testing

The NYS Department of Health has released a three-page guidance for schools on testing for COVID-19 as schools reopen— including a weekly testing requirement for unvaccinated school personnel.

Nick Reisman, "New York releases COVID-19 testing guidance for schools." *State of Politics/Spectrum News*. September 2, 2021
[New York releases COVID testing guidance for schools \(nystateofpolitics.com\)](https://www.nystateofpolitics.com)