

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

Summer 2023 Education News Update

Please note:

This is the final edition of *Education News Update*. I have enjoyed keeping myself as well as others up to date on trends and issues in public education. However, I can no longer devote the many hours required for its creation. At the end of this week's articles, I have listed resources for ed news that you might want to contact to be placed on their daily email distribution lists. Best wishes as you continue your interest in educating our next generation.

Judy

TEACHING & LEARNING

Cities use play in public places to help kids learn

For the past several years, cities like Philadelphia have quietly been installing rudimentary, open-ended games in places like bus stops, laundromats and grocery stores, nudging parents and caregivers to interact with kids around basic skills like math, reading and history. The preliminary findings are promising, according to developmental psychologist Sarah Lytle. A supermarket signage project has significantly increased how much parents talk to their kids. That's helping to build worldwide support for the effort.

Greg Toppo. "From Bus Stops to Laundromats, Cities Embrace Play to Help Kids Learn." *The 74 Million*. July 6, 2023
[From Bus Stops to Laundromats, Cities Embrace Play to Help Kids Learn – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](https://www.the74million.org/article/from-bus-stops-to-laundromats-cities-embrace-play-to-help-kids-learn/)

Ohio students star in campaigns about technology use

Springfield, Ohio, MS students are featured in two public service campaigns encouraging viewers to take a break from technology and connect with others. Local theaters will run these PSAs before every movie in July and August. The school district partnered with two local counseling organizations for the project, which is expected will have a lasting impact on students.

Brooke Spurlock. "Springfield middle school students appear in movie theater PSAs this summer." *Springfield News-Sun* (Ohio). July 3, 2023
[Springfield middle school students appear in movie theater PSAs this summer \(springfieldnewssun.com\)](https://www.springfieldnewssun.com/story/news/local/2023/07/03/springfield-middle-school-students-appear-in-movie-theater-psas-this-summer/7041117002/)

Restorative justice helps build stronger schools

A Maryland school district's implementation of restorative justice practices is proving effective in resolving conflicts and creating healthier school climates. By emphasizing dialogue, understanding and personal responsibility, restorative justice approaches are helping students, parents and educators address misbehavior, repair relationships and prevent future conflicts.

Caralee Adams. "What does restorative justice look like?" *Hechinger Report*. July 15, 2023
[What does restorative justice look like? - The Hechinger Report](https://www.hechingerreport.com/what-does-restorative-justice-look-like/)

Study: Public preK helped disadvantaged 5th graders

A recent study conducted by University of California Irvine School of Education showed marked positive outcomes for Black and Hispanic disadvantaged children in the 5th grade who had attended pre-K programs. The study has implications for states providing funding for free pre-K attendance.

Kate Lucariello. "Study Finds Positive Results for Disadvantaged Children in Fifth Grade from Public Pre-K Programs." *T.H.E. Journal*. July 17, 2023.
[Study Finds Positive Results for Disadvantaged Children in Fifth Grade from Public Pre-K Programs -- THE Journal](https://www.thejournal.com/study-finds-positive-results-for-disadvantaged-children-in-fifth-grade-from-public-pre-k-programs/)

Report: Social media harms students' mental health

The American Federation of Teachers highlights social media as the "root cause" of worsening student mental health in a new report. The report calls on social media companies to make fundamental changes to their platforms, prioritizing student's safety, protecting them from addiction and risky algorithms, and working directly with K-12 schools and parents to address the toll certain online technologies take on students.

Micah Ward. "Social media is undermining education, says the AFT. What needs to change?" *District Administration*. July 25, 2023
[Is social media undermining K12 schools? Educators say yes \(districtadministration.com\)](https://www.districtadministration.com/news/social-media-undermining-k12-schools-educators-say-yes/)

Spike in special education students strains schools

Over the past 40 years, the number of U.S. students in special education has doubled -- reaching 15% of the K-12 student population. This increase has led to a growing demand for special education services and put a strain on schools' efforts to find qualified teachers to meet these needs.

Eesha Pendharkar. "The Number of Students in Special Education Has Doubled in the Past 45 Years." July 31, 2023
[The Number of Students in Special Education Has Doubled in the Past 45 Years \(edweek.org\)](#)

Cybersickness: The Common Virtual Reality Side Effect

Cybersickness can be caused by the use of VR headsets or related technologies, and includes symptoms such as nausea, dizziness, sweating, and eyestrain. Researchers at Iowa State University, have found that half of new virtual reality users experience cybersickness after 10 minutes of playing a VR game, and after 20 minutes that number rises to 75%. "

Erik Ofgang. "What is Cybersickness? The Common Virtual Reality Side Effect Explained." *Tech & Learning*. August 2, 2023
[What is Cybersickness? The Common VR Side Effect Explained | Tech & Learning \(techlearning.com\)](#)

More teachers are quitting their jobs. Educators of color often are more likely to leave

Teachers are leaving jobs in growing numbers, reports show. The turnover in some cases is highest among teachers of color. A major culprit is stress from pandemic-era burnout, low pay, and the intrusion of politics. Burdens can be heavier in schools serving high-poverty communities that also have higher numbers of teachers of color.

Marc Levy. "Burnout, low pay and politics are driving away teachers. Turnover is soaring for educators of color." *Associated Press*. August 2, 2023
[Teachers of color are more likely to quit their jobs | AP News](#)

How nations are dealing with AI in education

Rapid developments in artificial intelligence have taken U.S. schools by surprise, with many districts limiting AI use. Investigation by the author found that other developed nations have concerns similar to those in the U.S. but are using AI to personalize education, enhance language lessons and help teachers with mundane tasks. She reports on findings from Singapore, South Korea, India, China, Finland, and Japan.

Robin Lake. "Shockwaves & Innovations: How Nations Worldwide Are Dealing with AI in Education." *The 74 Million*. August 7, 2023
[Shockwaves & Innovations: How Nations Worldwide Are Dealing with AI in Education – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Redesigning HS to customize student experience

Instead of attending one home campus, the 83 students at PXU City High School in Arizona craft their own educational pathways using classes they choose from the district's brick-and-mortar and online schools, plus college classes, internships, career training programs, and jobs.

Beth Hawkins. "Build Your Own High School: Phoenix Students Choose from 500 Classes, Internships, College Courses, Career Programs & More." *The 74 Million*. August 3, 2023
[Build Your Own High School: Phoenix Students Choose from 500 Classes, Internships, College Courses, Career Programs & More – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Research touts benefits of Montessori approach

Students enrolled in Montessori programs outperform their traditional-school counterparts in language, math and overall academic skills, along with excelling in executive functioning, according to a review of 32 studies conducted by multiple universities and school districts. One of the study's authors suggests that the Montessori approach could serve as an alternative teaching method for enhancing student engagement and academic achievement.

Kara Arundel. "Montessori method has 'strong and clear' impact on student performance. *K-12 Dive*. August 8, 2023
[Montessori method has 'strong and clear' impact on student performance | K-12 Dive \(k12dive.com\)](#)

Commentary: Community Schools Expand 'Parental Rights'

More U.S. public schools are using the 'community schools' approach to increase parent involvement, with promising results for students. Community schools listen to parents about their children's needs in and out of school, and it's working well. These schools offer a range of support for students to ensure they are healthy, well fed, safe, and in the best position to learn. Challenges differ from school to school, but school leaders work with parents and the wider community to solve them. Challenges solved include dangerous traffic patterns, lack of after-school activities, and lack of street lights. Teachers and staff visit families in homes to discuss questions and concerns. California has invested \$4 billion in community schools and federal funding for the approach has increased.

Jeremy Mohler is a therapist who previously served as communications director for In the Public Interest.

Jeremy Mohler. "Community schools, not conservative politicians, expand 'parental rights'." *In the Public Interest*. August 10, 2023.
[Community Schools, Not Conservative Politicians, Expand 'Parental Rights' - In the Public Interest](#)

Educators embrace AI in the classroom

Many teachers are beginning to use AI such as ChatGPT as an educational tool, acknowledging both AI's potential benefits and limitations to introduce their students to a useful tool while maintaining academic integrity. One language arts teacher allowed students to use ChatGPT to translate lines from Shakespeare's "Othello" into modern

English so they could better understand the plot and themes, while another educator used ChatGPT to generate an essay comparing "1984" and "The Handmaid's Tale" and had students critique the AI's work.

Olivia B. Waxman. "The Creative Ways Teachers Are Using ChatGPT in the Classroom." *TIME Magazine*. August 8, 2023
[How Teachers Are Using AI Like ChatGPT in Schools | Time](#)

6 methods of tailoring support to students' needs

Implementing a system of scaffolds is essential to helping students at varied stages of comprehension to absorb and retain more information. This article includes evidence-backed tips to help students cross the bridge from confusion to clarity. Some of the six scaffolding exercises offered include auditing instructional materials for clarity, building students' background knowledge, and using learning exercises with multiple sensory pathways.

Youki Terada. "6 Foundational Ways to Scaffold Student Learning." *Edutopia*. August 11, 2023
[6 Foundational Ways to Scaffold Student Learning | Edutopia](#)

4 articles on supporting new MS and HS students

Adolescence is a tumultuous time for transitioning to MS and HS, a [2022 study](#) suggests. Researchers analyzed survey data from thousands of 11- and 14-year-olds in the U.K., and found that the 14-year-olds reported much lower satisfaction with school, school work, and their relationships with friends than their younger peers. The findings are consistent with [recent data on declining adolescent well-being](#) in the U.S. To guide teens, schools can draw on evidence-based interventions. In a [2019 study](#), new middle schoolers read brief reflections from older students about how they overcame their MS struggles, then wrote about how they planned to manage their own difficulties. This simple perspective-taking exercise had dramatic effects: By the end of the year, disciplinary infractions and failing grades dropped by 34% and 18%, respectively, while attendance improved by 12%, compared to the control group. In 2011, a [similar intervention](#) was effective for recently arrived college students. (Click on highlighted phrases to access the articles.)

Commentary: A school of the future

Mat-Su Central in Wasilla, Alaska, might be called a hybrid homeschool, but that modern term belies its much-older origins. The school's unique history helped shape it into what could be a model for the rest of the country, and it has lessons for any state or district leader looking to deliver personalized, high-quality public education.

Chad Aldeman. "In Alaska, a School of the Future 50 Years in the Making." *The 74 Million*. August 15, 2023
[In Alaska, a School of the Future 50 Years in the Making – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Commentary: Teach students good decision-making skills

Balancing the need for classroom discipline and student empowerment, the author reflects on the importance of allowing students to participate in rule-making, fostering decision-making skills. He writes that by focusing on a few overarching rules like preparedness, respect and punctuality, educators can create an environment that promotes positive behavior while teaching students to understand and embrace the consequences of their choices.

Author Cassell is a HS administrator.

Sean Cassel. "Let Kids Make Decisions." *Edutopia*. August 8, 2023
[Fewer School Rules Can Have Great Results | Edutopia](#)

Commentary: Literacy is job of all teachers

Literacy instruction is a whole-school task that is the responsibility of content teachers as well as English-language arts educators, argue the authors. These teachers explain that school subjects have varied literacy needs that should be taught along with content, including examples, to enable students "to access, analyze, navigate, and create messages from a wide variety of genres, text types, text structures, and media."

Margarita Calderón, Leticia M. Trower, and Lisa Tartaglia. "I Teach Content in Secondary Schools. Do I Need to Teach Reading?" *Language Magazine*. August 14, 2023
[I Teach Content in Secondary Schools. Do I Need to Teach Reading? - Language Magazine](#)

Heat challenges plague classrooms nationwide

Sweltering classrooms due to inadequate cooling systems are hindering learning and causing health concerns among educators in several US states. Budgetary constraints and the increasing frequency of heat waves are exacerbating the issue, prompting educators to call for better classroom conditions and investments in upgraded cooling systems.

Daniella Silva. "Hot classrooms are impairing student learning and health amid record-hot year, teachers say." *NBC News*. August 19, 2023
[Hot classrooms are impairing student learning and health amid record-hot year, teachers say \(nbcnews.com\)](#)

In-person remote learning returns amid teacher vacancies

Some districts across the US have turned to remote instruction services to teach students as schools struggle to fill open teaching positions. Supporters of the approach note that the remote learning sessions are more intentional and interactive than the formats used during pandemic-related school closures, but critics say the model could lead to disengagement and learning loss among students.

Linda Jacobson. "Exclusive Data: Fueled by Teacher Shortages, 'Zoom-in-a-Room' Makes a Comeback." *The 74 Million*. August 17, 2023
[Exclusive Data: Fueled by Teacher Shortages, 'Zoom-in-a-Room' Makes a Comeback – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Commentary: Community school model may be best route to real school reform

A diverse and growing number of educators, students, families, and policymakers are calling for reimagining schools to support community; to create structures and practices to support relevant and engaging learning; and to organize resources and opportunities to mitigate the effects of structural racism and decades of disinvestment in low-income communities of color. Schools need to compensate for deficiencies in our social safety net. Many districts, large and small, and states are investing in community schools—to address the lacking social safety net and to provide a catalyst for cultural and practice changes needed to better serve students and adults. Community schools leverage a web of partnerships and relationships to support and engage students and families. By integrating access to services (e.g., medical care, housing), and making them available to families on school campuses, community schools provide a much-needed alternative to the fragmented bureaucratic social services gauntlet that families in need must navigate. Community schools treat families as trusted partners, and provide educators and staff with the needed tools, agency, and support to shift practices to expand capacities of students and adults.

Linda Darling-Hammond is a prominent professor at Stanford and president of The Learning Policy Institute.

Linda Darling Hammond. “Transforming schools to serve our children well.” *Learning Policy Institute*. July 6, 2023
[Transforming Schools to Serve Our Children Well | Learning Policy Institute](#)

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

Charter schools fail and close often

Disinformation from promoters that charter schools are successful is belied by the failure and closure of charter schools every week, abandoning hundreds of students, parents, teachers, and principals. This article provides many examples. A media more critical of charter schools and more in tune with research would make the public aware of far more problems, failures, and closures in the charter school sector. Most charter school students are low-income minority youth. Charter schools are generally more segregated than public schools, tend to have fewer nurses and fewer experienced teachers, do not offer meals or transportation, and all are governed by unelected private persons. Like private businesses, charter schools spend a large amount of money on advertising. Rochester’s Urban Choice Charter School met only 3 of its 10 benchmarks, student performance on standardized tests lagged behind RCSD schools in most areas, and the school failed to follow through on promises it made to secure earlier charter extensions. Dozens of charter schools in NYS have failed and closed.

Shawgi Tell. “Charter Schools Fail And Close Every Week.” *Dissident Voice*. June 28, 2023
[Charter Schools Fail And Close Every Week | Dissident Voice](#)

Economist analyzes effect of Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action

After the Supreme Court’s decision overruling race-based admissions, university leaders and applicants alike must confront the question of what will take their place. For Georgetown economist Anthony Carnevale, the future is decidedly murky, with universities coming under far greater scrutiny and employers dramatically shifting strategies to cultivate diversity. “One of the problems for elite colleges is that they’re going to become unpopular because everyone is going to see them as what they are: institutions that preserve elites.”

Kevin Mahnken. “Harvard Ruling Will Put Spotlight on College Elitism, Georgetown Economist Says.” *The 74 Million*. July 10, 2023
[Harvard Ruling Will Put Spotlight on College Elitism, Georgetown Economist Says – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Commentary: Pandemic “sky is falling” attitude panned

A *New York Times* article laments that American students are not making up the ground they lost academically during the pandemic. The pandemic created many disruptions: family members died or were very sick, teachers and other school staff died or were very sick, many schools closed, many adopted online classes, normal life came to an end for more than two years, affecting family life and mental health. *New York Times* education reporter Sarah Mervosh predicted that the text score point loss from 2019 to 2022 will result in fewer students accepted to college with a resulting lifetime loss of \$70,000 income (assuming that colleges will forego payments from students who scored 5 points lower on 8th grade tests). In 1990, scores were 30 points lower and lifetime incomes were fine.

Gene V Glass is Emeritus Regents’ Professor, Arizona State University.

“Gene V. Glass: The sky truly is falling, somewhere.” *Diane Ravitch’s blog*. July 13, 2023

[Gene V. Glass: The Sky Truly Is Falling, Somewhere | Diane Ravitch’s blog](#)

Education redlining and politics of school closures

This article uses as an example of redlining, the closure of Tampa’s Just Elementary School. Fewer than 11% of its students could read at grade level, and the building was already half-empty. There was a great school about 2 miles away. But the Just School kids didn’t get to go there. They were sent to schools farther away, where fewer kids were proficient in reading. This outcome was predictable as part of a pattern seen in almost all urban districts.

Tim DeRoche. “Educational Redlining, Rezoning and the Bitter Politics of School Closures.” *The 74 Million*. July 17, 2023

[Educational Redlining, Rezoning and the Bitter Politics of School Closures – The 74 \(the74million.org\)](#)

Charter school study faulted

A report by the Network for Public Education delineates the shortcomings of a report produced by the pro-charter CREDO organization, noting that CREDO produces reports that overstate insignificant and tiny differences that favor the charter sector, ones previously referred to as ‘meaningless’ and ‘small’ by CREDO itself. CREDO’s latest study, which does not address the methodical flaws previously exposed by researchers, compounds error with a charter management organization study that is so fraught with mistakes that its analysis is meaningless.

“In Fact or Fallacy: NPE Critiques Latest CREDO Report.” *Network for Public Education*. July 19, 2023

[In Fact or Fallacy: NPE Critiques Latest CREDO Report - Network For Public Education](#)

PDF of full report accessible at [In-Fact-or-Fallacy-CREDO-Report-1.pdf \(networkforpubliceducation.org\)](#).

U.S.E.D. investigating Harvard’s legacy admissions

Opening a new front in legal challenges over college admissions, the U.S.E.D. has launched a civil rights investigation into Harvard’s policies on legacy admissions. Top colleges’ preferential treatment of children of alumni has faced mounting scrutiny since the Supreme Court struck down the use of affirmative action as a tool to boost the presence of students of color. A recently filed complaint argued that students with legacy ties are up to 7 times more likely to be admitted to Harvard, can make up nearly a third of a class and that about 70% are white.

Michael Casey. “Education Department opens investigation into Harvard’s legacy admissions.” *Associated Press*. July 25, 2023

[Education Department opens investigation into Harvard’s legacy admissions | AP News](#)

Report on ALEC

Two Wisconsin Democratic legislators joined the ultra-conservative American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to learn what the group was planning. While ALEC is legally nonpartisan and a tax-exempt nonprofit, it is the birthplace of right-wing legislative proposals. ALEC has about 2,000 state legislators as members and writes model legislation against gun control, public schools, and environmental protections, etc. ALEC members introduce the model bills in their own legislatures. ALEC is funded by major corporations and acts as a voice against regulation. The two Wisconsin lawmakers state that knowing what ALEC is planning helps them understand coming challenges and to prepare legislation and messaging in opposition. As paying ALEC members (dues are \$200 a year; conference fees are \$750), Democrats can’t be excluded because of the group’s nonpartisan legal status. ALEC heavily promotes school privatization proposals, including education savings accounts and universal private school vouchers, like those approved in Arkansas earlier this year. ALEC seeks expanding public investment for religious schools, dismantling of accountability measures, and schooling focused on producing workers.

Erik Gunn is the deputy editor of the Wisconsin Examiner, which first published this report.

Erik Gunn. “Democratic lawmakers attend ALEC meeting to see what might be on the legislative agenda.” *NC Newslines*. August 2, 2023

[Democratic lawmakers attend ALEC meeting to see what might be on the legislative agenda | NC Newslines](#)

(NC Newslines is a nonpartisan nonprofit news organization dedicated to reporting and commentary that shines a light on injustice, holds public officials accountable, and helps improve the quality of life for North Carolinians.)

Commentary: Learning Loss Myth

There is a dangerous liberal-conservative consensus about learning loss, using it to shift blame for pandemic consequences. More than a million Americans have died of COVID-19, and people continue to become debilitated or die. Closing schools was necessary but exacerbated the emergency for children. In a country that offers no public childcare, schools allow for parents to work. In a country in which roughly 10% of the population are hungry, schools feed children. The learning loss narrative does not include the whole range of losses, nor does it encourage asking why our political and economic system, failed in anticipating, planning for, and coping with the coronavirus. Shifting blame away from the for-profit healthcare system and the government’s response to the pandemic makes the learning loss narrative valuable to those who don’t want to challenge existing power. Many school districts cannot quickly fill positions or, knowing that the federal windfall is only short-term, choose not to. Since resources for true recovery are not being offered, test scores are unlikely to improve rapidly, and critics can then accuse schools of failing. A real plan for recovery in public education — smaller class sizes, better conditions within school buildings, more student mental health resources, and higher pay for educators — would boost learning. It is not students and teachers who are failing, but a political and economic system that puts profit over people.

Rethinking Schools began with a group of Milwaukee education activists seeking to bring more critical voices into conversations about public schools and libraries. These founding members saw school curriculum as conservative, dumbed-down, and dominated by textbook publishers. Inappropriate standardized testing was rampant. Racial bias infected every level of schooling.

Editors. “The “Learning Loss” Trap.” *Rethinking Schools*. August 2023

[The “Learning Loss” Trap - Rethinking Schools](#)

Cyberattacks drain millions from schools

Hackers exploited email access to steal \$6 million from New Haven Public Schools (CT), impersonating administrators and vendors in fraudulent transactions. Similar attacks target schools nationwide, prompting efforts to improve K-12 cybersecurity, as institutions face financial losses and data breaches.

Anna Merod. “Cyberattacks cost New Haven Public Schools over \$6M.” *K-12 Dive*. August 18, 2023

[Cyberattacks cost New Haven Public Schools over \\$6M | K-12 Dive \(k12dive.com\)](#)

UN Panel backs children's right to sue over environment

All children are entitled to a clean and healthy environment, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child said, bolstering arguments for suing authorities over the ravages of climate change. Children and youths have the right to seek legal recourse when those duties are not upheld, the Committee says. The opinion is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a treaty which has been ratified by every country in the world except the US.

“UN Committee: Kids Entitled to Clean, Healthy Environment.” *Voice of America*. August 28, 2023

[UN Committee: Kids Entitled to Clean, Healthy Environment \(voanews.com\)](#)

NEW YORK STATE

NYC students provide critical support to tutoring program

Many NYS HS students are earning extra money and exploring teaching as a career path through a tutoring program put on by the Reading Alliance. The program, which has helped 20,000 students learn to read, partners high schoolers with students through third grade for regular one-on-one tutoring.

Monica Morales. “NYC teens provide one-to-one literacy tutoring with Read Alliance.” *WPIX-TV (NYC)*. August 11, 2023

[NYC teens provide one-to-one literacy tutoring with Read Alliance \(pix11.com\)](#)

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