

Education News – March 8-14, 2008



Keeping you current on the latest news in education courtesy of our partner, TeachersCount.

Georgia Students Ponder Future As Schools Court Disaster

<http://www.latimes.com/news/education/la-na-clayton14mar14,1,3991002.story>

(Source: *The Los Angeles Times*, 3/14/08): The school district in Georgia's Clayton County, a predominantly black area outside of Atlanta, may become the first U.S. district since the 1960s to lose its accreditation. The source of the district's woes is the gross ethical misconduct of the school board. One board member, for example, spent taxpayer money on a hotel half an hour from her home, and another tried to have a football coach fired for refusing to create a highlights reel featuring her son. If the district loses its accreditation, its 53,000 students may have trouble getting into college, receiving scholarships, and transferring their credits to other schools.

No Small Plan: Public Boarding Schools for Chicago

http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-boarding-schools_14mar14,0,7696763.story

(Source: *The Chicago Tribune*, 3/14/08): The Chicago public school district is hoping to open public boarding schools for homeless students and those with troubled home lives as early as 2009. While details of the plan are still being worked out, officials say that public boarding schools would be a great asset for these students, as education is often an afterthought for children whose personal lives are so unstable.

The Daily Goal: An Orderly Dismissal

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/education/20080314_HIGH_SCHOOL_DRAMA.html

(Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/14/08): Each day after school, no fewer than 260,000 students flood the streets and trains of Philadelphia. Throughout the city, policemen and women are stationed for the expressed purpose of reducing the number of after-school incidents, which often result when students from rival schools encounter each other. Last year, 815 such crimes, mostly assaults and robberies, were reported in the district.

A Solution to How to Teach Math: Subtract

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-03-13-math-panel_N.htm

(Source: *USA Today*, 3/13/08): A new study commissioned by President Bush has found that the system of math instruction in the U.S. is “broken and must be fixed.” According to the report, the main problem is that curricula try to cover 20 or so math topics each year, with the result that many students are encountering a lot of math but mastering none of it. The panel recommended that math textbooks be made drastically shorter and that curricula focus on teaching a few key concepts each year thoroughly rather than merely touching upon a great number.

Firings Cut Payroll by \$6 Million

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/11/AR2008031102747.html>

(Source: *The Washington Post*, 3/12/08): D.C. Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee fired 98 employees from the school district’s central office last week. The firings will reduce the payroll by \$6 million and are part of Rhee’s plan to both rein in expenses and increase efficiency. The decision, however, was not uncontroversial—D.C. Council members have demanded details on the firings, but thus far Rhee and her staff have not been forthcoming.

Parent-Teacher Talks Can Get Heated

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-conference10mar10,1,5962766.story>

(Source: *The Los Angeles Times*, 3/10/08): Parent-teacher conferences are a classic feature in the landscape of U.S. education, but they are often a source of stress for teachers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that parents less frequently “side” with teachers, but instead defend their children and take umbrage at teachers’ criticism. To reduce tension, some teachers are encouraging student participation or creating peaceful environments with candles, music, and food at the meetings.

At L.A. School, Singapore Math Has Added Value

<http://www.latimes.com/news/education/la-me-math9mar09,1,2519213.story>

(Source: *The Los Angeles Times*, 3/9/08): California has become the first state to approve the use of the Singapore series, the official math curriculum of Singapore, which boasts the world’s highest-rated math students. The books are being used in only a handful of schools, but the initial results are very promising. At one school, Ramona Elementary in Hollywood, fifth grade math proficiency went from 45% to 76% in just one year.

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