

October 17–23



Keeping you current on the latest news in education courtesy of our partner, [TeachersCount](#).

**[Duncan Points to Teachers Colleges](#)** (*USA Today*, October 22) In a recent speech to Columbia University's Teachers College, Education Secretary Arne Duncan called for radical change in teacher education programs. A 2006 report highlighted various cases of disappointed alumni, many of whom blamed their college programs for leaving them unprepared to teach. Due to high enrollment, and "mediocre" services, Duncan has branded teacher education programs as cash happy.

**[Funding For Early Education Only](#)** (*Education Week*, October 22) Amidst a recession and education budget woes, state pre-kindergarten funding is estimated to rise. The increase in federal funding will be about one percent nationally, a hope that seems commensurate with the Obama administration's push for an improved early education system. States may also see an even greater influx of funding pending Congress' decision on the Early Learning Challenge Fund, a portion of a larger federal funding bill that is expected to reach the Senate within the month.

**[Guidance Counselors Overwhelmed](#)** (*New York Times*, October 20) With rising numbers in college applications and economic struggles, school guidance counselors find themselves fighting to keep up. According to a study by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, high schools have increased the number of student cases for guidance counselors this year. The study highlights an average increase of about 53 students per counselor. These results coincide with the increasing college application pool, thus acceptance numbers have begun to decline. The statistic has sent many college-bound students into frenzy. Students have begun to increase the volume of applications to improve their admission chances.

**[Study Shows Academic Struggles for Hispanic Children](#)** (*New York Times*, October 21) A recent study shows evidence that children of Hispanic immigrants begin to fall behind in cognitive development in their early years. The study conducted by University of California, Berkeley, emphasizes that while the abilities of Hispanic infants are on par with other American infants, cognitive disparity begins to emerge at the grade school level. The evidence is said to validate previous findings, which show that by the third grade, children of Hispanic immigrants often fall

behind other students by as much as grade level. Unfortunately, the reason behind such a disparity remains unclear.

**Uproar Causes Change in District's Code of Conduct Policy** (*USA Today*, October 19) Contrary to the Obama administration's push to extend student time in classrooms, Hawaii's public schools find themselves slashing their school year from 180 to 163 days. The decision came in an effort to shore up Hawaii's budget amidst a recession, but has resulted in a parent uproar. The cuts are part of a budget deal with an 81% approval by voting teachers. The deal requires teachers to accept a pay reduction commiserate to the shortened year with the promise of no layoffs for the next two years.

**Baltimore Schools Getting Better** (*Education Week*, October 22) With steady increases on state exam performance, Baltimore's public schools have been removed from the "corrective action" status, a label that is given to struggling Maryland schools. The status allows state officials to reorganize or even close schools that are unable to meet the standards of No Child Left Behind. Much of the improved school performance has been attributed to Andres A. Alonso, the chief executive officer of Baltimore public schools. As a result Baltimore public school enrollment is beginning to grow. But Alonso remains humble stating that the city's scholastic improvements are just a starting point, as the school system aims for long term success.

**Voucher Program Revitalized** (*The Wall Street Journal*, October 19) Over the past year the Washington D.C. school voucher campaign seemingly vanished when Congress voted against funding the program in March. However, after various rallies and advertisement efforts the once lost idea has come back to life. The program, predominantly supported by Republican lawmakers, has caught the attention of Dick Durbin, the Democrat senator from Illinois, who has expressed a willingness to support the bill with some modifications. Connecticut independent, Senator Joe Lieberman recently sponsored a bill that would reauthorize the voucher plan. However, the bill is still subject to heavy negotiations.