

STEP UP TO SUCCESS...

A TA Initiative for Persistently Dangerous Schools, Gen I and II
Thru M. H. West & Co., Inc. for the Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
June 24, 2011 -- Expanded Weekly Edition



Selected News & Sound Clips for the Day*

NEWS FOR THE DAY*

Summer Educators 'Mix Up' Learning with Technology

Educators are rethinking how best to use the summer to help students improve academic proficiency rather than lose a grip on it—especially students who struggle academically or lack access to educational resources during the break.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/15/35summertech.h30.html?tkn=NZWF3sfCu3eSzdHfhuqr7OSsCVJ0OMkJLIMh&cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2>

Study Finds Gaps Remain Large for Hispanic Students

While growing numbers of Hispanic students have changed the face of American education over the past two decades, the gap between them and their white classmates in math and reading remains as wide as it was in the 1990s, according to a new federal study. Yet non-Hispanic white students exceeded Hispanic students' increase in math in both the 4th and 8th grades during the same time, and while white students' performance improved more slowly in reading, the growth was not slow enough for Hispanic students to catch up and close the gaps of more than two grade levels between the two.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/23/36hispanic.h30.html?cmp=ENL-EU-SUBCNT>

CPS Teachers Making Home Visits? New CEO Jean-Claude Brizard Floats Idea

Chicago Public Schools could lengthen the school year — without paying teachers more money — professional development days when schools are closed to students into teaching days would be turned into teaching days. Teachers could also lose their automatic pay raises for experience and credentials and be asked to pay two “home visits” each year to build a “better connection” to students’ parents or guardians.

<http://www.suntimes.com/6139863-417/schools-ceo-more-days-in-class-home-visits-but-fewer-teacher-raises.html>

Changes in State Bullying Law Applauded

Leaders of the effort to reduce bullying in the Norwich area applauded changes to the state's 2001 bullying law and await implementation by school systems in time for the new school year. The Greater Norwich Anti-Bullying Coalition held a news conference Wednesday to discuss changes the group had lobbied for during the spring legislative session. The bill, which awaits Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's signature, includes a new definition of bullying as repeated use of written, verbal or electronic communication or physical actions or gestures directed at another student. Schools must have a "school climate officer" to receive bullying reports and create a school-safe climate plan in addition to anti-bullying policies.

<http://www.theday.com/article/20110623/NWS01/306239459/1044>

Mayor: Renaissance Schools' Success Merits More State Money

Leaders from the Philadelphia school district, the mayor's office, and Mastery Charter are touting preliminary test score results at Mastery's three turnaround schools—and ramping up their argument that the state should restore funding to the district.

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But even while pointing to the evidence of early success in the Renaissance Schools initiative as a reason to “invest” in the district, officials confirmed at a press event Friday that the two senior staffers responsible for implementing the Renaissance initiative—Associate Superintendent Diane Castelbuono and Deputy for Process Improvement and Compliance Thomas Darden—have been laid off.

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/22/36pnbk_masterymoney.h30.html?tkn=VNNFEo2Tp%2BlnXa%2BeHRU%2BnsT7UDqPp424C5Ne&cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2

Teaching Secrets: Communicating with Parents

Here's the first rule to live by: Your students' parents are not your enemies. Ultimately, they want the same thing you want, which is the best for their children. By maintaining respectful and productive communication, you can work together to help students succeed. Second, whenever problems arise, remember that parents are probably just as nervous about contacting you as you are about returning the contact—and maybe more so.

<http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2011/06/21/tillery.html?tkn=QXQFt3Cw2U8vql%2F5pl5gyKQf5AyB49x9RMM9&cmp=ENL-TU-NEWS1>

State Authority to Run Worst Schools in Detroit and Michigan

The governor of Michigan and the emergency financial manager of the beleaguered Detroit school system announced an improvement plan Monday that will take the lowest-performing schools out of district management and place them under the auspices of a separate educational authority. The schools, under the umbrella of the newly created “Education Achievement System,” will be given the power to bring in successful principals and teachers and to lengthen the school day and year. The program is expected to begin in the 2012-13 school year with 39 schools in Detroit, with plans to expand to the lowest 5 percent of schools in the state by 2013-14.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/20/36detroit.h30.html?tkn=QQVFpFEa9mHgN10mr%2FaMDMLTTs64Di6i1BE&cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2>

Art and Music Learning Emphasize Interactivity, Real-World Relevance

In visual arts education, teachers are using technology to connect students with a wider audience and distribute their finished products globally; they're teaching them the tools they need to know for an arts-related career; and they're encouraging them to reflect on the creation process. In music education, fostering a technology-rich environment can help spread interest in the subject to a wider student population and allow students to become composers almost immediately, regardless of their knowledge of musical literacy and theory.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/15/35mm-art.h30.html?tkn=QXWF8Q8vUx9i%2Fev6iYP9JSIQ68owwtXgspgh&cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2&intc=EW-MM11-ENL>

Experts Call for Early Focus on Black Boys' Nonacademic Skills

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Schools should increase their attention to social and emotional development in the early grades as one way to prevent black boys from falling behind their peers, researchers said Tuesday at a symposium on closing the achievement gap between African-American males and other student groups. Panelists at the meeting hosted Tuesday by the Princeton, N.J.-based Educational Testing Service and the Washington-based Children's Defense Fund also said that a significant portion of the dollars spent on incarcerating black males in this country would be better spent on high-quality early-childhood education.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/15/36ets.h30.html?cmp=ENL-EU-SUBCNT>

More Than 38K Students in Detroit Summer Academy

A six-week summer school academy has started for more than 38,000 Detroit Public Schools students. The academy is part of the district's efforts to improve academic performance of struggling students. Enrollment exceeded expectations by 2,200 students. Low-income students are able to attend the summer session free of charge. Literacy and math will be the focus for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Literacy and project-based instruction in pre-algebra concepts will be taught in seventh and eighth grades.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-ap-mi-detroitschools-su,0,7517372.story>

SOUND CLIPS FOR THE DAY

Nutter on Budget and School Safety

Mayor Nutter said budget cuts will impact school safety efforts at the Inquirer forum on school violence

<http://www.philly.com/philly/video/124139518.html>



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