

The "*Hot Topics in US-China Education*" is a free, monthly email service that watches for "what is hot" in K-12 US and Chinese education. This service targets educators, administrators, researchers, and parents interested in issues of excellence in education in the US and China. The articles presented in this listserv are organized according to the following five dimensions of education: 1) Teachers and Teaching, 2) Learners and Learning, 3) Leaders and Leadership, 4) Curriculum, and 5) Family and Community. Under each category, you can access the full story by clicking on the story title.

Hot Topics is sponsored by the **US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence** at Michigan State University. It is our firm policy never to rent, loan, or sell our subscriber list to any other organizations, groups, or individuals. The subscription will be emailed every other Friday to subscribers. We welcome suggestions and requests for additional information. Please visit us on the web at <http://www.china-us.us> .

April, 2007

I. Teachers and Teaching

1. [English-teacher test puts accent on pronunciation](#)

Monday, April 23, 2007 from Shanghai Daily

Shanghai plans to weed out unqualified foreign English teachers with a language and teaching test. The test, organized by the Shanghai Personnel Bureau, will mainly target non-native-English speakers who apply for English-teaching positions in kindergartens, middle schools and language training schools, the bureau revealed at the city's second job fair for English teachers on Saturday. The bureau will invite an English-language expert panel from local universities to test applicants' English speaking ability, especially pronunciation and accent. Recent education graduates from English-speaking countries must also take a similar test on their teaching skills, bureau officials said. People who fail the test will be disqualified from obtaining a foreign expert certificate - the work permit

for foreign teachers and foreign professionals in China. Foreigners who teach without a work permit could be deported, officials said.

2. [House passes legislation to increase math and science teachers](#)

Tuesday, April 24, 2007 from CNN.com

The House approved legislation Tuesday intended to boost the number of highly qualified math and science teachers in U.S. schools. The bill, which passed 389-22, would authorize more than \$600 million through 2012 for scholarships and stipends for college students studying math and science in preparation for teaching careers. They could receive annual scholarships of \$10,000 if they commit to teaching elementary or secondary pupils upon graduation. The bill also would provide enhanced training for current math and science teachers. They could attend summer programs at universities or receive financial aid to pursue master's degrees. It would establish a national panel to identify math and science teaching materials that have proven effective.

II. Learners and Learning

1. [Shanghai high school students look overseas](#)

Tuesday, April 10, 2007 from Shanghai Daily

Hundreds of high school students and parents visited the 2007 overseas universities enrollment information session in Shanghai on Saturday. Seven universities including San Francisco State University and University College London tried to attract Chinese students with discounted medical services and security packages. Nonetheless, an overseas education now seems to be only one option for many parents. "First-rate domestic universities such as Qinghua and Fudan are still top choices for my daughter," said Qin Zhonghua, a father from Zhejiang Province. "But we cannot place all our hopes on those schools." Many parents prefer keeping children in China for undergraduate degrees, said Frank Wang, senior analyst with Can-Zhong Education, an agency for studying in Canada. "China's growing education resources have entitled many less competitive children, who once had to seek a spot in foreign universities, to an equal opportunity here," said Wang.

2. [Study: No benefit going high-tech for math and reading](#)

Friday, April 6, 2007, from CNN.com

Going high-tech doesn't lead to higher math and reading scores, according to a federal study. The study on the effectiveness of education technology was released late Wednesday by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, a research arm of the Education Department. The study found achievement scores were no higher in classrooms using reading and math software products than in classrooms without the new products. Researchers looked at elementary and secondary classes in 132 schools. The teachers that participated used more than a dozen software products to help

deliver their lessons. Nearly all the teachers received training on the products and believed they were well prepared to use the technology in their classrooms. Minor technical difficulties, such as issues with students logging in or computers locking up, were fairly common. However, most of those problems were easily corrected or worked around, according to the report. When asked whether they would use the products again, nearly all teachers indicated that they would.

III. Leaders and Leadership

1. China tightens supervision of joint educational programs

Thursday, April 19, 2007, from Xinhua Net

China will tighten supervision of education programs jointly operated by Chinese and foreign colleges to ensure that students get quality teaching, the Ministry of Education said here Thursday. The ministry said on its official website that a recent investigation discovered a series of irregular operations by joint educational institutions, some of which had triggered "mass incidents". Citing examples, the ministry said some institutions attracted many students with bold advertisements, but failed to deliver high-quality teaching. Others, which promised to send students study abroad, failed to do so or did not grant students diplomas after they completed their studies. Such cases, in which students often paid over hefty tuition fees, seriously damaged the interests of students and their families and generated bitter complaints, the ministry said. The ministry said it will not approve new Sino-foreign joint programs on higher occupational education until 2009. Applications for new joint programs on postgraduate education will be very carefully scrutinized. The ministry said it has asked provincial educational departments to carry out thorough investigations of current joint educational programs and clean up irregular operations as soon as possible. It also said it is working on an evaluation and sanction mechanism for joint educational institutions. But no details were given.

2. [Bush administration wants to loosen NCLB rules](#)

Wednesday, April 4, 2007, from CNN.com

The Bush administration wants to loosen the rules so that many more disabled children can take tests that are simpler than those required by the president's signature No Child Left Behind law. The changes would triple the number of those children who could take simplified tests. Roughly 10 percent of special education students -- those with the most serious cognitive disabilities -- currently can take easier, alternative tests and have the results count toward a school's annual progress goals under the law. Under final rules the administration was to unveil Wednesday, about another 20 percent of children with disabilities would be allowed to take alternative tests. The No Child Left Behind law is up for renewal in Congress this year and lawmakers, educators and the public have pushed for many changes. The law imposes sanctions on schools that don't meet certain goals. The new tests are for children who are not severely disabled but who have been unable to work on grade level because of disabilities, such as some forms of dyslexia. The new tests won't be as easy as those given to the children already exempted from the

regular tests, but they won't be as hard as those given to average students. Put together, the change means 3 percent of all children -- or roughly 30 percent of all children with disabilities -- will be allowed to be tested on standards geared for them.

IV. Curriculum

1. Old-style private school opened for kids in Dalian

Tuesday, April 24, 2007, from CRIENGLISH.com

A "Sishu", or old-style private school, was opened for kids between five to eight years old in northeast China's Dalian on Sunday. The China News Service reported the school intends to teach Chinese traditional culture to kids, by employing innovative methods. Twenty-four kids attend the first class of the school wearing traditional Han costume. The teaching content includes the writing of Chinese characters, convenance, traditional literature and the arts.

2. [Nine states to develop math test using shared standards](#)

Tuesday, April 10, 2007, from CNN.com

Nine states have come together for the first time to develop a common high school math test, a move described by some as a step toward national educational standards. State standards, and tests based on them, vary wildly for subjects as basic as math, English and science. This group of states has decided to share a test and standards for Algebra II, saying a subject like that shouldn't vary across state lines. The states are Arkansas, Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. The states are still trying to figure out which students will be given the test in the short term, but eventually the test will likely be given to all students who take Algebra II. All the states are considering making scores on the test available to college placement offices to help determine the level of coursework freshmen are prepared to take, according to Mike Cohen, president of Achieve Inc., a Washington-based nonprofit that is helping design the standards.

V. Family and Community

1. [China orders campus safety review](#)

Sunday, April 29, 2007, from Xinhua Net

China's education authority has instructed schools across the country to tighten security, barring entry to school grounds during the upcoming holiday to anyone carrying a gun or a knife at a time when the horror of the Virginia Tech slaughter is fresh in people's minds. Security guards should step up patrols on campus and around student dormitories and enforce strict entrance checks during the week-long May Day holiday that begins May 1, said a circular released by the Ministry of Education on Saturday. Schools are told to mend "security loopholes" in classrooms, libraries, labs, canteens and dorms for

students or teachers in and out of the campus. Schools should also ensure their fire extinguishers function well and fire escapes in buildings are not blocked, the ministry said.

2. [Teacher of the year comes from a family of educators](#)

Thursday, April 26, 2007, from CNN.com

Teaching is a family thing for Andrea Peterson, honored Thursday as the nation's top teacher. The 33-year-old is a music instructor in Granite Falls, Washington. Her father, Victor Rahn, has been in the classroom since before Andrea was born. Two sisters-in-law and her mother-in-law are also teachers. Bush said Peterson had told him that her father was her first role model. The president praised Victor Rahn at the Rose Garden ceremony, which was attended by nearly 200 people who braved threatening skies to celebrate Peterson's selection as the 57th national teacher of the year. Peterson said her father set an example that she has tried to follow for 10 years as a music teacher in tiny Granite Falls, north of Seattle. Her father, who teaches special education at Onalaska High School in Onalaska, Washington, provided countless examples of the difference a teacher can make in a student's life, Peterson said. Peterson is only the second music teacher to be honored as the national teacher of the year.

****UPDATE OR ADD A SUBSCRIPTION****

If you would like to sign up for this free service and receive *Hot Topics in US-China Education*, simply register with us. [\[Register\]](#)

Note: If you cannot see the links or images in this e-mail, register to receive future e-mails in text format only.

The Center wants you to receive *Hot Topics* at your preferred e-mail address. Please notify us if your e-mail address has changed. Send your name and new e-mail address to cnus@msu.edu. Be sure to let us know your old e-mail address so we can remove it from our list. We also welcome new subscribers. Feel free to forward this subscription information to others.

*Hot Topics is produced by the **US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence** which is funded by the Sun Wah Education Foundation.*