



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.

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July, 2008

I. Teachers and Teaching

[Teachers will act as advisers, not taskmasters—A School Where One Size Doesn't Fit All](#)

July 17, 2008 from Washington Post

Educator Hopes to Create Student-Centered Model, which is inspired by the success of home-schoolers. Teacher is recruiting students for a new private school like none the Washington area has ever seen. Students will set their class schedules, enabling them to learn at their pace and in their styles. Teachers will act as advisers, not taskmasters.

[Teachers battle summer slide](#)

July 20, 2008 from Arkansas Democrat – Gazette

Children make strong academic progress during the school year, but some of that seems to evaporate during summer, educators here say. Many youths hold video game controllers instead of books. So teachers, principals and librarians in the Springdale district are spending part of their annual break visiting pupils considered “at-risk” of backtracking in literacy gains.

[At This Summer School, Those Who Teach, Learn](#)

July 29, 2008 from The New York Times

The Scarsdale Teachers Institute is one of the most extensive teacher-development programs in the New York area, with more than 120 teachers enrolled this summer. While the children of this upscale suburb go to camp or travel abroad, many of their teachers are spending summer vacation in school, taking students’ seats. In a class on economic, environmental and social sustainability at Scarsdale High School, two dozen teachers in T-shirts, shorts, skirts and sandals debated the value of bacteria to a community and read aloud poems about a strawberry’s journey to the table.

II. Learners and Learning

[High Cost of Driving Ignites Online Classes Boom](#)

July 11, 2008 from The New York Times

As fuel prices rise, thousands of students nationwide have suddenly decided to take college classes over the Internet. The vast majority of the nation’s 15 million college students — at least 79 percent — live off campus, and with gas prices above \$4 a gallon, many are seeking to cut commuting costs by studying online. Colleges from Massachusetts and Florida to Texas to Oregon have reported significant online enrollment increases for summer sessions, with student numbers in some cases 50 percent or 100 percent higher than last year.

[1 in 4 California high school students drop out, state says](#)

July 17, 2008 from Los Angeles Times

Deploying a long-promised tool to track high school dropouts, the state released numbers Wednesday estimating that 1 in 4 California students -- and 1 in 3 in Los Angeles -- quit school. The rates are considerably higher than previously acknowledged but lower than some independent estimates. The figures are based on a new statewide tracking system that relies on identification numbers that were issued to California public school students beginning in fall 2006.

[Math Scores Show No Gap for Girls, Study Finds](#)

July 25, 2008 from The New York Times

A study paid for by the National Science Foundation has found that girls perform as well as boys on standardized math tests. Although boys in high school performed better

than girls in math 20 years ago, the researchers found, that is no longer the case. The reason, they said, is simple: Girls used to take fewer advanced math courses than boys, but now they are taking just as many. The findings, reported in the July 25 issue of Science magazine, are based on math scores from seven million students in 10 states, tested in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

III. Leaders and Leadership

[Schools eye four-day week to cut fuel costs](#)

July 24, 2008 from Reuters News Service

Facing a crippling increase in fuel costs, some rural U.S. schools are mulling a solution born of the '70s oil crisis: a four-day week. Cutting out one day of school has been the key to preserving educational programs and staff in parts of Kentucky, New Mexico and Minnesota, outweighing some parents' concerns about finding day-care for the day off. "For rural school districts where buses may travel 100 miles round-trip each day, there certainly are transportation savings worth considering," said Marc Egan, the director of federal affairs at the National School Boards Association.

[China to increase quotas for government sponsored overseas students](#)

July 28, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

China plans to offer 20,000 overseas students scholarship in 2010, doubling that of 2007, said an official with the China Scholarship Council (CSC) on Monday. The CSC Secretary-General Liu Jinghui made the above remarks here at an on-going China-ASEAN education exchange week activity, adding that overseas students who won the China government scholarships will find contributions toward both their living and tuition expenses. Liu also predict that China will welcome 500,000 overseas students by 2020, including self-sponsored ones." China has paid great attention to education, and overseas students are also very important," said Liu, explaining that these students will help Chinese universities become more international. He also disclosed that this year China increased the living subsidy for overseas students by almost half, with 1,400 yuan per month for an undergraduate, from last year's 800 yuan. China offered monthly 1,700 yuan and 2,000 yuan grants for every graduate and Ph.D candidate this year.

IV. Curriculum

[Class is out to change way educators teach math Ann Arbor](#)

July 28, 2008 from Detroit Free Press

This is no typical summer math class. And Deborah Loewenberg Ball is no ordinary teacher. Cameras are recording every move the class makes. And in the back of the room, a group of adults are paying rapt attention. As is another group of adults watching on large screens in a room next door. The two-week class, called the Elementary Mathematics Laboratory, is one of the ways the University Of Michigan School Of Education is working to improve math education. It is believed that all kids can learn

math and succeed; they just need to be taught well. And a large part of this class is about showing teachers -- and students training to become one -- effective methods for teaching math.

[Demand for online classes surges](#)

July 27, 2008 from Palm Beach Post

Half of Florida's 294,000 university students in 2007 took at least one class online, an increase of more than 300 percent during the past decade, and a number that is likely to grow higher as gas prices soar. The numbers, which were released in a recent report exploring the role of distance learning at Florida's 11 universities, surprised some state officials and showed the increased demand for courses that differ from traditional classroom pedagogy and schedules.

V. Family and Community

[Literacy Debate: Online, R U Really Reading?](#)

July 27, 2008 from The New York Times

Is the Internet the enemy of reading, or has it created a new kind of reading, one that society should not discount? The discussion is playing out among educational policy makers and reading experts around the world, and within groups like the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. As teenagers' scores on standardized reading tests have declined or stagnated, some argue that the hours spent prowling the Internet are the enemy of reading — diminishing literacy, wrecking attention spans and destroying a precious common culture that exists only through the reading of books. But others say the Internet has created a new kind of reading, one that schools and society should not discount. The Web inspires a teenager like Nadia, who might otherwise spend most of her leisure time watching television, to read and write.

[Green, Greener, Greenest](#)

July 27, 2008 from The New York Times

With students demanding environmentally friendly campuses, colleges and universities are racing to be the greenest of them all. Green is good for the planet, but also for a college's public image. In a Princeton Review survey this year of 10,300 college applicants, 63 percent said that a college's commitment to the environment could affect their decision to go there. And where there are application decisions to be made, there are rankings. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, with more than 660 members, is developing a rating for environmental friendliness; at least six other organizations rated campus greenness last year, according to the group.

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