



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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**June, 2008**

## **I. Teachers and Teaching**

### **[In the red, DPS may cut 800 teachers](#)**

*June 13, 2008 from Detroit News*

Detroit Public Schools officials are considering plans to lay off nearly 800 teachers in the next five months, outsource school social workers and psychologists, and make other budgetary cuts to reduce a projected \$297 million budget shortfall for fiscal year 2009. That information on the district's mounting fiscal problems, outlined in a draft budget document prepared by Chief Financial Officer Joan McCray as of Tuesday, gives a glimpse into how the district plans to address a multimillion-dollar deficit that came to light last month and an even larger shortfall expected next year.

## [Coalition Says Using a Culturally Based Education Model Could Help Close Achievement Gap](#)

*June 26, 2008 from Diverse Magazine*

Teachers must be sensitive and inclusive to all students' cultural backgrounds, educators and advocacy organizations said during a congressional briefing on Capitol Hill Wednesday. The briefing, "Culturally Based Teaching: A Model for Student Success," provided educators and student advocates with the opportunity to share their views and provide federal policymakers with first-hand accounts on how using a culturally based education model will empower students and help close the achievement gap.

## **II. Learners and Learning**

### [Anxiety sends Chinese to temples as college exam nears](#)

*June 5, 2008 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

Lately, gray-haired grandmother Sun Qiantui has found herself in the company of teenagers as she prays to the Buddha in Yonghegong (the Lama Temple) in northeast Beijing. Ministry of Education statistics show that more than 11 million people have applied for this year's exam, which will enroll 5.99 million students. Confucian temples, also known as Scholar temples, were built in many cities to commemorate Confucius (551-479 BC), the renowned educator of ancient China and "teacher of all teachers." It's a centuries-old practice in China to pray to Confucius before a major exam, and Confucian temples get large crowds of high school seniors and their parents before the annual ritual of college entrance exams. For example, Biluo Temple in Nanjing received about 200 visitors daily in the past 10 days, more than twice the number on normal days.

### [Schools experiment with paying kids](#)

*June 13, 2008 from Washington Post*

At one D.C. public charter school, students receive paychecks for good behavior and making academic gains. Although the money is pretend, it can be used at the school store to purchase real items and instills a sense of pride in students, supporters say. Studies into the effects of school-based rewards programs are limited. But research by an independent think tank at Stanford University indicated they can raise scores. A separate study examining schools in Ohio that paid kids for passing state tests also showed score gains after the incentive program was enacted.

## **III. Leaders and Leadership**

### [Opponents of Evolution Adopting a New Strategy](#)

*June 4, 2008 from The New York Times*

Opponents of teaching evolution, in a natural selection of sorts, have gradually shed those strategies that have not survived the courts. Over the last decade, creationism has given rise to "creation science," which became "intelligent design," which in 2005 was banned from the public school curriculum in Pennsylvania by a federal judge. Now a battle looms in Texas over science textbooks that teach evolution, and the wrestle for

control seizes on three words. None of them are “creationism” or “intelligent design” or even “creator.” The words are “strengths and weaknesses.”

### **[More Schools Trying Separation of the Sexes](#)**

*June 15, 2008 from Washington Post*

With encouragement from the federal government, single-sex classes that have long been a hallmark of private schools are multiplying in public schools in the D.C. area and elsewhere. By next fall, about 500 public schools nationwide will offer single-sex classes, according to the National Association for Single Sex Public Education, based in Montgomery County. That's up from a handful a decade ago. The approach is especially attractive to some struggling schools in the market for low-cost reform.

## **IV. Curriculum**

### **[Curriculum, math testing now adding up](#)**

*June 14, 2008 from The Salt Lake Tribune*

A disparity between Utah's math curriculum and state math tests has been fixed. Late last year, education officials across the state became concerned when they realized state math tests didn't yet match Utah's new math curriculum. They worried students would do poorly on the tests because they were taught one thing and tested on another. The federal government uses state test results to sanction schools under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Students took the math test at the end of this school year, but the questions that didn't match what they learned during the year won't count toward scores, said Judy Park, state associate superintendent, at a Friday meeting of the Utah Board of Education.

### **[Hot courses not equal to good jobs](#)**

*June 23, 2008 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

Choosing university majors has become the top concern among new high school graduates as they await the results of the National College Entrance Exam. Every year, millions of students crowd into a few so-called "hot" majors in the hopes of getting a better job after graduation, but the latest survey shows that connection is far from guaranteed, China Youth Daily reported on Monday. The survey, conducted by consulting firm MyCOS, showed that supply exceeding demand is a common phenomenon among the hottest majors in China. Nine of the ten undergraduate majors with the highest number unemployed graduates are "hot" majors. The results show that 33 percent of unemployed recent graduates surveyed undertook one of the ten hottest majors in college. According to the survey, the average employment rate of college graduates is 91 percent six months after graduation, but those of many "hot" majors don't reach that level. Among law graduates, for example, the employment rate is only 86 percent.

### **[Course set to create experts in energy](#)**

*June 17, 2008 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

Local enterprises can soon expect experts to assess their energy-saving potential and tailor economical consumption schemes for them. The news came after Shanghai Jiao Tong University teamed up with the Minhang District government to launch a training program for energy management engineers yesterday. "Energy-saving and emission reduction has become such an important task that tops the work agenda in all levels in the country," said Huang Zhen, head of Jiao Tong's energy research institute. "Specialists with energy management expertise are needed just as we need financial professionals to manage our money," he said. Candidates will attend special classes on how to assess a company's energy consumption structure.

## V. Family and Community

### [The Fate of The Sentence: Is the Writing On the Wall?](#)

*June 15, 2008 from Washington Post*

Survey finds that Internet language and text-messaging abbreviations are seeping into academic writing, worrying scholars that the death of the English sentence is looming. Librarian of Congress James Billington, for one—"I see creeping inarticulateness," he says, and the demise of the basic component of human communication: the sentence. This assault on the lowly -- and mighty -- sentence, he says, is symptomatic of a disease potentially fatal to civilization. If the sentence croaks, so will critical thought. The chronicling of history. Storytelling itself.

### [Student eyesight problems on rise](#)

*June 19, 2008 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

About half of this city's 1.2 million primary and high school students suffer from various eye diseases. A recent survey by the Shanghai Municipal Center for Eye Disease Prevention and Treatment covering about 5,000 students found that 51 percent of primary and high school students were either nearsighted, farsighted, or were suffering from tired or misaligned eyes, or other inherited conditions. More than 92 percent were myopic. The percentage of students suffering from vision problems rises as they progress up the school grades in a competitive schooling system.

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