



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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May, 2008

I. Teachers and Teaching

[Teachers group rewrites social studies standards](#)

May 30, 2008 from Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A week after education officials announced that a large number of students failed state social studies exams, a group of teachers tore apart what Georgia requires sixth- and seventh-grade children to learn and teachers to teach. The extensive revisions written this week will force the state to develop new questions for the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests. State officials said Friday they will field-test these questions on next year's sixth- and seventh-grade social studies exams, meaning students' scores from those tests won't count.

253G To Fire One Teacher

May 27, 2008 from New York Post

It took more than four years and \$253,000 for the city's Department of Education to get rid of just one tenured teacher in 2007, according to data obtained by The Post. Former PS 197 teacher David Salkin, 56, had taught for only five years in Queens before administrators accumulated enough documentation asserting he couldn't control his classroom - and in 2005, bumped him to the department's "rubber room," where educators get paid to do nothing while under investigation, records show. It then took another 2 1/2 years for the school system to cut him loose - while Salkin, who had earned tenure after his third year teaching, collected a total of \$169,000 in salary.

II. Learners and Learning

Kids in trouble

May 17, 2008 from Houston Chronicle

Group's screening of juveniles in detention reveals widespread mental illness and need for care. It comes as no surprise to researchers and those who work with juvenile offenders that there is a clear correlation between mental illness and delinquency. But hard statistics for the Houston area were hard to come by until last week. That's when figures were released showing that nearly half of the youths held in the Harris County Detention Center suffer from mental health problems, far more than the estimated 20 percent of the general youth population with mental disorders.

Surviving children back in classroom 6 days after quake

May 19, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

Surviving the magnitude-8 earthquake on May 12, 166 children in Sichuan Province had their first class on Sunday morning in the provincial capital of Chengdu. The children, mostly from the hardest-hit Pengzhou, Dujiangyan and Mianzhu cities, were accommodated in an old folks' home in Xindu District of Chengdu, along with 850 other quake-affected people. Those children, some of whom lost both parents in the quake, had originally been intended to go to several primary schools in the district. The children are divided into four classes which are in charge of about 20 teachers transferred from nearby schools. Two psychological consultants were also assigned to take care of the children's mental health. Another school was also set up in Zundao Town in Mianzhu City at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, with donations from China Youth Development Foundation.

New online school targets Latinos

May 18, 2008 from Salt Lake Tribune

The state's newest virtual charter school is expected to go online this fall, but only after a strategic campaign to recruit Hispanics and teenagers at risk of quitting or getting

kicked out of public high schools. Cliff Green, executive director of the iSucceed Virtual High School, has spent the past two months stumping in juvenile correctional facilities, cities with significant Latino populations and community programs aimed at getting kids off the streets. The nonprofit online charter school is part of Insight Schools, a Portland-based company that operates one of the largest networks of virtual high schools in country. With schools in Oregon, California, Washington and Wisconsin, Insight plans to open more this fall in Idaho, Minnesota and Kansas.

III. Leaders and Leadership

[California: Student Fees Going Up](#)

May 15, 2008 from The New York Times

The cost of attending a California State University is going up again after a decision by the system's governing board to authorize a 10 percent increase in student fees. California State's Board of Trustees voted 15 to 3 to raise yearly undergraduate tuition by \$276. Undergraduates will pay an average of \$3,797 next year, twice as much as what a California State University cost in the fall of 2000. The system is under orders from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to reduce campus spending to help make up a state budget deficit.

[Qualifications under scrutiny in Shanghai](#)

June 4, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

Shanghai is to check up on the variety of professional qualifications and certificates on the market and get rid of the fly-by-night ones. The Shanghai Personnel Bureau announced yesterday it would team up with the Shanghai Labor and Social Security Bureau to publish a list of certified qualifications and programs for locals' reference after the check. It came after the Ministry of Human Resources issued a notice to rectify qualification programs in the country late last year. The checks will focus on professional qualification setting, certification awarding institutes, exam organizers, training and fee charges. Qualification certification awarding institutes are required to report their programs to the two bureaus. Overseas qualification programs are also included in the checks, bureau officials said.

IV. Curriculum

[Students invited to learn Chinese in free summer class](#)

May 16, 2008 from San Diego Union-Tribune

More people have been paying attention to what's happening in China in recent years, especially with Beijing hosting the Olympics in August. In San Marcos, the school district for the first time will be offering an introduction to Chinese. The federally funded language program, called STARTALK, will be taught in summer school and could extend for seven summers.

[Curriculum Designed to Unite Art and Science](#)

May 27, 2008 from the New York Times

The battle between the sciences and the humanities has been going on for so long, its early participants are already dead. As educators, policymakers and other observers bemoan the Balkanization of knowledge, the scientific illiteracy of the general public and the chronic academic turf wars that are all too easily lampooned. Yet a few scholars of thick dermis and pep-rally vigor believe that the cultural chasm can be bridged and the sciences and the humanities united into a powerful new discipline that would apply the strengths of both mindsets, the quantitative and qualitative, to a wide array of problems. Among the most ambitious of these exercises in fusion thinking is a program under development at Binghamton University in New York called the New Humanities Initiative.

V. Family and Community

[U.S.: ABC to open bureaus on 5 university campuses](#)

May 08, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

In an effort to forge a relationship with younger viewers, ABC News intends to open bureaus this fall on five university campuses across the United States, the network announced Wednesday. ABC News said it would gain greater insights into the lives of the 33 million U.S. 18-to-25-year-olds -- a demographic every major network news division is striving hard to reach, while offering on-the-job training to aspiring journalists. Students will report on local stories in multimedia news bureaus encompassing online and broadcast technology. Their work will be used on various ABC News outlets, including the television shows "Good Morning America," "World News with Charles Gibson" and "Nightline," ABC News Radio and ABCNEWS.com.

[Microsoft Joins Effort for Laptops for Children](#)

May 18, 2008 from The New York Times

After years of conflict, Microsoft and the computing and education project One Laptop Per Child have reached an agreement that will put Windows on the organization's computers. The XO laptop weighs 3.2 pounds and comes with a video camera, microphone, game-pad controller and a screen that rotates into a tablet configuration. About 600,000 have been ordered since last fall, with Peru, Uruguay and Mexico making the largest commitments. The alliance between Microsoft and O.L.P.C. comes after long stretches of antagonism, punctuated by occasional talks, between them.

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