



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> .

---

**May, 2007**

### **I. Teachers and Teaching**

#### 1. [Marine Recruiting Program Takes Educators to School](#)

*Thursday, May 10th, 2007 from VOA*

Instead of teaching school, a group of U.S. educators recently attended school. They went to Parris Island, South Carolina where they took part in a workshop to learn about U.S. Marines Corps basic training, also known as boot camp. The Marines Corps says it is reaching its annual recruitment goals. But as the war in Iraq drags on and public support declines, the Marine Corps is hoping educators like these will help bring in new Marines.

#### 2. [Make teaching attractive](#)

*Monday, May 21 21, 2007 from China Daily*

A lack of teachers, quality ones in particular, has become a bottleneck in improving education in underdeveloped areas. Free teacher education starting this year, which will be offered by six teachers' universities directly under the Ministry of Education, is a move by the central government to solve the problem. The document released by the State Council last week stipulates that those receiving free teacher education must sign a contract with both the university and their hometown education department to teach in local elementary or middle schools for at least 10 years. Hopefully, the experts and decision-makers who are still working on detailed guidelines for free teacher education

will make educated decisions on establishing teaching as a desirable profession throughout the nation.

## **II. Learners and Learning**

### **1. [Tests show students learn basics in history, civics](#)**

*Thursday, May 17, 2007 by CNN*

More students are learning the basics when it comes to history and civics, but they aren't rising to the next level, national tests show. The history and civics tests were given to students nationwide in the fourth, eighth and 12th grades last year, and the results were released Wednesday. The progress in history and civics was made by students working at the lowest levels, meaning there have been significantly more students working at or above the basic level than in the past. But there has been no increase in students working at or above the "proficient" level since the last time the tests were given. "That's a concern, obviously," said Darvin Winick, chair of the independent National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees the tests. "We're delighted to bring up the lower-performing kids ... but we haven't brought up the higher-performing kids."

### **2. [Financial parachutes give poor students hope](#)**

*Tuesday, May 22, 2007 by China Daily*

More than 2.4 million college students had received national student loans, totaling more than 20 billion yuan (\$2.6 billion) by the end of June last year, since the loan system was piloted in 1999 among 136 universities in Beijing, Shanghai and six other large cities.

The government has promised to earmark 20 billion yuan (\$2.6 billion) for student scholarships and grants next year. More than 530 million citizens throughout the country have been catalogued by the personal credit database system which was launched in January last year, officials with the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said. Since the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Education has launched a series of measures to help students pay back their loans. If the graduates choose to work in the remote and rural areas in western China for at least three years, their loans will be paid off by the State. Some universities have introduced temporary subsidy and low-interest loans for disadvantaged graduates.

## **III. Leaders and Leadership**

### **1. [Ed. Dept. Releases Infant, Toddler Rules](#)**

*Tuesday, May 15, 2007 by Education Week*

The U.S. Department of Education has released long-awaited proposed regulations for the portion of the federal special education law that focuses on infants and toddlers with disabilities. Referred to as Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the \$436 million early-childhood program was established in 1986 to serve children from infancy to age 2. About 265,000 children nationally, representing about 2 percent of the population of babies and toddlers, were served under Part C, according to data collected by the Education Department in 2002. The regulations have been rearranged to follow more closely the reading of the special education law. Such changes make it easier to link a regulation back to the statute itself, according to the department. State coordinators who work with young children with disabilities say they have been waiting for the regulations for a long time.

### **2. [China to double its financial aid fund for students next year](#)**

*Tuesday, May 22, 2007 by Xinhua*

Millions more Chinese university and vocational students from low-income families will be entitled to some financial assistance next year as the government plans to double its

student aid program. The central and provincial governments will spend 30.8 billion yuan (about 3.95 billion U.S. dollars) to provide financial aid to colleges and vocational school students beginning in September 2008, Deputy Finance Minister Zhang Shaochun announced on Monday. The central government will allocate 20 billion yuan to the program while local governments will be expected to supply the remainder. Twenty percent of college undergraduates are now entitled to student aid granted by the program, up from just three percent in 2006. This year qualified students can receive 2,000 yuan a year, an increase of 500 yuan from the previous year. The government also plans to expand the state student loan program to provide greater access to bank loans to students from low-income families.

#### **IV. Curriculum**

##### **1. Funding grant for abstinence program to stop**

*Wednesday, May 16, 2007 by CNN*

Federal funding for abstinence education will likely fall considerably this year as Democratic leaders said Wednesday they will let a \$50 million grant program expire on June 30. The program, known as Title V, has not proven to be effective, said Rep. John Dingell, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Dingell's committee has jurisdiction over Title V funding. With a budget deficit and a war, he said the decision to eliminate funding was not a difficult one. The federal government funds abstinence education through three separate programs. Title V is the second largest of those programs. Congress approved it as part of welfare reform. Participating states match the grants with \$3 for every \$4 they get from the federal government. Dingell credited Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colorado, for her counsel on the need to do away with the grant program. Both lawmakers said they would prefer that the money be used for comprehensive sex ed programs that would include abstinence as part of the curriculum.

##### **2. Harvard OKs massive curriculum change**

*Thursday, May 17th, 2007 by China Daily*

Harvard University on Tuesday approved its biggest curriculum overhaul in three decades, putting new emphasis on sensitive religious and cultural issues, the sciences and overcoming US "parochialism." The curriculum change, proposed on February 8 after three years of faculty debate, is intended to counter criticism the oldest US institute of higher learning was focused too narrowly on academic topics instead of real-life issues. The curriculum shake-up is the first major overhaul since Harvard formulated its current "core" course requirements in the 1970s. It had been advanced by former Harvard President Lawrence Summers, who resigned his post in June after a faculty revolt over his leadership style.

#### **V. Family and Community**

##### **1. Schools fall short in preparing for emergencies**

*Thursday, May 17, 2007 by CNN*

When it comes to preparing for emergencies, the nation's schools could be getting better grades. While most school districts have plans for dealing with emergencies such as terrorist attacks, hurricanes or flu pandemics, those plans often fall short of what is needed, according to an analysis by the congressional Government Accountability Office. Lawmakers criticized the Bush administration for targeting a program for cuts that provides grants to districts to keep schools free of drugs and violence. The administration wants to cut the Safe and Drug-Free Schools grant program from \$300 million to about

\$100 million and wants to give the money to states to dole out, rather than directly to districts, Kuzmich said. Lawmakers and witnesses also criticized the quality of data available on school violence.

## 2. [Rise in suicide sounds campus alarm](#)

*Monday , May 21, 2007 by China Daily*

Five students, ranging from sophomores to a Ph.D candidate jumped to their deaths in May in Beijing. The alarming death toll has set off a psychological health raid launched by Renmin University to tackle students' mental problems, reported the China Youth Daily Monday. Renmin University has classified students vulnerable to mental problems into 12 categories, including students doing poorly in exams, students who are unsocial, and those from poor families or underdeveloped regions with low self-esteem. It is reported that there were only 108 psychologists on the Beijing campus for some 700,000 local university students in 2006. According to the report, the Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center is pushing forward a plan to help students adapt to the university environment.

---

### **\*\*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](mailto: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.*