



"*Hot Topics in US-China Education*" is a free, bi-weekly 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 topics covered in this service include 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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**April 15, 2005**

## **I. Teachers and teaching**

### 1. [Chinese Ministry of Education Asks for Quality Teachers](#)

The Ministry of Education requires elementary schools and kindergarten to hire qualified teachers according to the newly published whitepaper. At the same time, the Ministry has asked the local educational administrations to evaluate the quality of teacher training institutes.

### 2. [The Star Classroom Management Protocol](#)

The Haberman Educational Foundation is pleased to announce the availability of a new assessment tool for school districts, universities and researchers to answer the most frequently asked question in teaching, "Will this individual be able to manage a classroom?" Veteran teachers as well as beginners will be able to assess themselves in complete confidence and privacy in order to learn whether or not they have what it takes.

## **II. Learners and Learning**

### 1. [Students in Shanghai Gain More Choice in Homework Assignments](#)

Chinese students in elementary schools are assigned large amounts of homework everyday. Elementary schools in Shanghai are now giving alternative homework assignments for students to choose. For example, students can choose to write a story for the text of a book, co-write a play, or even draw pictures for the book.

### **III. Leaders and Leadership**

#### **1. [Principals are Responsible Reducing Students' Homework Load](#)**

In Liaoning Province, more and more elementary and high schools principals have signed official agreements to ensure that their students' homework load will be reduced gradually. It intends to give children more time to themselves.

#### **2. [Principals Lay off Ineffective Teachers](#)**

Principals at some 460 Chicago schools have let go about 1,100 non-tenured teachers effective next school year--the first time city schools were able to dismiss ineffective teachers without lengthy hearings.

### **IV. Curriculum**

#### **1. [Textbook Issue is not an Internal Affair](#)**

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said on April 14th that Japan's newly approved middle school history textbooks try to exculpate Japan's militarism and severely hurts the feeling of its victims. He said the textbooks compiled by right-wing groups obscure Japan's militarism, justify and glorify Japan's militarist past and beautify its invasions. The textbook debate affects the relations between Japan and its neighboring countries, including China. It will be vehemently condemned by people from all Asian countries that were victimized by Japan, including the Chinese. "The textbook issue largely determines whether Japan can appropriately treat its militaristic history of aggression and instill in its young citizens a right perception of that history," Qin said.

#### **2. [Textbooks or Internet? Lawmakers must Decide](#)**

Schools hoping to get new textbooks in August could face a tough decision: Use money from the state to replace the old, heavy hardbacks or spend it to help students get instructional materials off the Internet. There likely won't be enough money for both.

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

#### **1. [School Choice in China](#)**

Chinese students are assigned to schools based on where they live in China. However, parents have spent more than one million dollars to move so they can send their children to a better school. According to a survey conducted in Shanghai, 35.6% of parents have moved to be in a more desirable school district.

#### **2. [Family Letters on Display](#)**

Personal letters have linked together people separated in space for thousands of years of human history. But the rapid growth of e-mail and other modern means of telecommunication such as text messages are to a large extent doing away with traditional ways of information exchange. Now personal letters are being solicited from the Beijing public in an attempt to preserve the best of the letter-based tradition of communication. Organizers of the upcoming "Family Letter Exhibition" are welcoming all kinds of personal letters from all walks of society.

#### **3. [An After-School Space Science Activity Program](#)**

Build pop rockets, comet models, hold egg drops, have fun. While this is designed as an engaging after-school science activity program for middle-school students, we think that some of the hands-on activities would be fun for families.

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