



"*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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May 6, 2005

I. Teachers and teaching

1. [Studies Show that National Certification Does Not Reward Best Teachers](#)

When K-12 public school teachers attain certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), they are rewarded with annual bonuses of up to \$7,500. Yet four value-added research studies conducted since 2002--including three sponsored by NBPTS itself--have shown NBPTS-certified teachers produce only small gains in student achievement. That raises questions about whether the bonuses for NBPTS certification are being misdirected to average teachers, instead of going to teachers who produce substantial gains in student achievement.

2. [Tips for Improving Student Achievement](#)

The concept of school is very simple. Teachers teach and students learn. Improve the teacher and you improve the student. Teacher quality is the most critical factor by which to improve student achievement or close the achievement gap.

3. [Normal Education not to be Abolished](#)

The Ministry of Education, amidst wide speculation that China would abolish the normal education system, denied the rumor on Wednesday, saying the ministry has never discussed it. Wang Xuming, a spokesman for the Ministry, said media reports are ungrounded and the century-old teacher training system would not be terminated.

II. Learners and Learning

1. [Hooking Boys into Reading](#)

Nine-year-old Chaz Abbot is not interested in books like *Little House on the Prairie*, but he's read every Harry Potter book and almost every copy of Sports Illustrated that's come through his school library. He's a pretty typical boy when it comes to reading, experts say, interested mostly in non-fiction, but tempted by fiction if it entails adventure, mystery or magic. Boys are more likely to read about - and actually enjoy - subjects that interest them, Estle says.

2. [Beyond Elementary School](#)

When sophomore Christina Anderson and her high school peers go to their personal and social responsibility class at School of the Woods in Houston, they expect to teach the lessons. In small groups, the pupils select a chapter in one of the textbooks and choose their own way of presenting it, rather than relying on the teacher to do so. This Montessori philosophy allows students to demonstrate mastery of content by teaching classmates.

III. Leaders and Leadership

1. [House Approves School Vouchers: The Arizona Republic](#)

House Republicans approved state-funded private-school vouchers for low-income students on May 2nd and tied them to the future of all-day kindergarten funding. The measure, which passed 31-27, is designed to give \$17 million to further expand all-day kindergarten and support school-choice measures. Senate Republican leaders have waited for more than a week to act on the budget as House leaders worked to build support for vouchers. Senate leaders will now try to follow suit.

2. [The Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on Student Achievement and Growth](#)

A national research project recently released by the Northwest Evaluation Association indicates that student achievement has improved since No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was implemented, but student growth has declined slightly. If change in achievement of the magnitude seen so far continues, it won't bring schools close to the requirement of 100 percent proficiency by 2014. The study also evaluated achievement gaps among ethnic groups.

3. [Experiment Class is Closed this Year—killing the elite education in China](#)

Experiment classes in mathematics and science were instituted in 1993 in Hunan Province. This type of class has helped the first-class high schools in Hunan Province educate 43 gold medal winners in international Olympic tests of science and mathematics and hundreds of excellent students in the past 12 years. However, the educational administration in Hunan plans to close these kind of classes due to the unequally distributed of educational resources to these elite classes.

IV. Curriculum

1. [Math Strategy Could Add Up to Better Scores: Goal is to Boost Pupil Proficiency](#)

Despite looming teacher layoffs caused by an anticipated multimillion-dollar budget shortfall, North Andover School Superintendent Harry K. Harutunian is spending \$125,000 on a new elementary math curriculum for next year in an effort to boost student math proficiency. "It is short money for what we think we will be getting," said Harutunian, noting the curriculum change will also require him to set aside funds to make sure his teaching staff has the proper training to teach the new program. He could not say how much the training would cost.

2. [Environmental Education is to be Included in Formal K-12 Curriculum](#)

Environmental education is included in K-12 curriculum in China this year. It will be a multidisciplinary subject in the comprehensive practice course. Students will be taught issues of environmental protection, global ethics, and sustainable development.

V. Family and Community

1. [Mothers Alliance Decries Challenge of Pop Culture](#)

Most mothers, regardless of whether they work or stay at home, are dedicated to their children but fear popular culture is undermining their efforts to raise children with "positive values," according to a new study of more than 2,000 mothers. Among mothers' top goals: reduce family violence, promote healthy marriages, and find ways to help mothers spend more time with their families.

2. [Fathers are Feeling Left out, State Study Shows](#)

Studies show that kids with strong male role models do better in school and stay out of jail. But most social service programs aimed at protecting children and strengthening families are geared toward mothers.

3. [Be Aware: Your Children are Afraid of Listen to These Words](#)

Some parents may scold their children so severely that children's self-respect can be hurt. It is suggested that parents encourage their children instead of blaming them without any suggestions for improvement.

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