



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

April 2021

East Cleveland City sets criteria for remote learning

Alarmed by the number of students in academic distress, **East Cleveland City's** Shaw High School allowed students to continue remote instruction only if they attended 80% of classes and were passing them. Roughly 85% of students did not meet the criteria and returned to some in-person learning at the beginning of 2021. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU697>.

Mason City uses technology to help identify students' potential for self-harm

Some U.S. school districts are using computer programs to monitor students' online behavior and flag concerning behavior that indicates the potential for self-harm. **Nicole Pfirman**, mental wellness coordinator for **Mason City**, says she believes that, in a few cases, these alerts may have saved a life. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU698>.

Are the wrong questions being asked about testing?

The way students are assessed via standardized testing is flawed, asserts Dr. **Todd Rose**, former professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and head of the nonprofit think tank Populace. Rose says that even though there is no average student, current assessments measure students against an average. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU699>.

Minnesota teachers showcase project-based learning in virtual exhibition

An exhibition in a Minnesota middle school gave teachers a chance to showcase their students' hands-on interdisciplinary projects, according to **Matt Weyers**, a seventh-grade science teacher at the school. Weyers wrote that the pandemic caused teachers to shift to a virtual exhibition and shared that the demonstrations of project-based learning remained powerful in the online setting. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU700>.

Intensive tutoring may help students who are behind

Intensive tutoring is emerging as a leading solution to help students recover learning losses stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. One recent study found that high school students who had daily, at-school tutoring by recent college graduates learned two to three times more math. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU701>.

Student achievement in-depth

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief or in-depth article to discuss with board members and administrators.

Study considers bias in school-rating websites

Websites that rate schools may be overemphasizing test scores, which is tied to race and family income, according to a study by the American Educational Research Association. Researchers found the sites were less likely to point out growth in students' test scores over time, which is a better indicator of school quality and not as likely to be tied to demographic data. Further, racial and income disparities in public education are reflected in school reviews that parents posted to one popular website, a new analysis shows.

A majority of reviews on **GreatSchools.org** focused heavily on tests scores, which are closely correlated with race and family income, according to the study. Many of the comments were also written by parents at schools in affluent neighborhoods, the research found.

On the other hand, school effectiveness, which measures how much test scores improve over time and is less linked to demographics, was a much less common topic.

"School rating websites have come under scrutiny for ratings systems that overemphasize test scores," said study coauthor **Nabeel Gillani**, a doctoral student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Now we've found that subjective online parent reviews can do the same."

The value parents placed on students' current performance, rather than on growth over time, reflects the longstanding use of test scores as the main indicator of school quality. Further research could determine whether these reviews exacerbate school segregation or other barriers to high-quality education, Gillani said.

The researchers used natural language processing technology to analyze approximately 830,000 reviews of more than 110,000 schools.

In general, parents were more likely to review schools in urban areas and buildings serving affluent families. The research also found clear differences between the language used by parents of children at majority-white and minority-white schools.

For a link to the study, Parents' Online School Reviews Reflect Several Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in K-12 Education, and more findings, please visit, <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU702>.

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