



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION NEWS ROUNDUP

Volume 4 Number 5, June 2010

- [Australia: Education Minister Becomes Australia's First Female Prime Minister](#)
- [Canada: \(2 items\)](#)
- [China: \(2 items\)](#)
- [India: Court slams illegal educational institutions](#)
- [Israel: Tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox rally in Israel over segregated education ruling](#)
- [Kenya: \(2 items\)](#)
- [New Zealand: \(3 items\)](#)
- [Nigeria: Pupils Thrill Parents At Science Week](#)
- [Saudi Arabia: Sindi encourages women to pursue sciences](#)
- [Scotland: Ban on helicopter arrival at primary school prom](#)
- [South Africa: Research Boosts Mother Tongue as Basis for Primary Education](#)
- [UK: \(11 items\)](#)
- [Uruguay: One Laptop per Child updates design for older pupils](#)
- [USA: \(8 items\)](#)
- [Zambia: Zambia makes learning of local language compulsory in primary education](#)
- [Zimbabwe: No Chance to Prepare for the Future](#)

Australia: Education Minister Becomes Australia's First Female Prime Minister

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister, 24 June, 2010

I believe in a Government that rewards those who, day in and day out, work in our factories and on our farms, in our mines and in our mills, in our classrooms and in our hospitals, that rewards that hard work, decency and effort.

The people who play by the rules, set their alarms early, get their kids off to school, stand by their neighbours and love their country.

And I also believe that 'leadership' is about the authority that grows from mutual respect shared by colleagues, from team work and from hard work, team work and spirit.

It's these beliefs that have been my compass during the three and half years of the most loyal service I could offer to my colleague, Kevin Rudd.

I asked my colleagues to make a leadership change.

A change because I believed that a good Government was losing its way.

And because I believe fundamentally that the basic education and health services that Australians rely on and their decent treatment at work is at risk at the next election.

I love this country and I was not going to sit idly by and watch an incoming Opposition cut education, cut health and smash rights at work.

My values and my beliefs have driven me to step forward to take this position as Prime Minister.

Read more: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article_100624_152904.aspx

[< top >](#)

Canada: Education faculties pledge support for aboriginal learning

Elizabeth Church, The Globe and Mail, 1 June 2010

The heads of Canada's education faculties joined with first nations leaders Tuesday, pledging to respect traditional knowledge and culture in classrooms across the country and develop future aboriginal educators and scholars.

The promise, part of a new accord on indigenous education, is characterized by the education deans as a framework for change that will lead to new programs and partnerships that reflect first nations values. As a sign of that cooperation, university and native leaders joined hands with Mohawk performers in a crowded dance studio at Montreal's Concordia University after formally signing the accord, part of this week's meeting of the Canadian Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Read more: <http://www.globecampus.ca/in-the-news/article/education-faculties-pledge-support-for-aboriginal-learning/>

[< top >](#)

Canada: School bell tolls for teachers

Shawn Logan, Calgary Sun, June 15 2010

Calgary public classrooms will have to make due with at least 192 fewer teachers when the school bell rings in the fall.

Trustees with the Calgary Board of Education signed off on a tough budget for the coming school year Tuesday night that will also see 79 support staff and 6.5 custodial positions axed, even as the board is forced to swallow a \$10-million deficit.

While board members unanimously agreed to the balance sheet, they also took aim at the provincial government for not covering arbitrated raises for teachers or increasing the annual education grant, leaving no choice but to dip into the red and trim staff.

Board chair Pat Cochrane said larger class sizes and a narrowed support network is the price students will pay for Alberta bureaucrats linking education funding to boom and bust oil and gas revenues.

"From the word 'go' there has not been a comprehensive, sustainable plan for public education — we've had to lay off staff to meet budget requirements and a couple years later we're just hiring more staff," she said.

"The hole just gets bigger — it's just pushing the problem forward to future years."

Read more: <http://www.calgarysun.com/news/alberta/2010/06/16/14406741.html>

[< top >](#)

China: China underscores education, use of minority languages

Xinhua, 19 June 2010

China's State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC) has urged the teaching and official use of minority languages in ethnic minority areas.

Local ethnic affairs authorities must ensure "bilingual" education and must make more efforts to train teachers and write textbooks for minority language education, according to a notice on the SEAC website.

The notice also urged the use of ethnic minority languages be protected in accordance with the law.

Identity cards and other certificates for ethnic minority citizens in ethnic minority autonomous areas should be written in both standard Chinese and the citizens' own language, the notice said.

The notice also called for measures to boost the use of minority languages in publications, broadcasting, film and on the Internet.

Preservation of ethnic minority languages on the verge of extinction should be strengthened through the use of modern technology, the notice said.

The notice said ethnic minority languages are not just a tool for communication among people of the same ethnic group but also a conveyor of culture.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-06/19/c_13358153.htm

[< top >](#)

China: CPC Political Bureau approves education reform plan

Xinhua, 21 June 2010

The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Monday approved an education reform plan for the next decade, which aims for greater education investment and fairer distribution of resources.

Presided over by the CPC Central Committee General Secretary Hu Jintao, a meeting of the Politburo approved the final version of the Medium- and Long-term National Educational Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020).

The Politburo, the CPC's top decision-making body, said in a statement that education was the fundamental cause for the revitalization of China and social progress in the future.

China had established the largest education system in the world since the founding of the People's Republic, which ensured education rights for millions of people, the statement said.

The government promote educational fairness as a basic policy and increase education investment in rural, remote and ethnic minority areas, the Politburo agreed.

According to the plan, government investment will increase steadily to support the education sector, with the ratio of education expenditure in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) to be 4 percent by 2012.

In 2008, the ratio stood at 3.48 percent, compared with the average international level of 4.5 percent.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-06/21/c_13361297.htm

[< top >](#)

India: Court slams illegal educational institutions

India Edunews, June 24, 2010

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the process of admissions and consequent examinations in unrecognized private educational institutions has become a "vicious circle".

"This has become a vicious circle. They don't get recognition. By provisional orders of the court they give admissions and then by yet another provisional order they hold examinations," said the vacation bench of the Supreme Court headed by Justice R.M. Lodha and Justice A.K. Patnaik.

"This is a design that can't be permitted," Justice Lodha told petitioner Ansh College of Education and others' counsel J.S. Malik.

In the instant case, Gwalior-based Ansh College of Education run by Aryan Foundation Trust and eight other institutions conducting B.Ed courses had moved the apex court to direct the Jiwaji University Gwalior to allow their B.Ed students to appear in annual examination.

Declining to give relief on their petition, Justice Lodha said, "We will dismiss it and let the (aggrieved) students come."

Read more: http://www.indiaedunews.net/Law/Court_slams_illegal_educational_institutions_11922/

[< top >](#)

Israel: Tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox rally in Israel over segregated education ruling

Yair Ettinger, Haaretz, 17 June 2010

Tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox protesters gathered in Jerusalem and in Bnei Brak on Thursday to support the right of Ashkenazi Hasidic parents to keep their children in classes segregated from their Sephardi peers.

The demonstrations were called after the High Court of Justice handed down a two-week jail sentence to parents in the settlement of Immanuel who refused a ruling requiring the Ashkenazi and Sephardi girls to study in the same classes.

Protesters snarled traffic in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, near Tel Aviv, crowding onto balconies in crowded city squares, waving posters decrying the court's decision and proclaiming the supremacy of religious law, proclaiming: 'We have chosen the Torah' and 'Jewish education for all, without High Court interference'.

Read more: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/tens-of-thousands-of-ultra-orthodox-rally-in-israel-over-segregated-education-ruling-1.296746>

[< top >](#)

Kenya: Learning Disaster in Rift Valley

Daily Nation, 23 June 2010

Kenya's largest province has a shortage of more than 4,900 teachers, described by experts as a disaster. The shortage is being blamed for poor performance in last year's national examinations in Rift Valley.

"This under-staffing in our schools is now weighing heavily on most schools in this province. The government must take urgent measures by employing more teachers," says Rift Valley Secondary Schools Association official John Kirui.

Provincial director of education Beatrice Adu says that due to the shortage, some schools are seeking assistance from their neighbours with relatively more teachers to help with teaching. Other schools, according to Ms Adu, are forced to engage trained but unemployed teachers, who were contracted by the boards of governors.

However, the province has seen a rapid increase in the number of schools (or classrooms) built through the Constituency Development Funds. In Narok, the county council has been building schools alongside those being put up through the Constituency Development Fund money.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006231071.html>

[< top >](#)

Kenya: Ministry May Block New Schools

Mazera Ndurya, Daily Nation, 23 June 2010

The government is considering freezing registration of new schools as one way of tackling the biting teacher shortages. Instead, the new schools will be merged with existing ones for them to utilise the available teachers.

Speaking at the head teachers annual conference in Mombasa on Wednesday, acting Education permanent secretary Magdalene Wambua said district education boards, which register schools, will start consolidating the institutions.

"By revamping the existing schools, we will be making maximum use of the teachers and facilities because registering new schools means looking for additional teachers," she said. Mrs Wambua was reacting to the teachers who said they were finding it hard to cope with the increasing number of children against a small population of teachers.

Kenya has a shortage of up to 66,000 teachers in public primary and secondary schools, according to Teachers Service Commission (TSC) statistics. Up to 1,000 new schools have been constructed in the last year, many with

funds from the CDF kitty. Most of them are yet to be registered and will thus be forced to merge with existing schools near them.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006231036.html>

[< top >](#)

New Zealand: Professionals Applaud Proposed Standard Changes

Professional Association For Gifted Education, 17 June 2010

Raising standards reporting to recognize excellence is a positive step forward that is supported by members of giftEDnz: The Professional Association for Gifted Education as they celebrate Gifted Awareness Week (14-20 June).

Yesterday's announcement in Parliament by the Hon Bill English indicates changes to the National Standards regime, which to date has not included reporting mechanisms for those achieving well-above the standard. In contrast, students performing well-below the standard are to be reported.

Although this announcement is a welcome change in its acknowledgement of gifted and talented students, it is unclear whether this affects schools' reporting requirements to the Ministry of Education, or simply reporting to parents.

"It is critical, that students performing well-above standard, are monitored and expected to demonstrate appropriate growth throughout their schooling," says Chairperson, Assoc Prof Tracy Riley.

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1006/S00064.htm>

[< top >](#)

New Zealand: Douglas Education Bill Completely Out of Touch

NZEI, 18 June 2010

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa says Roger Douglas's Education Amendment Bill shows he is completely out of touch with what is happening in education.

The ACT MP's Education (Board of Trustee Freedom) Amendment Bill has been pulled out of the ballot. It brings back bulk funding, gives Boards of Trustees full control over the employment of teachers and introduces performance incentives for teachers and principals.

NZEI says the bill identifies a host of initiatives which have failed both in New Zealand and overseas. New Zealand already has a failed history with bulk funding.

NZEI President Frances Nelson says "during the 1990s the schools which opted into bulk funding soon realised that it didn't work and actually penalised schools which had experienced staff. We got rid of bulk funding for a reason – because it created winner and loser schools and was not a fair way of resourcing schools."

By giving Boards control over teacher employment each school would have to negotiate wages individually, essentially turning them into individual business units, and fragmenting the school sector.

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1006/S00069.htm>

[< top >](#)

New Zealand: The tin-pot third-world education strategy

Quality Public Education Coalition, 21 June 2010

"The idea that less education is good for people is not a new one – just a view not heard much in recent years" said Liz Gordon today.

She was responding to the New Zealand Herald's editorial supporting the aspirations of some of our universities to become more 'elite' by reducing access to qualified school leavers.

She said that prior to the late 1930s the view that education should be rationed was common. "Politicians were concerned that if people got a good education they would lose the taste for what one called 'the backbone industries of the nation', and would want better jobs.

"There was a concern that if people got a good education, they would increase their aspirations and would become dissatisfied if they were unable to be fulfilled. (I know all this because I wrote a thesis on it as part of my own education!)"

Dr. Gordon said that for the past 50 years New Zealand has broadly followed policies of expanding opportunities for people in tertiary education. She said there was a view that education was good for individuals (personally, socially and economically) and for the society as a whole.

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1006/S00073.htm>

[< top >](#)

Nigeria: Pupils Thrill Parents At Science Week

Ahamefula Ogbu, This Day, 23 June 2010

Pupils of Bereton Montessori Primary School, Port Harcourt thrilled their parents and guests with scientific demonstrations during their science week, held at the school, recently.

At the grand finale of the Science Club week, marked areas like Mathematics, Computer and Information Technology, Agricultural Science and Basic Science witnessed practical demonstrations like conversion of waste to wealth, using the principle of biomass with animal dung; water purification, how metals conduct electricity, knowledge of the bones and location in the human body and the role of certain glands in the human system, among others.

Other areas where they exhibited their grasp of scientific knowledge also include botanical names of major crops, scientific facts, brain spinning mathematical calculations, as well as quiz and facts about computers and their importance.

The pupils led their parents to the computer laboratory to demonstrate their knowledge in different computer applications. After the demonstrations, the Proprietress, Mrs. Victoria Diette Spiff commended the children, pointing out that laying good foundations for their education and proper curricular development accounted for the performance.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006230722.html>

[< top >](#)

Saudi Arabia: Sindi encourages women to pursue sciences

Siraj Wahab, Arab News, 17 June 2010

One of the Kingdom's most accomplished scientists said women have an important role to play in the nation's development, and their success will be determined by the support of men within society.

Dr. Hayat Sindi, one of the world's most celebrated researchers in the field of biotechnology, made the comments on Saturday night while addressing the Society of Petroleum Engineers at Le Meridien.

Sindi said women needed to make life-changing decisions for the betterment of society. "They have the capability and they have the capacity to overcome the hurdles that come their way, but they need to be encouraged by their fathers, brothers, husbands and other members of society."

Read more: <http://arabnews.com/saudiarabia/article65150.ece>

[< top >](#)

Scotland: Ban on helicopter arrival at primary school prom

BBC News, 16 June 2010

A parent has been banned from sending an 11-year-old child to their end-of-year primary school prom in a helicopter.

East Renfrewshire Council confirmed it had received an inquiry about landing a helicopter in the grounds of Mearns Primary in Newton Mearns.

But it rejected the request on health and safety grounds.

The local authority said the idea was dismissed because it had no educational benefits.

It is understood the parent wanted their child to make a big entrance at the end-of-term party.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/glasgow_and_west/10329253.stm

[< top >](#)

South Africa: Research Boosts Mother Tongue as Basis for Primary Education

Sue Blaine, Business Day, 23 June 2010

International research, including research done in Africa, continues to endorse the view that mother-tongue education is the way to go.

Language experts blame at least some of SA's poor educational results, and its poor showing in international tests of reading and maths ability, on a lack of mother-tongue education, especially in primary school.

There is a growing body of research that demonstrates the connections between the languages in which children learn, their successful cognitive development and their remaining in school throughout high school, says Human Sciences Research Council honorary research fellow Kathleen Heugh.

"Successful students in mainstream, state-provided education (worldwide) are those who succeed in developing high-level literacy skills in the language or languages of the immediate community which can be transferred to high-level literacy in a language of wider communication such as English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic or Mandarin," she says.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006230497.html>

[< top >](#)

UK: Can the teaching of history make us more British?

John Bew, BBC Radio 4, 13 June 2010

A new idea from the Conservatives is to promote the teaching of more British history in schools.

Education Secretary Michael Gove has said that many people in Britain have a "radically impoverished" understanding of the country's history.

At the Hay Literary Festival in May this year, he reached out to the Harvard Professor, Niall Ferguson, who shares this concern.

He claims that school leavers tend to know more about the American civil rights movement and Adolf Hitler than any figure in British history. "That's obviously absurd," he says, "people live here, they spend most of their time here, they need to understand this place."

Read more: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/politics/10297182.stm>

[< top >](#)

UK: 'Bullying' link to child suicide rate, charity suggests

BBC News, 13 June 2010

A bullying prevention charity has called for more official data on child suicide and research into its causes.

Beatbullying found that up to 44% of suicides among 10- to 14-year-olds may be bullying-related.

The charity said 26 out of the 59 cases reported in the national media were linked to intimidating behaviour.

Its report was published to mark the second anniversary of the death of 13-year-old Sam Leeson.

Beatbullying said the Office of National Statistics had recorded 176 cases of suicides of 10- to 14-year-olds between 2000 and 2008 in England, Scotland and Wales.

It then searched national press reports on the issue and said at least 14% (26 of 176) were clearly linked by the press to bullying.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/10302550.stm

[< top >](#)

UK: Former minister Chris Bryant: French is a useless language

Matthew Moore, Telegraph, 15 Jun 2010

Chris Bryant, who served as minister for Europe under Gordon Brown, used a speech in the Commons to highlight the waning value of the French tongue, which has traditionally been the first foreign language taught to British schoolchildren.

Mr Bryant, now a shadow Foreign Office minister, said that young people should be pointed towards languages that were more useful for business.

He told MPs: "Unless we have sufficient numbers of people who speak modern foreign languages – and not just the useless modern foreign languages like French ..."

Amid Tory protests that this was "insulting" to our near neighbours, Mr Bryant said: "I've said this to the French. I think they realise there are problems."

He defended his remark, insisting that while French had been the "most useful language to use because it was the diplomatic language", things had changed over the last 30 to 40 years and now "it certainly isn't".

He said the most significant languages to speak now, aside from English, were Mandarin, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Read more: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7831007/Former-minister-Chris-Bryant-French-is-a-useless-language.html>

[< top >](#)

UK: More schools fall foul of Ofsted

Angela Harrison, BBC News, 16 June 2010

Fewer schools in England are being judged outstanding compared with recent years and more are being rated as weak.

Ministers say urgent reforms are needed because almost half of schools are satisfactory or inadequate.

Figures released by Ofsted show that 11% of schools checked since last September were rated outstanding, while 9% were not up to scratch.

In the year 2006-07, 14% of those checked were outstanding and 6% were "inadequate".

Ofsted said a good proportion of schools had improved since they were last checked.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10327284.stm

[< top >](#)

UK: Half of schools 'not good', say inspectors

Jessica Shepherd, Guardian, 16 June 2010

But teachers warned that today's figures could not be compared with previous years because inspections had become much tougher since a new inspection regime was introduced last autumn. Inspectors are also visiting more schools that are "of concern" than in previous years.

Some 5% of schools were given "notice to improve", while 4% were placed in the worst category – special measures – which means they risk being closed down.

Hill said there was an "urgent need for real reform".

"We need to create more excellent schools and drive up standards across the board – and that's exactly what our academy proposals will help to do," he said. The government plans to continue to make inspectors concentrate on the weakest schools, leaving the best ones free from any inspection.

Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the inspection regime placed "huge pressure on schools not judged good or outstanding to teach to a narrow curriculum that won't necessarily develop the skills, attitudes, confidence, and passion for learning which young people need".

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/jun/16/half-of-schools-not-good>

[< top >](#)

UK: New science GCSEs 'not tough enough', says watchdog

Katherine Sellgren, BBC News, 16 June 2010

Examinations boards have been ordered to redraft new science GCSE papers because they are not rigorous enough.

The exams watchdog, Ofqual, said the new papers - designed to address concerns that science exams had become too easy - had "not gone far enough".

Last year Ofqual said science GCSEs taken in 2007 and 2008 had contained too many multiple choice papers and had failed to challenge the brightest.

Improvements have already been made to this year's paper, Ofqual said.

Ofqual previously ordered an overhaul of GCSE science qualifications and immediate action was taken to toughen them up for students sitting them last year and this year.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10319979.stm

[< top >](#)

UK: Brightest pupils 'need more support in school

Graeme Paton, Daily Telegraph, 22 June 2010

Shaun Fenton, chairman of the Grammar School Heads Association, said reforms in recent years had been driven by "raising standards to a minimum threshold" instead of boosting results among the most able pupils.

He said bright teenagers from comprehensives could benefit from expert tuition by state grammar schools.

England's remaining academically-selective schools should be given more funding to stage master classes in key subjects and create teaching materials aimed at "exceptionally able children", he said.

The comments were made before the association's annual conference in London.

Mr Fenton said: "All children deserve their needs to be met and, quite rightly, lots of policy development has been motivated by concerns about underachievement, overcoming social disadvantage and raising standards to a minimum threshold for everyone.

"I am not criticising that at all. But the implication for that may be that there is less room for developing policies for the most able students."

Only 164 grammars remain in England following widespread closures of academically selective schools.

Read more: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7844477/Brightest-pupils-need-more-support-in-school.html>

[< top >](#)

UK: From the archive, 22 June 1956: Higher I.Q. in children of the atomic age

Originally published in the Manchester Guardian on 22 June 1956

Intelligence tests recently carried out among more than a thousand children in Wolverhampton schools appear to show a striking and quite unexpected increase in the mental capacity of children born since 1945. A psychiatrist concerned in the tests has suggested that the most probable hypothesis to account for this change is the effect on the brain of the increase in "background radio-activity".

The tests were carried out under the direction of Dr J. Ford Thomson, consultant children's psychiatrist to the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury group of hospitals. They were begun after several children, referred to Dr Thomson by the schools on account of educational difficulties, had been found to show quite unexpected abilities. A child of 7½, described as a problem child in the "C" stream at school, was found to be exceedingly clever and well informed on astronomy, and was given an intelligence quotient of 142. Within two months another "prodigy" came along. He was also a "problem child," aged about 10½. He was found to have an I.Q. of 166.

These instances impelled Dr Thomson to search for more "prodigies" in Wolverhampton. He found what he was not looking for – namely, that all the children of this age group were by pre-war standards remarkably advanced.

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2010/jun/22/archive-higher-iq-children-atomic-age>

[< top >](#)

UK: Doubts cast over Swedish-style free schools

BBC News, 22 June 2010

The Swedish model of free schools, lauded by the Conservatives, has not significantly improved pupils' academic achievement, a study suggests.

The research, published in Research in Public Policy, found the biggest beneficiaries tended to be pupils from educated, professional homes.

The Swedish model has influenced the government's free schools policy.

Education Secretary Michael Gove believes free schools will lead to higher standards in England's schools.

In Sweden, non-profit and for-profit organisations are able to set up and run schools which are publicly funded, but independent from government control.

In England, all schools have been invited to become academies, which would allow them to opt out of local authority control

Groups of parents and teachers, charities and businesses are also being encouraged to set up free schools.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10376457.stm

[< top >](#)

UK: Schools still need local authorities

Estelle Morris, The Guardian, 22 June 2010

Local education authorities seem to be loved and loathed in equal measure. Their name may change, but their ability to maintain a role in the education service through 30 years of hostile legislation is impressive: they really are the great survivors.

It's difficult to think of any of the "big ideas" of the last three decades that haven't included reducing powers, changing funding or increasing the scrutiny of LEAs. From grant-maintained schools to academies, devolved budgets to commissioning, both major political parties have legislated to re-shape their role in education.

The similarity in the language used by Kenneth Baker in the second reading of the Education Bill in 1987 and that used by Jonathan Hill, the new education minister who introduced the academies bill to the House of Lords last week, is striking. Both argue for greater freedoms for schools, more delegation of powers and money, and more parent choice.

Both also talk about "local authorities controlling schools". That was the situation when Ken Baker delivered his speech, but it isn't still the case 30 years later.

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/jun/22/schools-local-education-authorities>

[< top >](#)

UK: Primary pupil numbers 'growing'

BBC News, 24 June 2010

The demand for primary school and nursery places in England will rise dramatically as education budgets cuts begin to bite, new data shows.

The Office for National Statistics says pupil numbers in these areas will rise 8% between 2010 and 2014.

And by 2018 they will reach the highest level for nearly 50 years, according to the projections.

But secondary school numbers are set to fall by almost 5% by 2014, it adds.

A Department for Education spokesman said pupil pressure was a major issue facing the schools system and that tackling it would be a key priority in the autumn's comprehensive spending review.

The ONS figures are published just days after the Chancellor unveiled cuts to the education department of up to 25% over the next four years.
Places shortage

There has been increasing pressure on some local authorities in urban and commuter belt areas, where schools are already struggling to cope with higher pupil numbers.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10394134.stm

[< top >](#)

Uruguay: One Laptop per Child updates design for older pupils

Jonathan Fildes, BBC News, 14 June 2010

The so-called \$100 laptop has undergone a facelift in order to be used by secondary school children.

The machines, designed by One Laptop per Child (OLPC), are based on the original XO laptop, which was built for primary school children.

The new computers feature a larger keyboard and upgraded software.

Uruguay, which has already distributed nearly 400,000 XO laptops to primary schools, has ordered 90,000 of the new laptops, known as the XO-HS.

It has also ordered 10,000 machines designed by rival Intel, which makes the Classmate PC, also developed for children.

"We want to see how students react and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of each," said Miguel Brechner, director of the Technological Laboratory of Uruguay, who is in charge of the country's Plan Ceibal (Education Connect) project.

Read more: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/10309116.stm>

[< top >](#)

USA: Performance-Pay Model Shows No Achievement Edge

Stephen Sawchuk, Education Week, 1 June 2010

Preliminary results from schools taking part in a Chicago program containing performance-based compensation for teachers show no evidence that the program has boosted student achievement on math and reading tests, compared with a group of similar, nonparticipating schools, an analysis Requires Adobe Acrobat Reader released last week concludes.

The findings are notable not just for being at odds with other studies of the Teacher Advancement Program model, but also for the Chicago experiment's unique background: During his tenure as chief executive officer of the district, Arne Duncan—now the U.S. secretary of education—oversaw the development of the initiative.

And through the economic-stimulus program's Race to the Top and Teacher Incentive Fund competitions, the Obama administration has pushed states and districts to engage in changes to teacher-pay and -evaluation systems. Mr. Duncan has been a vocal supporter of the incentive-fund program, which provided some of the financing for the Chicago project.

The study by Mathematica Policy Research also found that the Chicago TAP, a local version of the national program, did not improve the rates of teacher retention in participating schools or in the district.

Read more:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/01/33tap.h29.html?tkn=SLLFZe8XVYfHJJSsSgGYCI87ZvETbCbN%2FXmT&cmp=clp-edweek>

[< top >](#)

USA: States Receive a Reading List: New Standards for Education

Sam Dillon, New York Times, 2 June 2010

The nation's governors and state school chiefs released on Wednesday a new set of academic standards, their final recommendations for what students should master in English and math as they move from the primary grades through high school graduation.

The standards, which took a year to write, have been tweaked and refined in recent weeks in response to some of the 10,000 comments the public sent in after a draft was released in March.

The standards were made public at a news conference on Wednesday in Atlanta.

Leah Lechleiter-Luke, a Spanish teacher from Mauston, Wis., who is that state's 2010 teacher of the year, said at the conference that the new standards were preferable to her home state's. "It's not that the standards in Wisconsin are so bad, it's just that there are so many of them," she said. "These are more user-friendly."

The Obama administration hopes that states will quickly adopt the new standards in place of the hodgepodge of current state benchmarks, which vary so significantly that it is impossible to compare test scores from different states. The United States is one of the few developed countries that lacks national standards for its public schools.

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/03/education/03standards.html?ref=education>

[< top >](#)

USA: US moves into a National Curriculum the Brits are ending theirs

Mike Baker, Education News, 12 June 2010

It could herald not only an end to the pre-eminence of the GCSE but also an end to the national curriculum's domination of secondary schools.

It could turn out to be one of the most important changes to the school curriculum and examinations in England since the GCSE replaced O Levels over 20 years ago.

In one of a flurry of announcements since the election, the government announced that it had, at a stroke, lifted the ban on state schools offering the international version of the GCSE, the IGCSE.

... this is a significant move. It could herald not only an end to the pre-eminence of the GCSE but also an end to the national curriculum's domination of secondary schools.

Read more: <http://www.educationnews.org/global/92824.html>

[< top >](#)

USA: Social studies 'ex'ams

Yoav Gonen, New York Post, 18 June 2010

New York's social-studies tests may soon be history.

The annual history and civics exams given to public-school students in grades 5 and 8 are set to fall victim next week to state Education Department's budget cuts, The Post has learned.

The Board of Regents will likely vote to eliminate the tests -- given to more than 440,000 kids a year in New York -- as part of a plan to eliminate an \$11.5 million deficit for the coming school year.

"Obviously, we are concerned," said city Department of Education spokesman David Cantor.

The social-studies tests were first administered statewide in 2001 as part of a Board of Regents effort to raise standards.

But unlike the annual English, math and science exams given to students in grades 3 to 8, the social-studies tests aren't mandated by the federal government's accountability system.

Judging by the measure up for approval Tuesday, eliminating the tests in the lower grades would spare some of the high-school Regents exams that had been on the chopping block several months ago -- including two in social studies.

Read more:

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/social_studies_ex_ams_J2SvMdTTkAmGbyNWf9xHGL#ixzz0rlso3KeX

[< top >](#)

USA: School Without Walls senior an example of overcoming tough odds

Nestor Ramos, Democrat & Chronicle, 23 June 2010

Each of the approximately 1,300 students graduating from Rochester School District high schools this week has a story worth hearing, of obstacles overcome or inspiration passed from parents or teachers. And if the City School District's on-time graduation rate holds steady at 46 percent, nearly as many students have a story about what went wrong.

Bronson-Tramel is graduating on time from School Without Walls this week and set to attend the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University on a full scholarship. Last summer, she participated in the Democrat and Chronicle's Taub Multimedia Academy, a newsroom mentoring program established in 1993 in memory of the late Times-Union columnist Peter B. Taub.

She's not sure what kept her on track. She ran away from home two days before her 16th birthday and has been living in her own apartment in southeast Rochester for the last 18 months.

Read more: <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20100623/NEWS01/6230342/>

[< top >](#)

USA: New Survey Reveals High School Students' Views on American Citizenship

Education News, 23 June 2010

A new nationwide survey of nearly 3,000 high school students, released today by the Bill of Rights Institute, Arlington, VA, provides a glimpse into what the nation's future leaders think about American citizenship: what civic values they admire, who their political heroes are, and which of our Founding documents inspire them the most.

The survey, based on an analysis of the top 3,000 essays submitted in the Bill of Rights Institute's 2009-10 Being an American Essay Contest – the nation's largest high school essay contest, with more than 50,000 entries this year – concentrated on three themes: civic values, Founding Fathers and American heroes, and Founding documents.

"Perseverance" and "courage" were cited most often as the civic values essential to being an American, with each value being chosen by approximately 15 percent of participating students. Other civic values identified by large numbers of students included equality and respect (14 percent), entrepreneurialism (12 percent), responsibility (9 percent) and liberty (8 percent).

Read more: <http://www.educationnews.org/educationnewstoday/93336.html>

[< top >](#)

USA: Breaking the habit of skipping school

Emily Richmond, Las Vegas Sun, 24 June 2010

With Nevada still reeling from the latest national report to lambaste its education system, educators and community advocates want the spotlight on what they say is a key factor in the Silver State's dismal graduation rate — too many students skipping school.

For each of the past three academic years, the Clark County School District has cited more than 2,500 students for habitual truancy, meaning they had at least three unexcused absences. But those numbers likely represent a small percentage of tens of thousands of students who regularly skip class.

Edward Goldman, associate superintendent of education services, said it's difficult to measure the extent of the district's truancy problem. It has only 25 attendance officers to cover more than 350 campuses, and their duties are more comprehensive than just hunting truants.

Read more: <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2010/jun/20/breaking-habit-skipping-school/>

[< top >](#)

USA: Union blasts Chicago Public Schools' tenure attack

Rosalind Rossi, Chicago Sun-Times, 24 June 2010

Chicago School Board members Wednesday went on the attack against teacher tenure, agreeing to lay off the worst-rated teachers first -- regardless of seniority -- amid moves to raise class size and shrink a record budget deficit.

Chicago Teachers Union President-elect Karen Lewis immediately blasted the action as "very belligerent" and "very confrontational." Union attorneys will examine its legality, she said.

Experts called the system's new layoff rules unusual but part of a "growing drumbeat" to allow districts to use something other than seniority and tenure in determining who should be laid off, especially in tough economic times.

Read more: <http://www.suntimes.com/news/education/2427570,CST-NWS-tenure24.article>

[< top >](#)

Zambia: Zambia makes learning of local language compulsory in primary education

Xinhua, 23 June 2010

The Zambian government has said children will be required to take a local language alongside English from grade one to four to help them learn initial basic skills of reading and writing local languages, local media reported on Wednesday.

Recently, traditional leaders said there was need for the use of local languages for teaching purposes in schools. Currently, the teaching of local languages is not compulsory in Zambian schools.

Minister of Education Dora Siliya said when she made a presentation to the traditional leaders that the local languages the pupils will be taking will not necessarily have to be their mother tongue but ones spoken by the vast majority of people in a given area of the country, the Zambia Daily Mail reported.

According to the minister, the government introduced a primary reading program to foster initial literacy and numeracy skills of learners in grade in a local language, adding that the program was a success with a huge impact on reading levels among pupils following its evaluation in 2003.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-06/23/c_13365456.htm

[< top >](#)

Zimbabwe: No Chance to Prepare for the Future

Zimbabwe's ailing education system, once a model for sub-Saharan Africa, has buckled and all but collapsed under the economic and political crises of the past decade, when widespread food shortages, hyperinflation, cholera outbreaks, and an almost year-long strike by teachers in 2008 led to a dramatic decline in the standard of learning.

It is not uncommon for 10 pupils to share a textbook, and although the government drastically slashed school fees in February 2009, deepening poverty put even the reduced cost of attending government schools in some areas beyond the reach of thousands of children.

The government extended the initial exam registration deadline of 28 May by two weeks, but most people were sceptical that parents and students who had previously been unable to pay the fees - US\$10 per O-level subject and US\$20 per A-level subject - would be able to raise the money in time.

"The extension means nothing at all - the period is too short, and one wonders why the government is in such a hurry to close the door on students," the president of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), Raymond Majongwe, told IRIN.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006230900.html>

[< top >](#)

ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian-education-digest> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/international-news-roundup> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/public-education-voice> (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

To unsubscribe from International Roundup click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeRND>

To unsubscribe from all ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeALL>