



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION NEWS ROUNDUP

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Global: New UN handbook seeks to ensure quality education for children in conflict

Xinhua, 8 July 2010

The United Nations and its partners on Wednesday released an important tool to help the 25 million children who are living in conflict-affected areas and are missing out on primary education.

The UN move coincided with an open Security Council debate on how to protect civilians in armed conflict. "The willful targeting of civilians, disproportionate attacks, sexual violence, forced displacement and the denial of humanitarian access remain widespread in armed conflict, often carried out with impunity," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday at the open debate of the Security Council.

High numbers of children continue to be used as soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) despite a law passed last year in the DRC forbidding the recruitment of children, UN officials said.

"The Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response and Recovery" is a 114-page handbook, produced by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and supported by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), aims to raise the quality of education in emergency situations.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-07/08/c_13388907.htm

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Brazil: Brazil shows improvement in public education: report

Xinhua, 2 July 2010

A report released on Thursday indicates an improvement in Brazil's basic and secondary public education.

The Index of Basic Education Development (IDEB) for the lower grades of schooling rose from 4.2 points in 2007 to 4.6 in 2009, surpassing last year's target by 0.4 points, according to the report by the Ministry of Education

The indicator was created in 2005 and serves as a barometer for the quality of education, ranging from zero to ten, and is calculated every two years, with specific indicators for the higher grades of elementary school and high school.

In higher grades of the elementary school(6th to 9th grades), the indicator rose from 3.8 in 2007 to 4.0 in 2009, when the target was 3.7. In high school, however, growth was lower: the IDEB increased from 3.5 in 2007 to 3.6 in 2009, also reaching the goal of 3.5 points.

The IDEB results from the grades of students in a comprehensive review called Test Brazil and the rates of approval, failure and abandonment. The government's goal is that the Brazilian education will reach similar levels to those of developed countries by 2022.

Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-07/02/c_13380219.htm

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Canada: Ottawa pledges \$20-million for science education in Africa

EducationNews.org, 07/07/2010

At a time when the knowledge produced by a nation is increasingly seen as a ticket to prosperity, the Canadian government is taking a step beyond traditional aid programs, pledging \$20-million for science education in Africa.

The funding will go to the Next Einstein Initiative, a unique project that aims to nurture and support the brightest minds in Africa through a network of research centres. Its founder is Neil Turok, the director of the Perimeter Institute of Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, who began the initiative seven years ago to develop the scientific capacity of Africa as a way to promote prosperity.

Canada's investment over four years will help support the existing African Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Cape Town, South Africa, as well as three planned centres in Senegal, Ethiopia and Ghana. Prof. Turok said the investment is transformative because of its size – the next-largest contribution to the project was a \$1-million gift from Google earlier this year – and because it sends a signal to other developed countries that traditionally have steered clear of directing aid dollars to higher education in Africa.

"This is an amazing opportunity that we must not waste," Prof. Turok said Tuesday after the announcement, which was one of two made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper during a visit to meet renowned physicist Stephen Hawking, who holds a distinguished research chair at the institute.

"The development agenda has emphasized primary education, health and very basic food and agriculture," said Prof. Turok, a native of South Africa. Directing money to some of the one million students who graduate from African universities each year, he said, gives them access to leading instructors on their own continent and provides the skills they need to continue their studies in Africa or abroad.

Read more: <http://www.educationnews.org/global/94539.html>

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China: Parents in Beijing demand more transparency in school placements

Li Shuang, Xinhue, 2 July 2010

Elementary schools graduates in Beijing's Dongcheng district got the results of computerized school placements Wednesday, which decide which middle school they will go to.

It was the first time students not holding Beijing permanent residency permits (hukou) were included, but parents still doubt the fairness of the practice.

"We demand more transparency in the process," Zhang Cuiling, whose 12-year-old nephew was assigned to No. 65 Middle School, a school of below average standard, told the Global Times. "If there is no illegal dealing, why do we have to wait for two days for the results of the computerized placements?"

All ordinary elementary school graduates in Beijing are supposed to be assigned to a middle school randomly by a computer. Dongcheng's computerized placements were held on Monday. The results were not published until Wednesday.

Parents in Haidian district were told they will have to wait for a week for the results when their placement is held next week.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-07/02/c_13380646.htm

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China: Language lessons help deepen ethnic ties in China's Xinjiang

Li Jianmin, Xinhua, July 5 2010

Gazing at the lips of her teacher, 36-year-old An Ping thinks for a moment and bursts out with a string of unfamiliar words: "Eyuinez dikilar opdan turuwatamdu."

"It is a greeting for Uygur people meeting in the street. It means 'How is your family?'" says An, a community official of the Han ethnic group in Tianshan District in Urumqi, capital of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

She is attending one of the government-organized Uygur language classes, along with about 80 colleagues -- mostly ethnic Han -- from different communities. The government bears all the costs for the full-time classes, which began in mid-April and will last six months.

An began working as a "grassroots-level official," as it is called in China, in her community 10 years ago. She had been using Mandarin, the Han language, to talk with people of other ethnic groups, or asking her Uygur colleagues to interpret for her.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-07/05/c_13384019.htm

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Indonesia: MPs bid to make 'Education for All' a reality

The Jakarta Post, 07/07/2010

Indonesian House of Representatives speaker and Forum of Asia Pacific Parliamentarians for Education (FASPPED) president Marzuki Alie said Tuesday that legislative bodies could play a significant role in tackling obstacles hindering the achievement of "Education for All" (EFA) by 2015.

"First, parliaments should be committed to formulating laws that fully support the implementation of Education for All goals," he said at the opening ceremony of the first session of the FASPPED General Assembly at the Hotel Sultan in Jakarta.

Second, he continued, parliaments needed to monitor their governments' commitment to implementing their national education goals and ensuring that these goals were in line with EFA goals.

"Third, parliaments are obliged to request that their governments allocate sufficient budgets for education, not only to provide affordable education, but also to continuously improve quality," he said.

UNESCO's World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in 1990, stipulates six goals: expanding early childhood care and education, providing free and compulsory primary education for all, promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults, increasing adult literacy by 50 percent, achieving gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015, and improving the quality of education.

Read more: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/07/07/mps-bid-make-%E2%80%98education-all%E2%80%99-a-reality.html>

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Jordan: Teachers' children to receive full scholarships under quota

Hani Hazaimah, Jordan Times, July 8th 2010

The government on Tuesday decided that children of teachers admitted to public universities under the 5 per cent quota reserved for them will benefit from scholarships that will cover all their tuition fees.

"As of the 2010/11 academic year, children of public sector teachers will enjoy the same privileges of the Royal makrma covering children of active and retired military servicemen," Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications Nabil Sharif said yesterday following the weekly Cabinet meeting.

The gesture was made earlier this week by Their Majesties King Abdullah and Queen Rania.

The decision corresponds Majesty King Abdullah's directives to the government to apply the regulations of the Royal makrma to children of teachers, Sharif added.

Under the new decision, the beneficiaries will have their tuition fees covered. In addition, they will receive a monthly allowance to cover their daily expenses and an annual allowance to cover the cost of books and supplies, the minister said, noting that these grants will be governed by the same regulations of a similar programme benefiting children of armed forces' members.

Read more: <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=28114>

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Liberia: US gives Liberia millions for girls' education

Agence France Press, 8 July 2010

Liberia has signed a 15 million US dollar (11 million euro) agreement with the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to finance girl's primary education, land rights and access to trade policy.

MCC senior advisor, Cassandra Butts said the grant would finance these key development areas as identified by the Liberian government.

"The areas of priorities represent key constraints to economic growth, identified by Liberians as part of their own national development strategy," she told journalists on Tuesday.

The MCC is a US-based foreign aid agency working to fight poverty through economic growth. According to the agreement, the fund will be administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Liberia was established by freed American slaves in the 1820s and is recovering from the ravages of successive civil wars ended in 2003.

Read more: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hwwXs2lj1n9dH-8iELt-aNgsXNOQ>

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Malaysia: Malaysia to teach Mandarin, Tamil at national primary schools

Xinhua, 30 June 2010

National primary schools in Malaysia will start teaching the languages of Mandarin and Tamil next year to allow students, especially those of Chinese and Indian descents, to learn their mother tongues.

Malaysian Education director-general had been directed to implement such policy from 2010, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said during a question and answer session at a talk series held near here on Tuesday.

Muhyiddin, who is also Malaysian Education Minister, said that parents will be allowed to decide if they want their children to study the languages at the schools.

One of the uniqueness of the country's education system is that besides national primary schools, there are also the so-called national-type vernacular primary schools where classes are conducted in the languages of Mandarin and Tamil respectively.

Both types of the schools are run and administered by the Malaysian Education Ministry.

Read more: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-06/30/c_13377092.htm

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Mexico: Mexico schools teach lessons in survival

Chris Hawley, USA TODAY, 8 July 2010

Schools across Mexico are teaching students to dive to the floor and cover their heads as the violence-torn country sees more urban gunfights between drug gangs.

At least nine shootouts have erupted in school zones since mid-October, three of them in the past month. On June 15, soldiers and gunmen battled for an hour 60 feet from a preschool in the central town of Taxco.

Several Mexican states require "shootout drills" and incorporate them into summer teacher-training courses, which will begin next week. School ends Friday in most of Mexico.

"We're in a situation like nothing we've ever lived through before, and we need to make sure the children are safe," says Juan Gallardo, director of school safety in the northern state of Tamaulipas.

Read more: http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-07-07-mexico-schools_N.htm

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New Zealand: Crunch Time for Government on National Standards

NZEI, 2 July 2010

The Government can no longer ignore the snowballing opposition to its National Standards policy, says the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

550 principals at the New Zealand Principals Federation Conference have passed three resolutions spelling out their complete lack of confidence in the Standards and their implementation.

The principals, who represent Principals Associations around the country, say National Standards don't work and will not deliver on the government's promise to raise student achievement.

The President of NZEI, Frances Nelson says the government has completely lost touch with where the sector is at with National Standards.

"The Education Minister continues to say that only a handful of schools are not implementing the Standards or are resistant. What she's failing to acknowledge is that whether schools feel compelled to implement or not, principals and teachers have no confidence in the Standards and the rushed implementation process."

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1007/S00008.htm>

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New Zealand: Representatives Tackle Classroom Behaviour

Porirua Education Forum, 5 July 2010

Responding to demand from schools, The Porirua Education Forum led by former Minister of Education Russell Marshall, hosted a ground-breaking forum on classroom behaviour that crossed spectrums between youth justice, community leadership and education.

Marshall and Porirua College Principal Susanne Jungersen aimed to introduce "restorative justice" practices into Porirua schools at all levels and establish the basis for complementary engagement between the justice and education systems.

On Monday 28 June, representatives from school boards of trustees, primary, secondary and tertiary education, youth justice, Porirua City Council and also Mayor Jenny Brash and Hon. Tariana Turia explored case studies in 'restorative justice'.

Restorative justice, (also known as transformative justice), views wrong-doing as a violation of people and relationships. Problem-solving becomes centred around an exploration of the harm that has been done and how to repair it.

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1007/S00019.htm>

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New Zealand: Student Achievement focus for school Trustees

NZ School Trustees Association, 5 July 2010

This year's New Zealand School Trustees Association Conference marks 21 years since Tomorrow's Schools reforms were launched, and School Trustees from around the country will be gathering in Christchurch to listen to experts in all aspects of school governance, as well as celebrating the successes achieved since 1989.

As the school's governing body the Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the school's performance, including student achievement.

Around 18,000 people serve on approximately 2,460 school Boards of Trustees in New Zealand.

The Boards were created as part of the wide-ranging Tomorrow's Schools reforms, along with other core features of today's education system such as the Ministry of Education, NZ Teachers Council (NZTC), Education Review Office (ERO), and NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1007/S00020.htm>

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New Zealand: Maori Educators Send Powerful Message on Standards

NZEI, 6 July 2010

A hui of more than 200 Maori educators has issued a strong vote of no confidence in National Standards, saying they will damage the learning of tamariki Maori.

The teachers and principals have been in Rotorua attending the annual hui of Te Reo Areare - the Maori Council of the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

Today they unanimously passed a resolution saying supporting the call for National Standards to be trialled in kura auraki or English-medium schools. Over 80% of Maori students attend mainstream schools.

The hui was united in its belief that National Standards in their present form discriminate against tamariki Maori and marginalise their potential.

Read more: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1007/S00028.htm>

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Nigeria: Sosan Advocates Use of Instructional Materials in Schools

Daily Independent, 7 July 2010

Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Princess Sarah Adebisi Sosan, has declared that the use of instructional materials in schools plays important role in the education of teachers and pupils.

Sosan made the declaration at the end of a two-day Lagos Festival of Instructional Materials organised by Lagos State Ministry of Education in collaboration with Lagos State Educational Resource Centre, Ojodu, Lagos.

She declared that with what had been witnessed especially with the aid of teaching with the instructional materials; teachers in the state would have no excuse of non-performance especially in the aspirations of Lagos State Government to take education to the next level.

The deputy governor explained that it was in realisation of the series of advantages inherent in using appropriate instructional teaching materials that motivated the present administration to vote huge budget for the upgrading of the State Educational Resource Centre with state-of-the-art technology to enable it organize refresher courses and trainings for teachers on how they could produce and use different media to enrich their lessons.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007080237.html>

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Nigeria: Imo And the Return of Mission Schools

Daily Champion, 8 July 2010

he recent handover of mission schools to their original owners by the Imo State government is a welcome trend that would lead to the rejuvenation of the nation's ailing education sector, if other states adopt the policy.

This is so because of the many advantages that would accrue as a result of the involvement of missions in the running of their schools which were unilaterally taken over by government after the Nigerian Civil War in 1970.

Following the devastation of the structures of the schools as a result of the war-time hostilities and the fact that the missions could not muster the resources needed to rehabilitate them, government took over the schools to be able to justify spending public funds on private investments.

The government was also mindful of the need to ensure that Nigerian children were not discriminated against or denied access to education on religious grounds.

40 years after the take over of these mission schools, it has become apparent that government cannot sustain the high standards set by the missions, a failure which has resulted in some of the same missions as well as individuals and organisations being granted licenses to run schools that are exemplary in many ways.

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007080182.html>

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Philippines: Parents objecting to sex education program targeting children

Catholic News Agency, 6 July 2010

Despite suffering a legal setback, a group of 30 parents in the Philippines is pushing ahead in its appeal of the country's implementation of a United Nations-backed sex education program, which is aimed at children as young as nine years old.

On June 21, the parents had launched a petition to file a temporary restraining order against DepEd. Memo No. 261, a sex-ed initiative in the Philippines supported by the U.N. Population Fund. In addition to targeting children as young as nine, the bill seeks to inform on topics such as fertility reduction, HIV/AIDS prevention and family planning services, including contraceptive methods.

The program is being piloted in select schools around the country.

In their appeal, the parents argued that the legislation is unconstitutional as it violates the primary rights of parents to develop the moral character of their children. The parents also claimed that it was unnecessary for children as young as nine to be taught about reproductive health.

On July 5, a judge in a Quezon City court ruled against the parents' appeal, citing insufficient proof that their children attend any of the schools that are piloting the initiative. Because of this, stated the judge, the schools had not actually violated these specific parents' rights.

Read more: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/parents-in-philippines-objecting-to-sex-education-program-targeting-children/>

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South Africa: S.Africa to host education summit ahead of final

Reuters Africa, 8 Jul 2010

South Africa will host an education summit among political leaders and sports personalities attending the World Cup, hours before kick-off for the final, officials said on Wednesday.

South African President Jacob Zuma has said he would like to see the same concentration of effort his country used to prepare itself for hosting the World Cup be poured into education in the state where millions of students attend schools that do not have regular electricity or running water.

"The aim of this two hour summit is to use the World Cup event to promote the importance of education for development," Zuma's office said in a statement.

The "1Goal Education Summit" is designed to bring together heads of state from Africa, U.N. officials, soccer stars and political leaders who will be in South Africa for the championship match on Sunday.

Critics have said the billions of dollars South Africa spent to host the World Cup and build modern stadiums would have been better spent on textbooks, internet access and schools for an education system desperately in need of resources.

Source: <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE6660JO20100707>

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Tanzania: Help Solve Country's Problems, Students Urged

Victor Karega, The Citizen, 7 July 2010

Students have been urged to help solve political, economic and social problems facing Tanzania.

"With their energy, vigour, enthusiasm and fresh ideas, they can take the nation to new heights," said a Deloitte leader in Tanzania, Mr Eshak Harunani. "In fact, their engagement in the democratic process needs to be the primary concern of political leaders, policymakers, planners and administrators."

He was speaking to The Citizen after he presented prizes to winners of audit firm's essay-writing competition for 2009. "Talent and knowledge are the most important resources a nation can possess. The progress of today's youth has vital implications for the future health and growth of governments, companies and nations," he said.

Mr Harunani highlighted problems facing young people in the country. They include unemployment and difficulties in accessing education. He said Deloitte valued the involvement of young people in decision-making processes to enable them to become leaders.

Prizewinner Aaron Ezekiel from the Institute of Finance Management got Sh650,000 and an internship at Deloitte.

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007080107.html>

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Thailand: Thailand to spend \$3.4 bln for 64 education projects in 2011 fiscal year

Xinhua, 28 June 2010

Thailand's Education Minister Chinaworn Boonyakiart said on Monday his ministry plans to spend 109.45 billion baht (3.382 billion U.S. dollars) to launch 64 education development projects for the 2011 fiscal year, the Nation online reported.

The projects are part of the four-year roadmap of Thailand's Education Ministry, Chinaworn explained.

The projects include the development of 2,000 small schools into community learning centers, the minister said.

Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-06/28/c_13373665.htm

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UK: Behaviour and Discipline in Schools

Mr Nick Gibb, Minister of State, Department for Education, 7 July 2010

I would like to announce to the House new measures to be introduced to tackle behaviour and discipline in schools.

All pupils should show respect and courtesy towards teachers, towards other staff and towards each other.

Head teachers help to create that culture of respect by supporting their staff's authority to discipline pupils.

The role of the Government is to give schools the freedom they need to provide a safe and structured environment in which teachers can teach and children can learn.

The coalition agreement sets out this Government's intention to give heads and teachers the powers they need to ensure discipline in the classroom and promote good behaviour.

It also sets out the Government's intention to give anonymity to teachers accused by pupils and to take other measures to protect against false accusations.

Teachers should feel confident in exercising their authority, and pupils should not have to suffer disruption to their education caused by the poor behaviour of others.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtoday/cmwms/archive/100707.htm#d2e53>

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UK: Teachers to get new powers over troublemakers

Alison Kershaw and Joe Churcher, Press Association, The Independent, 7 July 2010

Teachers will be handed tough powers to search pupils for alcohol, drugs and mobile phones in a Government crackdown on bad behaviour, it was announced today.

Rules allowing schools to use physical force to remove unruly students from the classroom are also set to be simplified, while teachers facing accusations from pupils will be granted anonymity to prevent careers being ruined by "malicious" claims.

The raft of measures, which have won support from the teaching profession, were unveiled by Schools Minister Nick Gibb today in an effort to restore discipline to the classroom.

Official figures show 2,230 pupils were permanently excluded last year for physical assaults on teachers or fellow pupils and tens of thousands more suspended.

One in five secondary schools is rated "satisfactory" or worse by Ofsted for behaviour and two in five teachers have witnessed physical aggression - a quarter of them being the victims of it.

Read more: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/teachers-to-get-new-powers-over-troublemakers-2020487.html>

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UK: Best and worst class behaviour

Angela Harrison, BBC News, 7 July 2010

It is a situation a teacher least wants to find themselves in and one for which few are properly prepared.

At 6ft 4in Paul (not his real name) is no shrinking violet and no easy target for a violent pupil.

But early in his 10-year teaching career, at a school in south London, he was hurled across a desk by a pupil.

"A large boy came to the office, threatening staff and demanding to use the phone," he said.

"He pushed me through some doors and we went over the desks. He was trying to hit me.

"I was worried about getting into trouble and I did not know it at the time but he had gone to the police about me. I only found out that the school had been investigating it afterwards. Luckily there were witnesses."

The incident was not an isolated one but it did not put Paul off teaching.

He is now an assistant head teacher just outside London.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10540843.stm

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UK: Primary schools 'need specialist science teachers'

BBC News, 7 July 2010

Primary schools in England do not have enough specialist teachers to provide youngsters with a high quality science education, a report says.

A Royal Society study of UK science and maths teaching for five to 14 year olds said every school should have a teacher with a sound scientific background.

The study said England's testing regime "stifled creativity" as teachers "drummed" facts into pupils' heads.

The report also called for maths tests for 11 year olds to be scrapped.

Key Stage 2 tests in science, taken in the last year of primary school, have now been abolished and were sat for the last time by pupils in England in 2009.

The Royal Society, which champions science in the UK, called for a move away from "teaching to the test", a major new drive to recruit specialist science and maths teachers, as well as a greater emphasis on practical work to help youngsters understand the subjects.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10522188.stm

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UK: CCTV turning schools into 'prisons'

Graeme Paton, Telegraph, 7 July 2010

Researchers found the widespread use of CCTV, ID cards, electronic registration systems, fob-controlled gates and fingerprint technology as schools attempt to crackdown on troublemakers.

Staff at one comprehensive patrolled corridors and playgrounds with radios to make sure children behaved at lunchtimes, while teachers at a private school used technology to spy on children's computer and internet use.

Researchers suggested that the sheer scale of surveillance was fuelling paranoia among many pupils.

According to the report, children at an all-girls' secondary school claimed that "voyeuristic" cameras could be used to monitor them in changing rooms and toilets.

The conclusions, in a study by Hull University, come amid growing concerns over a rise in the use of surveillance techniques in schools.

As many as 85 per cent of teachers have reported the use of CCTV in their schools and one-in-10 admitted cameras were even trained on toilets.

This comes despite claims in another report that the collection of CCTV images or other biometric information could contravene the Data Protection Act.

Read more: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7874818/CCTV-turning-schools-into-prisons.html>

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UK: The school with 30 languages where teachers talk to pupils through a computer translator

Daily Mail, 7 July 2010

A school where 60 per cent of pupils speak English as a second language has invested in electronic translators for every child so they can communicate with teachers.

Manor Park Primary in Aston, Birmingham, which has 384 pupils of 32 different ethnicities, is the first school in Britain to provide translators for all of its children and to make the tools an integral part of every lesson.

The technology enables teachers to type messages to pupils which are then translated into the 19 native tongues of children with no English.

Another 11 languages are spoken by pupils who have some English.

And with figures showing that one in six primary pupils speaks a different language at home - double the number ten years ago - the technology could soon become a permanent feature in many more schools.

The 'Talking Tutor' can verbally translate English into 25 languages including Polish, Urdu, Pakistani and Chinese. A further 200 languages can be translated on-screen.

Teachers type a message into a computer and the virtual tutor then reads the message out to the pupil in their native tongue. The pupil types a response which is read to the teacher by the tutor.

The software claims to be 95 per cent accurate as it uses 'contextchecking technology' which gives the meaning of the message rather than a verbatim translation.

Headmaster Jason Smith said the software had transformed his school and given staff the opportunity to communicate with children.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1292466/School-forced-buy-translator-half-pupils-dont-speak-English.html>

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UK: Private schools forced to offer more free places

Graeme Paton, Telegraph, 7 July 2010

In an unprecedented move, two independent schools have become the first in England and Wales to increase the amount of money set aside for bursaries under pressure from the official charities regulator.

The move could have serious implications for a number of other fee-paying schools as they battle the threat of falling income in the economic downturn.

Last night, private school leaders warned that the rules could "jeopardise the future" of some schools.

The Independent Schools Council is now seeking a judicial review of guidelines issued by the Charity Commission amid claims it is acting "illegally".

Under Labour's 2006 Charities Act, fee-paying schools are no longer automatically entitled to charitable status.

They must prove they provide "public benefit" to remain in business and retain tax breaks worth around £100m a year.

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UK: Private schools want legal ruling on charity status

BBC News, 7 July 2010

The Independent Schools Council says it wants a legal ruling to clarify the guidelines on charitable status for private schools.

Such a legal ruling could come a step closer if the independent schools group is successful in its bid for a judicial review of Charity Commission guidance.

The ISC says it is expecting to hear shortly if there will be such a review.

In particular it wants to clarify what is meant by charity rules which expect schools to provide "public benefit".

Chief executive David Lyscom said the independent schools body "had no alternative but to challenge the commission in the courts".

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10541553.stm

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UK: Local authority schools face financial 'meltdown,' says study

Richard Garner, The Independent, 8 July 2010

Schools that stay under local authority control face financial "meltdown" as a result of the Government's drive to boost the flagship academies programme, a study warns today.

Schools have been told they will get extra funding if they opt to become academies - with cash held by councils to provide services like special educational needs support and truancy officers passed on to them.

However, a "ready reckoner" produced by the Department for Education showing how much each will get reveals some will get substantially more than others.

In Islington in north London, for instance secondary schools will get £1,322 per pupil while in Buckinghamshire the figure is only £217.

This is because authorities differ widely in the way they calculate how much cash they hold back from schools.

In some, the overall cost of administration and of other children's services is included in the calculation.

The upshot, according to local government expert Martin Rogers, is that these authorities would lose so much cash if schools opted out that they would face "a financial catastrophe".

Read more: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/local-authority-schools-face-financial-meltdown-says-study-2021219.html>

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UK: Michael Gove apology over school building list errors

BBC News, 8 July 2010

The education secretary has said he will apologise in person to schools led to believe they could go ahead with building projects which were axed.

They include nine schools in Sandwell, West Midlands, and one in Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

Michael Gove admitted 25 errors in data about scrapping a multi-billion pound scheme in England.

Labour MPs said this was "intolerable", and called Mr Gove a "miserable pipsqueak".

The latter comment was shouted across the Commons chamber on Wednesday by Labour's Tom Watson, whose West Bromwich East constituency includes Sandwell.

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/10549400.stm

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USA: Online Bullies Pull Schools Into the Fray

Jan Hoffman, New York Times, June 27, 2010

The girl's parents, wild with outrage and fear, showed the principal the text messages: a dozen shocking, sexually explicit threats, sent to their daughter the previous Saturday night from the cellphone of a 12-year-old boy. Both children were sixth graders at Benjamin Franklin Middle School in Ridgewood, N.J.

Punish him, insisted the parents.

"I said, 'This occurred out of school, on a weekend,' " recalled the principal, Tony Orsini. "We can't discipline him."

Had they contacted the boy's family, he asked.

Too awkward, they replied. The fathers coach sports together.

What about the police, Mr. Orsini asked.

A criminal investigation would be protracted, the parents had decided, its outcome uncertain. They wanted immediate action.

They pleaded: "Help us."

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/style/28bully.html>

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USA: Last Day of 'Rubber Rooms' for Teachers

Jennifer Medina, The New York Times, 28 June 2010

Monday was the last day of school for the city's 1 million students. But at the "rubber room" on West 125th Street, it was also the end of an era.

For the last several years, teachers accused of incompetence or wrongdoing have been forced into rubber rooms, formally called Temporary Reassignment Centers, where they receive a full salary but do not work while they wait for the Department of Education or a hearing officer to decide their fate.

But in April, city officials and the teachers' union agreed to eliminate the rooms, which had been a source of embarrassment for all. Beginning in the fall, those teachers will perform administrative duties or be sent home if they are deemed a threat to students.

So Monday was the last day for the roughly 700 teachers and administrators spread among seven reassignment centers, where they were sent after being accused of transgressions as small as persistent tardiness and as serious as sexually harassing students.

There is no rubber on the walls — the name comes from the notion that it would be difficult not to go mad after spending day after day in a windowless room like the one on 125th Street.

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/29/education/29rubber.html>

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USA: More California school districts on the financial brink

Howard Blume, LA Times, June 29, 2010

An increasing number of California school districts are edging closer to financial insolvency, state officials reported Tuesday.

One immediate effect has been the layoff of teachers — probably in the thousands, although neither state officials nor the California Teachers Assn. has final numbers.

Since the beginning of 2010, the number of school systems that may be "unable to meet future financial obligations" has increased by 38%, according to the state Department of Education.

"Schools on this list are now forced to make terrible decisions to cut programs and services that students need or face bankruptcy," said state Supt. of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell.

Of the state's 1,077 school districts, 14 are classified as in especially dire condition. They are not likely to avoid bankruptcy based on their current approved budgets. L.A. County has one such school system, the Lynwood Unified School District, officials said. Other districts in this category include Hayward Unified in Alameda County, Vallejo City Unified in Solano County and Natomas Unified in Sacramento County.

Read more: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2010/06/more-california-school-districts-on-the-financial-brink.html>

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USA: In Blow to Bloomberg, City Must Keep 19 Failing Schools Open

Jennifer Medina, The New York Times, 1 July 2010

A state appellate court ruled unanimously on Thursday that New York City must keep open 19 schools it wanted to close for poor performance, blocking one of the Bloomberg administration's signature efforts to improve the educational system.

The ruling, by the Appellate Division, First Department, in Manhattan, upheld a lower court finding that the city's Education Department did not comply with the 2009 state law on mayoral control of the city schools because it failed to adequately notify the public about the ramifications of the closings.

Because many eighth graders assumed the schools would be closed and the Education Department discouraged them from attending the schools, few applied. Some of the schools could begin September with just a few dozen freshmen. School officials said they expected enrollment to grow with students who move into the city, but the number will still likely be far smaller than in past years.

Since taking office in 2002, the mayor has closed 91 schools that regularly posted low test scores or graduation rates and has replaced them with smaller schools, on the premise that the more intimate environments served struggling students better. Studies have shown that students in the new schools have fared better than their predecessors in the larger schools, but some other large schools have suffered from having to absorb more struggling students.

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/education/02schools.html>

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USA: Fenty outlines plans to cut special-ed costs and return students to public schools

Bill Turque, The Washington Post, 2 July 2010

The administration of D.C. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, seeking to whittle the annual \$280 million cost of sending special education students to private schools, said Thursday that it will study several options to return as many as possible to the city's public schools.

The options, which officials said they will present to parents in meetings over the next few weeks, include forming public-private partnerships to build new facilities, co-locating "schools within schools" in joint ventures with private operators, expanding special education services in neighborhood schools by establishing separate classes for students who need full-time services, modernizing the city's special education schools and retraining staff, and offering scholarship-type grants so parents can buy special education services on the open market.

Fenty announced the initiative 90 minutes after his rival in the Democratic mayoral primary, D.C. Council Chairman Vincent C. Gray, unveiled his schools platform. Fenty's plan was designed in part to address recent criticism from special education parents who have expressed alarm at District attempts to "reintegrate" private school students without what they describe as adequate advance notice or careful consideration of their needs.

Read more: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/01/AR2010070106192.html>

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USA: Teachers seeking national certification to get less help from state

Laura Camper, The Anniston Star, 7 July 2010

eachers will receive less reward for becoming nationally certified next year because, while more teachers are working toward certification, the state Legislature did not increase funding in this year's budget for the stipends certified teachers receive.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification is the equivalent of a lawyer passing the bar exam, said Superintendent of Piedmont City Schools Matt Akin.

"Everything I've read, everyone I've talked to has said it's the best professional development experience that a teacher can go through," he said.

The teachers put together four portfolios of their work including videos of them teaching, and go through six written assessments before earning certification. There are 25 different certifications teachers can earn, said Eddie Johnson, deputy state superintendent of education.

The certification is something the state and many school systems have been promoting.

"The national board is a single, comprehensive, advanced teaching credential for educators," Johnson said. "This is what teachers need to know about their content area and how to teach it."

http://www.annistonstar.com/view/full_story/8204350/article-Teachers-seeking-national-certification-to-get-less-help-from-state

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USA: Fremont High's grand experiment begins

Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times, 7 July 2010

A revamped Fremont High, which opened its school year Tuesday with a majority of new teachers, has become a local test case for a controversial school makeover approach being tried around the country.

Last December, Los Angeles schools Supt. Ramon C. Cortines announced that he would personally oversee sweeping reforms at Fremont. The most striking was his edict that all staff members — including teachers, counselors, custodians and cafeteria workers — had to reapply for their jobs at the persistently low-performing South Los Angeles campus.

Among the disturbing data that led to his decision: Fewer than 2% of students tested as proficient in the math course they took last year.

Nearly half of the teaching staff has returned, said Principal Rafael Balderas. Of those not coming back, about 70% had refused to interview for their former jobs. The rest, about 33, tried to come back but were turned down. Displaced teachers are entitled to jobs at other schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Balderas said he retained many of the "best and the brightest" and was able to fill slots as needed with equally talented educators from among 600 applicants.

The Obama administration, in its initiative to "turn around" the worst schools in the country, has endorsed replacing a school's staff, among other harsh strategies, but acclaim is far from universal.

Read more: <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jul/07/local/la-me-0707-laUSD-fremont-20100707>

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USA: Conservative Candidates Take Aim at Federal K-12 Role

Alyson Klein, Education Week, 7 July 2010

The conservative currents roiling the 2010 midterm election season bring with them a new group of Republican congressional candidates who are outspoken about their desire for a limited federal role in education policy and funding.

For many, the prime target is the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the economic-stimulus program passed by Congress in February 2009, which provided some \$100 billion for public education.

And in some cases, candidates have taken a page from a decades-old conservative playbook, pushing policies that would strengthen the rights of parents to homeschool their children—and even urging the abolition of the U.S. Department of Education, a position once favored by President Ronald Reagan's administration.

Read more:

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/07/07/36teaparty_ep.h29.html?tkn=YYMFCPS1JtbUQucvCpJwWLF34QbmdHuJEc3%2B

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USA: The value of arts education: A video

The Washington Post, Valerie Strauss, July 7, 2010

This 14-minute film does a great job detailing the impact of arts education on the development of children's cognitive, artistic, social and psychological development.

The film, "Enlivening the Senses: Arts|Learning at the Core of Education," was created through a partnership between the nonprofit organization Arts/Learning and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The film was made by Derek LeDoux, the producer and director, and Andrew Swaine, director of photography, who have worked together on documentaries, television pilots and other projects. Aaron Shadwell edited the film.

Arts/Learning encourages active engagement of preschool through college students in developing their highest artistic and academic competence by promoting practices, programs and partnerships to achieve a new level of excellence in teaching and curriculum development.

Watch the video at: <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/arts-education/the-value-of-arts-education-a.html>

The video is also available to watch, or for sharing, at <http://artslearning.org/video>.

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USA: An Interview with Neal McCluskey: The Right Reasons Why the Teacher Bailout is Wrong

Michael F. Shaughnessy, EducationNews.org, 8 July 2010

Neal, it seems that every time I turn around, these politicians are putting some kind of strange spin or simply incorrect explanation about things. Why SHOULD the average taxpayer oppose the Teacher Bailout?

The primary reason taxpayers should oppose the teacher bailout – and we're really talking about a bailout for both teachers and other public-schooling staffers – is that we have increased public-school staffing for decades and gotten no corresponding improvement in achievement.

Indeed, over the past forty years public-school staffing has grown ten times faster than enrollment while achievement scores for students at the end of high school have been stagnant.

If anything, then, taxpayers should demand more public-school employment cuts so that the saved money could stay with taxpayers who could put it to more productive uses.

Read more: <http://www.educationnews.org/michael-f-shaughnessy/94730.html>

Neal McCluskey is the associate director of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom
<http://www.cato.org/research/education/>

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- 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)

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