

Class Notes: Common Core, Chinese Schools and More Education News

Each week, TIME's Kayla Webley fills you in on the goings on in the education world, everything from pre-K to higher ed.

By Kayla Webley | @kaylawebley | February 16, 2012 | +



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Obama Administration Proposes Grant to Overhaul Teaching

In his proposed 2013 budget, President Obama included a new \$5 billion competitive grant program aimed at retooling the teaching profession. The details are still in the works and pending approval from Congress, but the Department of Education has said the money will be awarded to states and school districts which do the following: reform teacher colleges and make them more selective, create new career ladders for teachers, link teacher pay more closely with performance (rather than longevity or credentials), compensate teachers who work in challenging learning environments, make teacher salaries more competitive with other professions, improve professional development, build evaluation systems based on multiple measures, and reform tenure. Read more about the program [here](#).

Study Says the Common Core Will Fall Short

The Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institute released its 2012 report on American education on Thursday. Among the findings in the report, authored by Tom Loveless, is a study on the Common Core that shows the set of curriculum standards, which has been adopted by 45 states, will have little to no effect on student achievement. This finding is huge, as

the Common Core is being touted as exactly the thing that will help the U.S. increase its global competitiveness — and it's also a key component of the Obama Administration's education agenda. The Brown Center report also takes a look at the achievement gap and says the primary factor that contributes to the disparity in student performance is whether a student is an English language learner or not, as opposed to the student's race or economic status. Download the full report [here](#).

Where the States Stand on Teacher Evaluations

This map from Jo Napolitano of Newsday shows where each state stands on teacher evaluations. It breaks the states into three categories: those who have (or plan to) link teacher evaluations to student performance (as preferred by the Obama Administration), those that are considering making the link and those who have decided against it. See the map [here](#).

Study Shows Education Gap Between the Rich and Poor is Increasing

A new study from Sean Reardon, a sociologist at Stanford University, shows the achievement gap between children from high- and low-income families is roughly 30 to 40 percent larger among children born in 2001 than among those born 25 years earlier. At the same time, the achievement gap between whites and non-whites has lessened, Reardon writes. Download the abstract [here](#) or read the New York *Times* story on this study and one other with similar findings [here](#).

Number of the Week: \$10 billion

The amount of money in President Obama's 2013 budget proposal that would go to community colleges to increase job-training programs. The president would also like to raise the maximum Pell Grant by \$85 to \$5,635. Read more about what the president's budget proposal means for community college students [here](#).

New Mexico Granted No Child Left Behind Waiver

The Department of Education announced on Wednesday that New Mexico has been granted a No Child Left Behind waiver. The state had initially been denied approval last week when President Obama granted waivers to the other 10 states that applied for them in the first round. The waivers relieve states from having to meet the strictest requirements under NCLB, including one key provision that required all students at public schools to be proficient in math and reading by 2014. In exchange, the states must adopt the Obama Administration's preferred set of reforms, including "college and career ready" standards, new systems for evaluating teachers and principals and aggressive plans to turn around low-performing schools. Read more about the waivers [here](#).

Can China Successfully Educate Its Future Workforce?

The latest article in TIME's partnership with the Hechinger Report shows that while China continues to modernize its economy, millions of migrant children are being taught in substandard urban schools, a fact that could jeopardize the nation's ability to grow and develop a skilled workforce. Read the full story [here](#).

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