



Department of Community
and Human Services

YOUTH TOPICS NEWSLETTER

IN THE MARCH 29 EDITION:

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EVENTS

Jazz 4 Justice Benefit Concert (April 5)

An [event](#) in support of the Alexandria Bar Foundation, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, and NOVA's Rayburn Street Jazz Band 3 will be held at the at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall (4915 E. Campus Drive). The cocktail reception and improvisational jam session will begin at 6 p.m. followed by the concert at 7:30. Admission is free; the suggested donation is \$10.

Law vs. Policy: Charting a Path Toward Socioeconomic Rights (April 7)

Socio-legal scholars have amassed considerable research on civil and political rights, but have given very little attention to socioeconomic rights and the role of law in reproducing economic inequality. Public policy scholars have documented inequalities in matters of social and economic welfare, but have rarely conceptualized social welfare policy as "law" or considered the legal dimensions of state distribution. A [talk](#) considers both what has been lost as a consequence of this "law vs. policy" divide and what might be gained from bridging the two fields by studying law's relationship to social welfare. The event will take place from 6 – 8 p.m. at the Virginia Tech Research Center (900 N Glebe Rd, 2nd Floor, East/ West Falls Church Room). The lecture begins at 6:30 p.m.

Materialized Magic: Fiber Art Workshop (April 7, May 5)

The [community art project](#) provides free lessons for people of all levels of experience in crocheting, knitting, and felting. After the session, leftover materials and supplies will be donated to the community through nursing homes, community centers, and nonprofit organizations. The event will take place from 6 – 9 p.m. in the Target Gallery at the Torpedo Factory (105 N. Union Street).

An Evening in the French Quarter (April 8)

Revel in the romance of New Orleans's historic French Quarter, where cobblestone streets, gas lamps and fragrant magnolia blossoms evoke the Antebellum era and colorful Mardi Gras characters keep things lively at the Hotel Monaco (480 King Street). Beginning at 7 p.m., enjoy an [evening](#) of mingling, dancing, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and a silent auction. Enter the [Grand Prize Raffle](#) to win a week in St. Croix, a New Orleans Getaway, or a Complete Invisalign Package at Stone Aesthetic Dentistry. All proceeds benefit children in foster care or at-risk of abuse and neglect. The [Online Auction](#) is now live. The deadline for pre-bidding is April 5 at Noon. Pre-bidding allows online bids for silent auction items before our event. At the end of the pre-bidding period, the winning bid is used as the starting bid for the silent auction itself. Bidding then continues during the event. The auction ends April 6 at Noon.

Spring Forward (April 10)

The headliner for the Community Lodgings fundraiser is the Philadelphia international recording group [The Intruders](#). The [gala](#), which features a live auction and a dinner buffet, will take place at the Union Street Public House (121 S. Union) from 5 – 8 p.m.

Catalyzing City and Anchor Institution Partnerships (April 12)

The Urban Institute event will bring together leaders from government, philanthropy, universities, and hospitals to discuss strategies for cultivating mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships that promote local prosperity. The discussion will include two panels. The first will focus on how best to form partnerships between cities, anchor institutions, and philanthropic organizations. The second will focus on how leaders in several industries and sectors are using new approaches to advance ground-level improvements. The event is from 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. at the Urban Institute (2100 M Street NW, 5th Floor); lunch will be available at Noon. [Registration](#) is required.

Second Thursday Art Night: Recycling & Reuse (April 14)

The Torpedo Factory Art Center (105 N. Union St.) hosts a special after-hours [event](#) from 6 – 9 p.m. each month that includes browsing open studios and galleries and interacting with artists. In April, Alison Sigethy (Studio 307) Karen Fitzgerald (Studio 203), and Jen Athanas (Studio 320) create a chandelier from recycled plastic water bottles. Sheep Jones and Cindy Richmond host an opening reception for *Fish Stories*. Lisa Kellner will install *Always into Now* in The Target Gallery and *Orbit* and *Teresa Oaxaca: Misfits* will be on exhibit in The Art League Gallery.

Alexandria Archaeology Save Our Ship Tours (April 14, 15 and 16)

An 18th century ship was recently excavated along the Alexandria Waterfront that had been sunk by early Alexandrians over two hundred years ago in the Potomac mudflats. Special behind-the-scenes tours are being offered before the ship is moved to a more permanent storage facility. [Reservations](#) are required for 30-minute tours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tours take place at 116 South Quaker Lane (old DASH bus barn).

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) National Advocacy Summit (April 18-20)

The [summit](#) at the Hilton Garden Inn on Capitol Hill (1225 First Street N.E.) will feature briefings on two key issues in child welfare – the critical topic of substance use and the challenge of building a stronger child welfare workforce.

Data + Storytelling = Impact (April 19)

An interactive discussion at the Durant Arts Center (1605 Cameron Street) will enable participants to verify data being collected by their organization is the right data to track as well as decide what additional data should be tracked with the limited resources available to the organization. Reservations are required and [online registration](#) is available. Registration and a light breakfast for the free event will begin at 8:30 followed by the workshop from 9 – 11 a.m.

Linking the Silos of Racial Equity Work Conference (April 21)

The School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech is hosting a [free event](#) featuring a discussion that will incorporate a myriad of perspectives about the salience of racial equity. Participants will have the opportunity to learn communication strategies that will foster an environment conducive to collaborative learning and racial equity as well as a general understanding of the historical role that race has played in the development of current policies and practices. The keynote speaker is Dr. Susan Gooden, author of *Race and Social Equity: A Nervous Area of Government*. The event at the Virginia Tech Research Center (900 N. Glebe Rd, Arlington) will begin with a grab-and-go breakfast at 8 a.m. followed by the event at 9 a.m.

Project Discovery Walkathon

A [walkathon](#) in support of Project Discovery (a college access program that helps minority and low-income students and those who would become the first members of their families to attend college or technical school) will begin at 8 a.m. at Fort Ward Park (4301 W. Braddock Road). Honorary C-Chairs are Chris Lawrence, Anchor/Reporter, NBC News 4; Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, Pastor, Alfred Street Baptist Church; and Kristin Wright, General Assignment Reporter, NBC News 4.

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CAREERS/VOLUNTEERISM

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce Poetry Contest

In honor of National Poetry Month (April), the Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) invites reflections from ages 13+ on the intersections of work, school and career as well as the challenges of balancing life and school. Winners will receive a certificate of participation and will be featured on CEW's newly redesigned diversity initiative and on its Facebook and Twitter pages. [Submissions](#) are due April 18.

Smithsonian Latino Center Young Ambassadors Program

The goal of the annual [program](#) is to foster the next generation of Latino leaders in the arts, sciences, and humanities. Graduating high school seniors with an interest in and commitment to the arts, sciences, and humanities as they pertain to Latino communities and cultures will be selected to travel to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong seminar at the Smithsonian. Following the week in Washington, students participate in a four-week interdisciplinary internship in museums and cultural institutions in seventeen cities across the United States and Puerto Rico, including Smithsonian-affiliated organizations. Student selection is based on demonstrated interest, commitment and excellence in the arts, sciences, and humanities as well as academic record, leadership experience, and dedication to education and community service. The program includes meals and accommodations for the duration of the one-week training seminar, round-trip travel to Washington, D.C., and a program stipend following the four-week internship. Upon completion of the five-week program, participants will receive \$2,000 to apply to their future educational plans. Applications must be received by April 4.

Child Advocates Law Scholarship

The law firm of Steinger, Iscoe & Greene believes attorneys stand in a unique place to help families and individual victims of child abuse. Twice a year it awards a [scholarship](#) of \$1,000 to a child advocate or abuse survivor seeking a law degree. Applications for a scholarship for the fall semester must be received by July 31; applications for the spring semester of 2017 must be received by November 30.

Health and Disability Scholarships

The program of the American Association on Health and Disability [supports](#) students with disabilities pursuing higher education. Preference is given to students who plan to pursue undergraduate/graduate studies in the field of public health, health promotion, and disability studies (including disability policy and disability research). Applicants must be enrolled full time as an undergraduate (freshman or beyond), or be enrolled part or full time in graduate school, have a documented disability, and be able to provide documentation of their disability. Scholarships will be limited to less than \$1,000 and will be awarded in January 2017. The deadline to apply is November 15.

Alexandria Workforce Development Center Career Readiness Workshops

A number of free [workshops](#) will be hosted by the Workforce Development Center in April. Registration is required. Register [online](#) or in person at the Workforce Development Center (1900 N. Beauregard Street).

Youth Justice Leadership Institute

The year-long [fellowship program](#) of the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) is for advocates and organizers interested in juvenile justice reform that focuses on elevating leaders of color, youth, and family members. The fellowship supports the development of advocates and organizers who reflect communities most affected by juvenile justice system practices and policies, and includes mentoring and distance learning opportunities. NJJN will host informational seminars on [March 30](#) and [April 4](#). Applications are due April 25.

Juvenile Diversion Certificate Program

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, in partnership with the Juvenile Law Center, National League of Cities, and the Police Foundation, is accepting applications for a [program](#) that will help law enforcement officers, probation staff, prosecutors, school officials, judges, policymakers, and other local leaders strengthen their diversion efforts. Participants will receive training on juvenile diversion policies, practices, and programs while also benefiting from networking and learning across jurisdictions. The program will be held from August 2 - 5 at Georgetown University. Applications are due April 29.

Justice Innovation Awards

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) is seeking [nominations](#) for its 2nd Annual Justice Innovation Awards honoring those who “rethink, reimagine, and redefine” justice for children and families. Nominations are being accepted for Innovator of the Year and Impact of the Year. The awards will be presented at NCJFCJ’s 79th Annual Conference in Monterey, CA. from July 17–20. The deadline is April 8.

World of Children Award

The [award](#) seeks to improve the lives of vulnerable children by funding and elevating the most effective changemakers for children worldwide. The Health Award is for those providing services specifically in the fields of health, medicine, or the sciences. The Humanitarian Award recognizes individuals working in child safety, social services, or humanitarian services. The Youth Award is given to a young person under the age of 21 who has made

extraordinary contributions to the lives of other children. The Education Award recognizes individuals who are making extraordinary contributions to the education of children. The Protection Award is awarded to individuals working to help children live free from fear, abuse, and exploitation (including but not limited to trafficking, slavery, and sexual imposition). Award winners in each category receive a minimum grant of \$50,000 (\$25,000 for the Youth Award) to support their organization. The nomination deadline is April 1; self-nominations are accepted.

UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education

The UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education, supported by the Government of the People's Republic of China, honors outstanding innovation and contributions made by individuals, institutions, and organizations to advance girls' and women's education. Two [laureates](#) will be awarded with \$50,000 each to recognize their exceptional contributions and support their work in advancing education for girls and women. Member States and non-governmental organizations in official partnership with UNESCO are invited to submit nominations (self-nominations will not be considered.) The nomination deadline is April 20, 2016.

Global Nursing Research

Sigma Theta Tau International is inviting applications from registered nurses for its Global Nursing Research Grant program. Through the [program](#), a single grant of up to \$12,000 will be awarded to a nurse with a research project focused on a global health disparity. To be eligible, the principal investigator(s) should be a registered nurse (or equivalent, depending on his/her country) with a current license and at least a master's in nursing (or country equivalent). Preference will be given to Sigma Theta Tau members.

Sex Offender Management Fellowship Program

The Office of Justice Programs is accepting applications for as many as two [fellowship positions](#) to enhance the capacity of the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART) to provide assistance and support to public or private colleges and universities in their response to, prevention of, and education about sexual violence and other sex offending behaviors on campus. Each fellow will receive up to \$150,000 for an 18-month project period. Applications are due April 25.

Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program

The year-long [program](#) of Atlantic Philanthropies is designed to provide healthcare professionals with the experience and skills necessary to make a positive contribution to the development and implementation of health policies that affect older Americans. The program provides fellows with the opportunity to participate in either a residential or non-residential track. The residential track allows fellows to participate in the policymaking process, on either the federal or state level, as a legislative assistant in Congress, a professional staff member in an Executive branch agency, or in a policy organization. The non-residential track allows fellows to remain at their home institution, where they work on a policy project that involves brief placement(s) throughout the year at relevant sites. Stipends for residential fellows vary and are commensurate with individual fellow's current base salary (up to \$100,000 annually). In addition to a stipend, financial support will be provided for relocation (up to \$4,500) and health insurance, if not covered by the fellow's institution (up to \$400/month). Non-residential fellows, including those in the global and community tracks, may receive up to \$10,000 to cover approved project-related expenses and travel costs. Applications must be received by April 15.

Creative Community Fellowships

The [program](#) of National Arts Strategies supports innovators committed to using arts and culture to design solutions for community problems. Led by experts and leaders in social innovation, design thinking, and creative placemaking, fellows gain the tools, skills, and networks to activate ideas that will transform their communities. In 2016, twenty-five fellows will enter the program with an idea for a cultural project that responds to a problem in their communities. The program brings entrepreneurs together for a week of learning and fostering connections. Following the networking week, fellows will have access to online tools, lessons, and discussion to help them further their projects. Fellows will come together six months later for a three-day feedback session, where they will have the opportunity to make their pitches to national funders who support creative placemaking initiatives. Following the feedback sessions, fellows will have the opportunity to create a crowdfunding campaign to support their projects. Tuition, including room and board, will be completely underwritten for all fellows. Fellows are only responsible for their travel costs to in-person events. To be eligible, applicants must be a cultural entrepreneur who is curious, open, and collaborative as well as dedicated to creating healthy neighborhoods in his or her community. The deadline to apply is April 24.

Alfa Fellowship Program

The Alfa Fellowship Program offers up to eighteen accomplished young Americans, Britons, and Germans the opportunity to complete a high-level professional development program in Russia each year. The [fellowship](#) provides a monthly stipend, accommodation, insurance, all program-related travel costs, language training in Russia, and private tutoring in the U.S., U.K., or Germany. Fellows tend to be between the ages of 25 and 35 with graduate degrees and professional experience in business, economics, journalism, law, public policy or a related field. While Russian language skills vary, most fellows have studied Russian for at least two years at the post-secondary level. Applications must be submitted online by December 1.

College Board Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Arts

The College Board Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Arts recognizes the achievements of arts initiatives that serve students in grades 6-12 and that promote student learning and creativity in exemplary and innovative ways. [Awards](#) will be given to model programs in three categories. The Arts Integration award recognizes a middle or high school program that uses an innovative approach to cross-curricular study, drawing connections between arts-based learning and the themes, content, and ideas of other subjects, including English language arts, science, social studies, math, and/or other areas. The Equity Through Arts award recognizes a successful middle or high school arts program that uses the arts as a tool for increasing academic engagement among underserved students. The award for Civic Engagement/Professional Partnerships recognizes a middle or high school arts program that uses arts experiences as vehicles for community engagement. Within each of these three categories, one award in the amount of \$5,000 will be given to winning schools to support the continuation and growth of their arts programs. Among the three winning schools, one will be named the national winner and will be awarded an additional \$2,500. Public and private schools serving students in grades 6-12 may apply. Applications are due April 18.

Artist Residencies

The Ucross Foundation in Sheridan, Wyoming provides uninterrupted time, work space, and living accommodations to competitively selected visual artists, writers, and composers. Currently, the foundation is accepting applications for its 2017 Spring Residency program, which runs from March to June. [Residencies](#) vary in length from two weeks to six weeks. At any one time, there are up to nine individuals in residence, a mix of visual artists, writers, and composers. In most cases, studios are separate from living quarters. Lunch and dinners are prepared Monday to Friday by a professional chef with ample provisions on hand for breakfasts and weekends. Although there is a \$40 non-refundable application fee, there is no charge for a residency. Artists, writers, and composers from anywhere in the United States and the world, in any stage of their professional career, are invited to apply for a residency. The deadline to apply is October 1.

Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Fine Arts

The foundation will award [three prizes](#) of \$50,000 each to young foreign-born artists who demonstrate outstanding early achievement. Artists practicing in a variety of media — including painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, sculpture, and other visual arts processes — are encouraged to apply. Applicants must have been born outside the United States; be no more than 38 years old as of December 31, 2016; be a naturalized citizen or permanent resident (green card holder) of the United States, and intend to pursue a professional career in the United States. Applications must be received by June 10.

Fund for the Advancement of U.S. Judo

The Women's Sports Foundation is accepting [applications](#) for the Rusty Kanokogi Fund for the Advancement of U.S. Judo. The fund was established in 2009 to provide direct financial assistance to aspiring judo athletes with successful competitive records who have the potential to achieve even higher performance levels and rankings. Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to elite-level athletes for coaching, specialized training, equipment, athletic clothing, and/or travel. To be eligible, applicants must be a U.S. female judo player in training for national and international competition. The deadline is April 1.

Mika Salpeter Lifetime Achievement Award

The annual award by the Society of Neuroscience recognizes an individual with outstanding career achievements in the field of neuroscience who has significantly promoted the professional advancement of women in the field. The recipient will receive a \$5,000 prize and complimentary registration, transportation, and two nights of hotel accommodations for the annual meeting in San Diego, where the prize will be presented and the recipient honored at the Celebration of Women in Neuroscience Luncheon. [Nominations](#) are due June 10.

Prize for Creative Promise in Biomedical Science

The Vilcek Foundation will award [three prizes](#) of \$50,000 each to young foreign-born biomedical scientists who demonstrate outstanding early achievement. Eligible work may be in basic, applied, and/or translational biomedical science. To be eligible, applicants must have been born outside the United States; must not be older than 38 as of December 31, 2016; must be a naturalized citizen of the United States or a green card holder; and must have been living and working in the United States for at least 5 years. In addition, applicants must have earned a doctoral degree (M.D., Ph.D., or equivalent), intend to pursue a professional career in the United States, and hold a full-time position at an academic institution or other organization. Eligible positions include assistant or associate professor, research scientist, or equivalent. Applications must be received by June 10.

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GRANTSMANSHIP

DCHS Office of Youth Services Listing of Grant Opportunities

The DCHS Office of Youth Services compiled a listing of grant opportunities on [March 7](#), [March 18](#) and [March 25](#).

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RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Congressman John Lewis Shares the Inspiring Story of How He Became Involved in the Civil Rights Movement

Congressman John Lewis, representing Georgia's 5th District, inspired students and staff at Jefferson-Houston School with stories of his very humble youth raising chickens on a farm, his participation in the Civil Rights Movement, and his role in Congress today. [View](#) John Lewis' talk at Jefferson-Houston School on ACPS-TV.

ACPS Picks Up Top Awards at Regional Science Fair

Ten students from T.C. Williams High School and George Washington Middle School won [first place awards](#) at the Northern Virginia Regional Science and Engineering Fair, while three T.C. Williams students were recommended to move on to the Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair. ACPS took home the Grand Prize Alternate Award, Best of Grades 7 and 8, and four nominations for the 2016 Broadcom Masters.

ACPS Welcomes New Coordinator of City-Wide Early Childhood Programs

Michelle A. Smith-Howard will be [overseeing](#) the future expansion and direction of programs for preschool-age children. Smith-Howard comes to ACPS after serving as Director of Early Childhood Development and Intervention with the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and as an early childhood expert with D.C. Public Schools.

Cora Kelly Principal Named Virginia Principal of the Year

Brandon Davis, Principal of Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology, was [named](#) Virginia's 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year in a surprise ceremony staged by his staff and students. He was acknowledged by the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP) for his role in putting Cora Kelly on the map by building student success and meeting high-performance targets at a school with an 87% free and reduced school lunch rate.

Meet the Teachers Nominated for The Washington Post Outstanding Teacher Award

Each year The Washington Post hosts its Outstanding Teacher Award, which honors one teacher from each school division in the Washington Metropolitan Area. In the [fourth](#), [fifth](#), and [final](#) posts in a series in the run up to the announcement of the winner, ACPS Express profiles nominees.

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EDUCATION

How Well are American Students Learning?

The 15th edition of the [report](#) by the Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings is comprised of three studies. The first part is on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and instruction in math and reading. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data indicate that nonfiction is receiving greater emphasis in both fourth and eighth grade reading instruction, data and geometry are receding in importance in fourth grade math, and course enrollments in eighth grade math are shifting away from advanced courses toward a single, general math course. The CCSS supports all of these trends. The second section investigates whether tracking (the practice of grouping students into different classes based on ability or prior achievement) in eighth grade is related to Advanced Placement (AP) outcomes in high school. Critics argue that tracking creates or reinforces social inequities. Middle school is when students first experience tracking, typically in mathematics. Part three examines school leadership from an international perspective. Data from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are examined to see whether principals' instructional activities are associated with student achievement. No association was found.

U.S. Students from Educated Families Lag in International Tests

The 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) [found](#) fifteen-year olds in the U.S. today are average in science and reading literacy, and below average in mathematics, compared to their counterparts in [other industrialized] countries. Quoting Arne Duncan, “the educational challenge in America is not just about poor kids in poor neighborhoods. It’s about many kids in many neighborhoods. The [test] results underscore that educational shortcomings in the United States are not just the problems of other people’s children.” In Virginia, 40% of the students were proficient, ranking it 15th among the states and 21st internationally (tying with Luxembourg).

New Research Shows How a Federal School Turnaround Program Backfired in North Carolina

The focus of new [study](#) by researchers at Northwestern, released as a working paper by the research group CALDER, is North Carolina elementary and middle schools in North Carolina that were part of the state’s [turnaround program](#) (which was funded with federal dollars through Race to the Top). Researchers found the program had at best no effect on student achievement, and by some measures had a negative impact. More students were suspended and slightly fewer were in attendance because of the program. Middle class parents often transferred their kids to different schools. Teachers said they spent more time collaborating and receiving professional development, but also doing paperwork and administrative tasks; they were more likely to leave turnaround schools than similar struggling schools. This is one study of one state — and in fact a different study of the same program found more positive outcomes — but the results are nevertheless stark and disappointing. A program designed to turn around low-performing schools, if anything, may have made them worse.

Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card

A [report](#) published by the Education Law Center (ELC) found public school funding in most states remains unfair and inequitable, depriving millions of U.S. students of the opportunity for school success. It showed little improvement over the past five years in those states that consistently fail to direct additional funding to districts with high levels of need (as measured by student poverty). The report also found striking differences in levels of funding for K-12 education across the states, even when adjusted for regional variations in cost. Alaska and New York, the states with the highest funding levels, spend more than two and half times what is spent by Utah and Idaho, the states with the lowest funding levels. A key finding was that fourteen states, including Pennsylvania, North Dakota, and Illinois, are regressive, providing less funding to school districts with higher concentrations of low-income students. Another finding was low rankings on school funding fairness correlate to poor state performance on key indicators of essential education resources, including less access to early childhood education, non-competitive wages for teachers, and higher teacher-to-pupil ratios. Virginia ranked 26th with regard to predicted funding level in 2013; received an F for state funding distribution, 2013; and received a C on the effort index.

State of Our Schools: America’s K-12 Facilities

According to a new [report](#) on the state of America’s K-12 infrastructure written by the 21st Century School Fund, the National Council on School Facilities, and the Center for Green Schools, the nation’s investment in public school facilities falls short by \$46 billion annually. It concluded American school districts should be spending at least \$145 billion each year to keep their buildings in good working order and to upgrade their existing building stock. With projected enrollment growth, school districts would need to spend another \$10 billion a year on new construction over the next decade just to accommodate those students. The report includes profiles on each state, including [Virginia](#).

Study Points to Benefits of Peer-Led Learning in STEM Classes

According to [a new study](#) published in the journal PLOS Biology, focusing the responsibility for learning on students can be more effective than traditional lectures in improving student achievement in STEM courses, especially for underrepresented minority students. [In the study](#), a team of Syracuse University researchers examined the use of peer-led team learning, or PLTL (an active-learning method that emphasizes small-group interactions between students), in the university's introductory biology course. During the study, using the PLTL workshop model, students worked in small groups of six to eight students led by an undergraduate student "peer leader" who had passed the same course the previous year. After being trained in group-leadership methods, relevant learning theory, and the conceptual content of the course, peer leaders worked collaboratively with an education specialist and the course instructor to help students in group problem-solving and constructing their own understanding of concepts. "The peer leader is not a teacher nor a tutor," said Jason Wiles, a co-author of the study. "Rather, they are an integral member of the student team with a responsibility for facilitating the group effort toward solving problem sets to which they have not been given the answers".

Lesson Study? There's an App for That

Knowing that improving the quality of math discussion in their classrooms will not be easy, educators are applying the "[lesson study](#)" technique to improve their craft. During a "research lesson," only one teacher will deliver instruction, but other teachers in the lesson study group will be present to observe how students react, what sorts of solutions they come up with, and how they interact with one another. This is very different from many classroom observations that focus primarily on how the teacher delivers the lesson. To help them take accurate, helpful notes that can be discussed later, teachers are using an app called [Lesson Note](#), developed by the [Lesson Study Alliance](#) in Chicago. Proponents of lesson study have found that many teachers new to the method do not know what to look for when observing a classroom and they tend to sit in the back and focus on the teacher.

Wallace Launches \$47 Million Initiative to Prepare School Principals

The Wallace Foundation in New York City announced the launch of a [five-year, \\$47 million initiative](#) to help universities improve how they prepare future school principals, especially for the nation's highest-need schools. The University Preparation Program Initiative will fund the redesign of up to six university programs in states with policies supportive of high-quality principal training. Among other things, the initiative will include funding for independent research focused on how universities can develop and implement high-quality courses of study and other supports for effective principal training, and how universities and high-needs school districts can form effective partnerships. Each university will work with up to three school districts to jointly develop the elements essential to effective principal training, including internships and other school-based experiences for aspiring school leaders.

Teach for America to Cut National Staff by 15 Percent

Teach for America, the nonprofit known for placing idealistic and inexperienced teachers in some of the nation's neediest schools, is [cutting](#) 15% of its national staff in what the organization described as an effort to give more independence to its more than 50 regional offices around the country. The organization will cut 250 jobs and add 100 new ones, making for a net loss of 150 jobs.

Early Education and Child Care Bill Tracking Database

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, about 450 bills with some tie to early childhood are pending in 46 states. The organization's [Early Education and Child Care Bill Tracking Database](#) tracks and updates early care and education legislation from the 2008-2016 legislative sessions for 50 states and the territories. Issues include child care and child care financing, early childhood services, pre-kindergarten, professional development, home visiting, infants and toddlers, and financing early education. Legislation can be searched by state, topic, status, primary sponsor, bill number or keyword.

Research to Inform Early Childhood Policies

As political candidates look for policies that support early care and education, the policy framework devised by the [Alliance for Early Success](#) is a useful roadmap. An accompanying Child Trends report examines the research behind each recommended policy option. Recommendations encompass health, family support, and early learning, and policies that cross categories.

Learning, Behavioral Issues Could Be Defense for Virginia Students

A bill that would allow juveniles to use documented disabilities as a defense for school-related misbehaviors has cleared the Virginia General Assembly and is headed to Gov. Terry McAuliffe's desk for his signature. [House Bill 1213](#) will apply to "delinquent acts" that would be misdemeanors if committed by adults. The law allows students to introduce their individualized education programs, behavioral intervention plan, or 504 plan. 504 plans, created under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, provide accommodations to students with health or cognitive issues that are not covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Center for Public Integrity found in a 2013 report that Virginia [led the nation in referring students to law enforcement agencies](#). About 16 referrals were made for every 1,000 students in the state, compared to a rate of six referrals for every 1,000 students nationwide. The bill found overwhelming approval among state lawmakers; the vote was 39-1 in the Senate on March 2, and 95-1 in the House of Delegates on March 7.

ADHD and Immaturity: What Parents and Educators Need to Know

Does a fidgety, distractible, and disruptive youngster have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder? Or is the behavior just an example of the emotional ups and downs of young childhood? A recent highly-publicized [study](#) in Taiwan has renewed interest in this question. Its findings—and the results of similar studies conducted in other countries—lend credence to the idea that immaturity may be driving some diagnoses and subsequent medication for ADHD, a disorder linked to inattention, impulsive behavior and excessive activity.

Racial Bias in Special Education: Learning About Disproportionality

The U.S. Department of Education released a [proposal](#) that it believes will provide a clearer picture of whether school districts are overenrolling minority students in special education. The proposal involves tightening up policies on how states can calculate what is known as "disproportionality" while loosening up some current restrictions on just how to address the problem.

Maryland School District Examines Racial Disparities in Its Gifted Programs

A [report](#) on school choices examined Montgomery County's selective academic programs and found marked disparities by race and ethnicity in enrollment and acceptance rates, with white students faring much better than their black and Hispanic counterparts. At the high school level, the report found an acceptance rate of 45% for white students applying to selective programs studied, compared with 39% for Asians, 23% for Hispanics, 19% for African Americans, and 11% for low-income students. Among younger children, enrollment in the district's elementary centers for the highly gifted was 47% white, 34% Asian, 8% African American, 8% low-income and 4% Latino in the 2013-2014 school year, according to a research firm's report to the county Board of Education. Community leaders called the data deeply troubling, saying it reflects diminished opportunities for minority students at a time when the fast-growing school system is increasingly diverse.

Challenges of Inclusion Explored in Special NewsHour Report

Over the past three years, the Los Angeles Unified School District has worked to move many students out of separate settings, such as dedicated special education schools, and into their neighborhood schools. In the [second part](#) of a two-part series that aired March 1 on the PBS NewsHour, *Education Week Video* explored the impact of that move on two families. One mother spoke of wanting her son to spend more time with his general education peers, but said that school support was not always there for him. Another family says that in doing away with specialized schools, the district is eliminating the most appropriate environment for her child with disabilities.

Separate But Equal? Wealthy County's Plan Would Concentrate Low-Income, Hispanic Students

Loudoun County is weighing a [plan](#) that would concentrate children from a poor, largely Hispanic neighborhood into two schools, rolling back a policy of economic integration and stoking arguments reminiscent of the "separate but equal" debate a generation ago. Tasked with redrawing enrollment boundaries in fast-growing Loudoun County to ease overcrowding, some school board members have suggested doing away with the practice of dispersing students from a cluster of high-density Leesburg apartment complexes to several affluent schools, some up to three miles away. The board members have argued that it may be better to keep those students — many of whom are underprivileged — closer to home in two schools that could qualify for more resources.

'For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...': An Interview With Chris Emdin

Christopher Emdin is an associate professor in the Department of Mathematics, Science, and Technology at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he also serves as associate director of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education. He is the creator of the #HipHopEd social media movement and Science Genius B.A.T.T.L.E.S. Emdin was named the 2015 Multicultural Educator of the Year by the National Association of Multicultural Educators and has been honored as a STEM Access Champion of Change by the White House. In addition to teaching, he serves as a Minorities in Energy Ambassador for the US Department of Energy. He was [interviewed](#) by EdWeek about his newly released book.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs Isn't the First Celebrity to Open a Charter School

Rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs (A.K.A. P. Diddy or Puff Daddy) is opening a [charter school](#) in New York City. Whether an educator or famous athlete, opening a charter school in 42 states plus Washington D.C. is allowed as long as an authorizer—either a school district, a university, a state agency, or a nonprofit, depending upon state law—is convinced the proposal is solid. Combs' [Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School](#) will open in the fall and be run by Steve Perry, the founder of a Hartford, Connecticut magnet school. Other celebrities who have founded charters include Pitbull, Deion Sanders, Andre Agassi, Kevin Johnson, and Jalen Rose.

In Charters, Using Weighted Lotteries for Diversity Hits Barriers

The charter movement—fueled in part by high-profile networks geared strictly toward serving inner-city, low-income students—has mostly fallen short of creating schools that are more integrated than their traditional school counterparts. To counteract that trend, some charter school leaders and advocates are championing a broader use of [weighted lotteries](#), a mechanism that can give certain groups of students—such as those from low-income families or English-language learners—a better chance of getting into a school. Although there has been some movement at the federal level recently to encourage the use of weighted lotteries and similar policies among charters, there remain barriers at the state level.

Charters Suspend Blacks, Students With Disabilities More Than Peers

The [first-of-its kind analysis of charter school discipline data](#), completed by the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the University of California Los Angeles, found charter schools suspend students of color and students with disabilities at higher rates than their peers. That trend mirrors disparate discipline rates in traditional public schools, although the report finds suspension rates at charters are slightly higher on the whole.

Advocates Cheer Probe of Racial Bias in Mississippi School Discipline

A [federal investigation](#) will examine whether discriminatory school disciplinary policies are disproportionately affecting black students in DeSoto County, Mississippi.

Salt Lake City District to Outline Limits for School Police as Part of Settlement

Salt Lake City schools and the city's police departments signed a [settlement](#) with the ACLU in exchange for an agreement to end litigation related to how the schools and school-based officers treated students of color. "The agreements stem from a federal lawsuit filed by the ACLU on behalf of students at West High School in Salt Lake City who were unlawfully detained and accused of participating in gang activity during a 2010 'gang sweep,'" the ACLU said in a [news release](#). "The students were of Latino, African-American, or Pacific Island descent, even though students of color comprised just half the student body. They were rounded up, questioned, searched, and forced to be photographed holding signs describing alleged gang affiliation. Their information was then documented and entered into a police database, potentially subjecting them to future unwarranted police scrutiny." In the settlement, Salt Lake City schools committed to create an agreement with the police department that "clearly establishes the role and responsibilities" of police officers working in schools. The agreement will "clearly distinguish between disciplinary matters and criminal issues," leaving discipline to school administrators.

Restorative Justice: Creating Tomorrow's Peacemakers

Community or essential [agreements](#) — grounded in the practice of restorative justice — use responsive pedagogy to establish rules for appropriate conduct and consequences for rule breaking, thereby encouraging students' acceptable behavior and holding students accountable for their actions. Creating and implementing essential agreements requires far more than making and hanging a poster based on those rules and consequences to which students agree. In fact, there are entire curricula based in restorative justice and essential agreements.

Classroom Yoga Exercises Prompt Parent Concerns in Cobb

A group of parents at a Cobb County (GA) elementary school are [upset](#) over the school's use of yoga and other mindfulness practices for students because they believe it endorses a non-Christian belief system. As a result, the school is making changes. When yoga moves are used in classrooms, students will not say the word "namaste" nor put their hands by their hearts, according to the email. The term and gesture are often used as a greeting derived from Hindu custom. When coloring during classroom teaching breaks, students will not be allowed to color mandalas -- spiritual symbols in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Palestinian Teacher Who Emphasizes Play Wins \$1 Million Education Prize

Hanan Al Hroub, an author and teacher in Palestine, has won the 2nd annual [Global Teaching Prize](#), sponsored by the Varkey Foundation. Pope Francis announced Al Hroub as the winner of the prize, which includes \$1 million. Al Hroub, a secondary school teacher, grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp and said she entered teaching as a way to help youth who experience trauma. That has led her to focus on classroom management and social-emotional skills to try and reduce aggression, including through an emphasis on play. "A child has the right to play," Pope Francis said in a pre-recorded video message. "Part of the education is to teach children how to play because you learn how to be social through games, and you learn the joy of life."

Washington's Digital Citizenship Legislation Could be Model

Washington state lawmakers passed [digital citizenship legislation](#) designed to help students better understand their lives online – one of the first bills of its kind in the nation. The legislation would require state education officials to craft a model policy for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy, and calls for attention to ethics, etiquette, and security online, including cyberbullying prevention and response.

Chicago District Sues Ex. Chief Barbara Byrd-Bennett for More than \$65M

The Chicago school district is suing former superintendent Barbara Byrd-Bennett and the owners at SUPES Academy and Synesi Associates for more than \$65 million in damages in connection with the ex-superintendent's role in steering about \$23.5 million in contracts to companies owned by her former employers. [The lawsuit](#) accuses Byrd-Bennett and the other defendants of deceiving the school district, breach of contract, unjust enrichment, and fraudulently obtaining public funds, which should be returned. The defendants' conduct was "intentionally deceitful, and so reprehensible" that it warrants punitive damages, according to the lawsuit. Byrd-Bennett [pleaded guilty](#) last October to one count of wire fraud in connection with the bribery scheme and faces up to 7.5 years prison. Federal officials have said that Byrd-Bennett agreed to [steer contracts](#) to SUPES Academy in return for secret kickbacks. The scheme netted her more than \$865,000, the district says in its lawsuit. The lawsuit also alleges that Byrd-Bennett made the deal to steer business well before she was appointed CEO of Chicago schools in October 2012. Byrd-Bennett had worked as a consultant for SUPES before taking the top job in Chicago.

Chicago Teachers Union Approves Walkout on April 1

The Chicago Teachers Union [voted](#) to walk off the job on April 1 and close down the schools for the day in a battle with district officials over funding and a new contract. Union President Karen Lewis said 486 members of the union's House of Delegates voted in favor of the walkout, while 124 voted against the action. "April 1 would be an unfair labor day of action," Lewis said in announcing the proposed strike. "It's a showdown."

Chicago Files Lawsuits Against State Charter Commission

Chicago Public Schools officials say they have filed [lawsuits](#) over the Illinois State Charter School Commission's decision to block plans closing three underperforming charter schools. The lawsuits claim the commission is overstepping charter school law.

PA Governor Tom Wolf to Let Budget Lapse Into Law

Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf ended school officials' agony by [announcing](#) he will let the final pieces of a Republican-driven budget lapse into law Easter Sunday instead of vetoing them as he had threatened to do. Wolf's decision will release \$6 billion in frozen tax money to school districts, prisons and Medicaid providers to complete a roughly \$30 billion budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year. It ended a nine-month budget impasse that drew national attention. Wolf also announced he will veto the fiscal code, a separate budget document that dictates how some money will be spent for state programs and pet projects for lawmakers. Of the \$6 billion to be released beginning next week, roughly half is slated to go to school districts, including an additional \$200 million to public schools. Wolf wanted an extra \$400 million, plus major tax increases to help tame a state deficit. He got neither.

Scathing Independent Report Blames State Officials for Flint Water Crisis

A task force appointed by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder to investigate the water-contamination crisis in Flint issued a [blistering report](#), laying blame squarely on state officials in what it called “a story of government failure, intransigence, unpreparedness, delay, inaction and environmental injustice.” [The 116-page report](#) details a widespread lack of responsibility and leadership that contributed to the catastrophe, which potentially exposed more than 95,000 residents in the beleaguered city — including about 9,000 children under age 6 — to water tainted with lead.

Newark to Test 17,000 Students for Lead After Years of Elevated Water Levels

Newark will be [testing 17,000](#) of its students for lead after testing revealed elevated levels of lead in some of its schools' water. The city made the decision to turn off water fountains in 30 school buildings after tests revealed elevated levels of lead in the drinking water last week

After Flint, New Scrutiny of Schools' Drinking Water

The revelation this month that drinking water in nearly half the 67 schools in Newark, N.J., have lead levels exceeding national guidelines has brought [new concerns](#) about testing requirements for such contaminants and about whether similar discoveries may emerge elsewhere, particularly in urban districts where buildings tend to be older. Since the water crisis in Flint, Mich., thrust lead poisoning back into the national spotlight, higher-than-acceptable lead levels also have been reported in schools in Ithaca and Binghamton, N.Y., and in Howell, Mich. The school systems in Baltimore and Camden, N.J., are still spending thousands of dollars annually on bottled water years after officials in those cities discovered lead in the water.

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YOUTH WELL-BEING

Communities Take Creative Approaches to Summer Learning

SL3 is [a program](#) in Oregon that emphasizes the power of learning, libraries and lunches to keep kids engaged during the summer. Participating programs keep school libraries open, which are often easier for students to get to than regional public libraries, especially in rural communities. They offer meals, and partner with community organizations to provide enrichment activities. When the program began four years ago, four sites participated. In 2015, the number had grown to more than 30.

How Earvin “Magic” Johnson Defines Success

“I encourage young people across the country to get their [education](#),” Johnson said. “Knowledge is something that can never be taken away from them.” The Magic Johnson Foundation has helped more than 800 students from underserved communities get a college degree, internships and jobs through the Taylor Michaels Scholarship. For students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out, the Magic Johnson Bridgescape Academy provides an alternative path to earning a high school diploma. “If all kids need is a chance, who are we not to afford them that opportunity?” he said. “They don’t have to let their circumstances define what they can achieve.” In 2014, President Obama asked Johnson to co-head his new initiative, My Brother’s Keeper, to address the opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color. And last year, Johnson [pledged \\$10 million](#) to provide summer jobs for Chicago’s at-risk youth, through the One Chicago Summer Plus program.

Watch Carol Dweck’s Speech: “The Journey to a Growth Mindset’ (Video)

The Stanford University professor and author of "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success" is renowned for her research that shows individuals with a "growth mindset" — an understanding that their talent and abilities are not "fixed" and can be developed — are more likely to achieve. Her work has gained traction and led many educators to rethink the way they teach. But, says Dweck, misunderstandings abound about growth mindsets. Dweck shared findings from her latest mindset research and debunked those misunderstandings in a [speech](#) at *Education Week's* Leaders to Learn From event in Washington on March 11.

Nurturing Growth Mindsets: Six Tips From Carol Dweck

As people have embraced the growth mindset idea, they have not always fully understood every dimension of the research. Among the biggest misconceptions is the belief that boosting students' mindsets is simply a matter of praising effort rather than results or helping students develop new strategies for approaching content they struggle with. "Sheer effort is highly important, but it is not the ultimate value; learning and improvement are," Dweck said. "Effort is one route to learning and improvement." [Six tips](#) were pulled from Dweck's keynote speech at an *EdWeek* event.

L.A. Uses iPads to Touch the Minds of Vulnerable Youth

The county's Board of Supervisors approved a \$547,500 [plan](#) in which the Department of Mental Health (DMH) will contract with the University of Southern California's School of Social Work to provide tele-mental health services to youth ages 12-to-21. Tele-health is a growing field in which services like therapy sessions are conducted using video-conferencing technology.

What Children's Brains Tell Us About Trauma: Invest Early

Many of the families of children who come into care are struggling with poverty, homelessness, health or mental health problems, addiction, or incarceration. The entry into care, while a lifesaver for some families or children, is for most a traumatic disruption of primary relationships, bringing the loss of parental figures, siblings, home, school. Layered atop the underlying problems (which may or may not be addressed) is a series of additional losses, stressors and problems. Families at risk can benefit from services that address these problems [before](#) children are in danger.

Author: To Reach Struggling Students, Schools Need to Be More 'Trauma-Sensitive'

A growing body of evidence highlights the connection between adverse childhood experiences and academic problems. The effects of trauma can impair a child's cognitive ability, while the stress of a dysfunctional or unstable home life can make children act out or shut down in the classroom. While such findings are increasingly acknowledged, however, they have yet to broadly inform classroom practices or school-improvement initiatives, says Susan E. Craig, an author and school consultant. In her new book, [Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Learning Communities Transforming Children's Lives, K-5](#), Craig seeks to share some of what she has learned, with a particular focus on detailing what educators and policymakers can do to better respond to and support traumatized students and help them "regain their ability to achieve academic and social mastery." EdWeek recently [spoke](#) to Craig about the book and her advice for teachers.

Federal Commission Releases Recommendations to End Child Abuse Fatalities

A [report](#) by the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities calls for a national strategy to end child deaths from abuse and neglect. [Recommendations](#) include improved leadership and accountability, better research and data, and enhanced multidisciplinary support for families. In addition, all reports of neglect or abuse of children under age 3 should receive responses, rather than some being screened out, with the fastest response times required for children under age 1. The commission said new efforts should be fully funded by the states and Congress but reached no consensus on how much money would be necessary. An estimated 1,500 to 3,000 U.S. children die each year from abuse or neglect, according to the commission.

Child Abuse Fatalities Commission Staggers to a Close

Michael Petit is the driving force behind the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. In the [opinion](#) of Richard Wexler, Executive Director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, the commission seems to view part of its job as squelching any discussion of the pervasive racial bias in child welfare.

Former Judges Challenge Official Who Said 3 Year-Olds Can Represent Selves in Immigration Court

Three former federal immigration judges are [publicly challenging](#) a senior Justice Department official who argued that 3- and 4-year-olds can learn immigration law well enough to represent themselves in court. It was in a case in Seattle that Jack H. Weil, a longtime immigration judge who is responsible for training other judges, made his unconventional assertions about children. "I've taught immigration law literally to 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds," Weil said in a deposition. "It takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of patience. They get it. It's not the most efficient, but it can be done." He repeated his claim twice during the deposition. "A typical three-year-old cannot tie her shoes, count to 100, peel a banana, or be trusted not to swallow marbles," three former judges wrote in a brief filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. Citing an article in *The Washington Post* reporting Weil's comments, the judges said in their brief that Weil's position "has been justly ridiculed as preposterous". The court is hearing an

appeal stemming from a federal court case in Seattle regarding whether immigrant children — thousands of whom are forced to defend themselves each year in immigration court — are entitled to taxpayer-funded attorneys.

Screening and Assessment Tools for Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

A [list](#) compiled by the Family & Youth Services Bureau features screening and assessment tools that can be used to determine the types of interventions and services a young person needs. Screening involves brief instruments that check for things like traumatic stress and mental health problems, and can identify certain youth who need more thorough diagnostic evaluations and treatment. Assessment involves evaluating multiple aspects of social, emotional, and behavioral competencies in order to inform service planning and monitor progress toward better outcomes. Featured tools include those that are appropriate for use across various federal programs for youth and young adults generally between the ages of 12 and 24, and that are low cost or in the public domain.

House Bills Seek to Improve Out-of-state Foster Placements, Infant Welfare

A bipartisan group of federal lawmakers want to reduce the time foster youth spend waiting for a placement across state lines. The House approved [legislation](#) that would provide \$5 million in grants to help states and counties join a web-based case processing system to exchange data and documents.

‘She Never Said I Was a Bad Child’

"With all the obstacles you faced while you were in foster care, what motivates you to move forward in life?" Brittany Myers, 23, asks Jody Middlebrooks, 20. Former foster kids Middlebrooks and Myers get honest about motivation, case workers and the power of positive interactions in an insightful [conversation](#) on forging relationships in the system.

The Right Risks: How to Keep Normal Behaviors from Ruining Teens’ Lives

In the last 15 years, researchers have made some important discoveries about the relationship between adolescent brain development and social behaviors. Psychologist Lawrence Steinberg, for example, has proposed that the relative strength of the [social-emotional system](#) in adolescence contributes to risk-taking. He notes that adolescents seek social rewards in their interactions with peers, and they do not always accurately assess how behaviors that are socially rewarding may hurt them in other ways. Some people struggle with impulse control disorders throughout their lives, but the challenge of impulse control in adolescence appears to be normative and (relatively) short-lived on the whole.

Cultural Competence and LGBTQ Kids

LGBTQ youth make up 5 to 10% of the 10- to 18-year olds in foster care. Culturally competent foster care addresses the specific needs of its LGBTQ individuals — including gender pronouns, preferred names, art on the walls of agencies, and more. "You need be willing to learn ... and not be judgmental," says Quinsea Pratt of the Children's Home + Aid in Chicago in a [video](#).

Data Lacking About How LGBT Students Are Treated at School, Researchers Say

In a briefing paper, researchers concluded lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students are the targets of bullying, harassment, and disproportionately high discipline rates at school, research suggests. But without consistently collected, reliable, large-scale sources of data, it is [difficult to track](#) the extent of those problems or the effectiveness of proposed solutions. Expanding existing federal surveys on youth safety and well-being to include more questions about gender identity and sexual orientation could provide a clearer picture.

Foes: Kansas bills create 'bounty' on transgender students

Legislation in Kansas that would [restrict](#) how public schools and colleges accommodate transgender students is receiving national attention because other students would be able to collect monetary damages if someone was in what is deemed the wrong bathroom. Two separate but identical [bills](#) before House and Senate committees limit accommodations for transgender students. The measures say group bathrooms, locker rooms and showers must be limited to a single sex, and gender would be defined "by a person's chromosomes" — so that transgender students would have to use facilities associated with their birth genders. If transgender students are discovered using group facilities for their identified genders, other students who were present can sue the schools and colleges. The measures allow an award of \$2,500 for each incident, along with monetary damages for "all psychological, emotional and physical harm." Aggrieved students would have four years after an incident to file suit. "We are referring to them as a \$2,500 bounty on the head of every trans student," said Tom Witt of the advocacy group Equality Kansas. "This puts trans kids in danger."

Never Too Early for Career Counseling

If a student is talented in math, science, or the arts, how does that student have a good sense of what opportunities are available to them once they have to earn a living? “It absolutely should start in [elementary school](#),” said Kim Reykdal, a school counselor at Olympia High School in Olympia, Washington and a 2016 School Counselor of the Year finalist. “The research shows that as early as fifth grade, kids are making assumptions about their success in school and their futures.” Reykdal believes that just an emerging awareness about career pathways in elementary school can better prepare students for later on in their academic careers.

Help Students Experiencing Homelessness Apply for College Financial Aid

The financial aid process can be confusing for homeless young people and the service providers guiding them through the process. The Family & Youth Services Bureau has compiled [resources](#), including a video, that can assist.

Education Department Highlights College Access, Success for Low-Income Students

A new [report](#) by the U.S. Department of Education highlights what it says are effective strategies by colleges and universities to increase college access and to support successful outcomes for low-income students. It profiles public and private institutions of higher education that enroll relatively high shares of students from low-income backgrounds who receive Pell Grants, and who graduate at relatively close to the same rates as all students. The report also looks at colleges whose Pell Grant recipients earn at least \$25,000 annually six years after enrolling. But on a conference call with reporters to discuss the report, Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. said too many barriers remain for low-income students seeking admission to colleges and universities, and significant graduation rate gaps persist between Pell Grant recipients and students who do not receive Pell Grants.

Why Students Are Throwing Tons of Money at a Program That Won’t Give Them a College Degree

One of the biggest booms in the job market right now is an influx of coders graduating from three to six-month [coding crunch programs](#) in lieu of traditional four-year Computer Science degree programs. These for-profit programs, non-accredited and operating without much regulation, have been cropping up in response to a swelling market demand for STEM workers. They vary in quality, but most boot camps promise steady, high-paying work upon graduation, prompting aspiring coders to invest anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 of personal money to enroll. Colleges and universities are now teaming up with these private schools or rolling out their own boot camp-style programs to offer accelerated coding workshops to their students.

And the Survey Says: Aspen Institute Examines Efforts to Connect Young Adults to Jobs

The Annie E. Casey Foundation commissioned the Aspen Institute Workforce Strategies Initiative to examine how organizations are helping adults ages 18 to 29 succeed in today’s labor market. The [report](#) gathered feedback from nearly 400 individuals at 340 organizations nationwide. Providers of young adult employment services were asked to identify companies they work with that they felt offered the best job opportunities to young adults. More than 40% of these companies fell into three main industry categories: health care, retail and manufacturing. Survey respondents also identified industries they commonly target when helping young adults find work. When researchers compared these answers to the providers’ “best job opportunities” list, they found something interesting. The industries on the two lists didn’t completely match up.

Opportunity Youth Employment Toolkit

Opportunity youth, those young people ages 16 to 24 who have been disconnected from school or work for at least six months, face multiple barriers to employment, which affect both their financial and housing stability. Heartland Alliance in Chicago created a [toolkit](#) to help agencies provide effective employment training programs for youth who need it most.

Recasting American Apprenticeship

The [report](#) is a review of findings from varied efforts to understand the obstacles experienced by businesses with a demand for skilled workers yet uncertain about using apprenticeship to build their workforce, and the opportunities and limitations in using apprenticeships to advance economic opportunity for disadvantaged populations. The study addresses three topics: the value to the employer; overcoming the start-up challenge; and apprenticeship and equity.

New Reports Provide a Roadmap for Creating Opportunities for Baltimore’s Young People

More than one in five young people ages 16 to 24 in Baltimore are neither in school nor working, one of the highest city rates in the country. Within that population of about 18,000 young people, about 38% lack a high school diploma or GED, and, on average, these young people have a seventh-grade reading level and fifth-grade math

level. Two recently released reports offer [recommendations](#) for finding new ways to reconnect these young people with education, training, jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities, focusing on expanding industry-specific training programs, fostering more collaboration between organizations and providing expanded support services for youth to help them succeed. The [reports](#), which were developed by Baltimore’s Promise, the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative and the Job Opportunities Task Force with support from Casey and others, highlight the specific needs of young people not in school or working (sometimes called disconnected youth), as well as the local workforce field's capacity to meet those needs.

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JUVENILE JUSTICE

Future Interrupted: The Collateral Damage Caused by the Proliferation of Juvenile Records

One and a half-million youth are arrested across the country every year. The moment each of these children comes into contact with the police, a record is created which interferes with the child’s opportunities to move ahead in life and demonstrate their ability to make better choices. In [Future Interrupted](#), Juvenile Law Center urges that children be allowed to grow up unfettered by their childhood mistakes—to have their court involvement remain in the past so they can move forward with their lives. Juvenile records are increasingly available to the public through state police databases or private background check company databases. This report demonstrates, through youths’ own stories, how records carry devastating collateral consequences when they remain unprotected. The report also examines how the background check companies operate to sometimes provide inaccurate or out of date information. The report acts as a call to policymakers to increase record confidentiality and opportunities for expungement and decrease ready access to juvenile record information. It also argues for employers, educational institutions and housing authorities to understand that children grow up and the mistakes of their past should not follow them for their lifetime.

Audit Finds Lapses in Case of Mentally Ill Inmate Who Died in Jail on a \$5 Charge

After Jamycheal Mitchell was arrested for stealing \$5 worth of snacks in April, a judge ordered the mentally ill Portsmouth, Va., man to be restored to competency at a state hospital so he could face trial. But for four months Mitchell wasted away in a cell at the Hampton Roads Regional Jail. By the time the 24-year-old died on August 19, he was gaunt, sickly and had shed at least 36 pounds. A [final report](#) by a state agency details why Mitchell never got the help he needed -- fundamental lapses by various state employees handling Mitchell’s case and a long wait for beds for mentally ill inmates at some state hospitals.

Juvenile Detention Reform in Baltimore in the Year of Freddie Gray

At the height of the unrest on Monday, April 27, the secretary of Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), Sam Abed, made a command decision to detain virtually all youth taken into custody until morning. But almost immediately, DJS returned to normal operations. The state’s attorney declined to press charges against the majority of youth who had been detained, and most were released on April 28. In the weeks after the crisis, DJS staff re-evaluated the decision-making process employed during the unrest and identified several ways the state might avoid the overuse of detention during any future crisis. Since April, Baltimore has seen a steady decline in the use of detention — sustaining a period of [marked progress](#) that began in 2011.

Gender Injustice: System-Level Juvenile Justice Reforms for Girls

A new [report](#) shows that when girls come in contact with the justice system, it is usually for acts that present little or no threat to public safety, and for behavior that is largely a reaction to “abuse, violence and deprivation.” Yet, while girls are disproportionately pulled into the system, new juvenile justice reforms rarely focus on the specific needs of troubled girls or on the underlying reasons they landed in the justice system in the first place.

Evaluation Findings Released on Juvenile Drug Courts and Reclaiming Futures Project

The University of Arizona Southwest Institute for Research on Women has published findings from a 4-year cross-site evaluation of the Juvenile Drug Court and Reclaiming Futures project to improve juvenile drug courts. A key finding of the evaluation: youth with high levels of criminal behavior and substance use involved in the Juvenile Drug Courts/Reclaiming Futures programs had better outcomes than those in non-Reclaiming Futures juvenile drug courts and intensive outpatient treatment programs. The study also provides an economic and implementation analysis as important considerations for potential replication. View the [final report](#), [executive summary](#), and [policy briefs and project reports](#) for findings and recommendations.

Get Involved: A Collection of Juvenile Justice Resources

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative of The Annie E. Casey Foundation as well as its work to reduce youth incarceration focus on creating systems that use proven family-oriented interventions and lock up fewer kids. An [article](#) provides an overview of key juvenile justice publications by Casey.

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WORKSHOPS & WEBINARS

Early Literacy Learning in Out-of-School Time Programs (March 29, 1 – 1:30 p.m.)

The [webinar](#) will provide an overview of early literacy development, and then describe two OST literacy programs based in public housing. It will end with a series of recommendations for other OST programs working with young learners. The cost is \$10.

Moving the Needle for First Generation College Students: Comprehensive Advising from College Access to Success (April 5, 2 – 3:15 p.m.)

Navigating the college process can be challenging for some students, particularly first generation college students from low-income homes (FGLI). Advising comes in many forms, but when done comprehensively can assist students with academic, financial, and social-cultural barriers. Given the multiple barriers FGLI students may face, supports must be comprehensive in order to effectively address the needs of this population. A [webinar](#) will highlight comprehensive advising strategies for supporting FGLI students' college access, transition, and success and discuss the role of policy in scaling these efforts.

Attachment: Understanding and Overcoming the Impact of Ambiguous Loss (April 7, 3 – 4:30 p.m.)

Attachment—the feeling of belonging in a relationship—is based on a sense of confidence and certainty that the relationship is stable and dependable. Unfortunately, for many children the uncertainty of repeated, unpredictable, and often unexplained and unexplainable losses makes it hard for them to develop the secure attachments that allow them to turn to adults for help and comfort. The [webinar](#) will explore ways that teachers, counselors, caregivers, and others can help them overcome the impact of these ambiguous losses.

It's Almost Too Late: Designing Summer Programs to Stem the Summer Slide (April 19, 1 – 1:30 p.m.)

The summer slide is when young people drop several grade levels behind if they do not engage with stimulating summer enrichment activities. The [webinar](#) will provide an overview of the research on the summer learning gap, and then present some ways to design a high quality summer program that can help stem the summer slide. The cost is \$10.

2016 Quality Investments: How to Use Administrative Data and Other Sources to Evaluate What is Working (April 21 and June 2, 3 – 4:30 p.m.)

Child Trends and other partners of The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance are hosting a webinar series focused on evaluating quality initiatives, especially those related to the Child Care and Development Fund. Topics include evaluation basics, data collection and analysis, and evaluation timing and reporting. [Session 2](#) will provide an overview of data collection options and a tool for mapping available data sources. Presenters will help states and territories identify specific data elements for analysis. [Session 3](#) will discuss the timing of data analysis, dissemination strategies and the messaging of evaluation findings, and ways to examine the infrastructure needed to support evaluation findings over the long term. Session 1 ([Power Point](#); [webinar recording](#)) provided an introduction to evaluation planning and offered a template to guide States' efforts. Presenters discussed how monitoring and evaluation can support State planning and decision-making, and offered examples of how states have used evaluation findings to shape policy and to inform program decisions.

Community-wide Partnerships to Support Student Success (May 17, 1 – 1:30 p.m.)

Effective partnerships that link school and out-of-school time and summer programs can have a big impact on student learning, attendance, and behavior. The [webinar](#) will provide an overview on the research on effective partnerships, followed by school district personnel in Connecticut who will discuss their experience creating partnerships with a wide range of community organizations. The cost is \$10.

Documenting Youth Learning with Badges and Portfolios (June 15, 1 – 1:30 p.m.)

There is a burgeoning movement to develop relevant ways to document youth learning which utilizes reflection and demonstration of skills, and is trusted enough to unlock greater opportunities. The [webinar](#) describes Mouse, Inc., a nonprofit that involved high school students in an afterschool computer project. The participating students, upon completion, were able to earn a badge recognized by the admissions department of Parsons School of Art.

Providing a Continuum of Supports for First-Generation, Low-Income Students' Success (On Demand)

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) explored in a [discussion group](#) the ways in which policy and practice can better support first-generation, low-income (FGLI) students. FGLI students often face unique and significant barriers to educational attainment, and on average have lower rates of postsecondary enrollment and persistence than their more affluent peers with parents who went to college.

Building a Robust Afterschool System: Lessons and Opportunities (On Demand)

An American Youth Policy Forum [webinar](#) provided an overview of the cornerstone elements of an afterschool system and showcased how these elements are reflected in the system building work in three communities: Palm Beach County, Florida; Seattle/King County, Washington; and Providence, Rhode Island.

How Research Evidence Informs Foster Youth Medication (On Demand)

The [webinar](#) profiled how mid-level policymakers in state child welfare agencies acquire, interpret, and use research evidence to develop policies regarding the use of medications for youth in foster care with the goal of improving their life and health outcomes.

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