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Today's News for the National Education Association from Newspapers, TV, Radio and the Journals

Customized Briefing for ELVIRA TIPPINS-RUSSELL

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Leading the News

Kline's Charter School Bill Clears House.

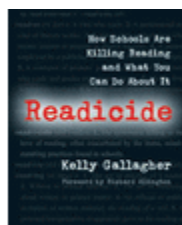
The [New York Times](#) (9/14, Dillon, Subscription Publication, 950K) reports on the "rare display of bipartisanship" in which a bill expanding charter school programs in US districts passed the House, noting that the measure is part of House Education and the Workforce Chairman John Kline's push for a "piecemeal rewrite" of No Child Left Behind. The Times lists a broad range of education stakeholders who supported the bill, relates the legislative gridlock that has stymied a broader NCLB reauthorization, and describes other education measures that Kline has put forth. The Times notes parenthetically that growing frustration over the law as it currently stands has prompted Education Secretary Arne Duncan to announce his intention to offer states waivers to the law, which has "angered Republicans."

[The Hill](#) (9/14, Kasperowicz) reports in its "Floor Action" blog that the bill "revises and expands the federal charter school program, and authorizes \$300 million in state grants to charter schools over the next six years." The legislation "enjoyed broad bipartisan support in part because of language ensuring that charter schools will help convey best practices to public schools, and expand enrollment to disadvantaged students." Democrats particularly praised the bipartisan backing for the bill during floor debate last Thursday. Rep. Lynn Woolsey said that "the bill would return charter schools to their original purpose, which is to help 'improve the public school system.'" The ranking member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, Rep. George Miller praised the bill for expanding charter school access to disadvantaged students. Two amendments to the bill from Reps. Rush Holt and Steve King were rejected by the House yesterday before final passage.

[The Hill](#) (9/14, Kasperowicz) adds in its "Floor Action" blog that Holt's amendment encouraged "the secretary of Education to prioritize grants to schools that use energy-efficient buildings." Meanwhile, King's amendment stripped "language from the bill requiring that grants only go to high-quality charter schools, defined in part as schools that have shown success with minority students, students with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups."

[Education Week](#) (9/14, Klein) reports the legislation helps "charters gain access to high-quality facilities; advocates say charters are often stuck in some of the least desirable buildings. [Minnesota Public Radio](#) (9/14, Neely) also reports this on its website.

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Read-i-cide, n. *The systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools.* In [Readicide](#), Kelly Gallagher takes a hard look at instruction that discourages students from reading, and offers suggestions on how teachers can cultivate lifelong readers. [Click here for details!](#)

In the Classroom

New Jersey Governor Discusses Importance Of Curriculum Standards.

The [AP](#) (9/14, DeFalco) reports, "New curriculum standards being implemented in schools across New Jersey are sorely needed to prepare students for college and careers, especially in urban districts, Gov. Chris Christie said Tuesday." Christie said he was "tired of giving out fake diplomas to people who can't qualify to sit in a college classroom." The AP notes, "According to a report by a task force appointed by Christie to review state education regulations, a majority of community college students in urban areas were not prepared for college." Christie said effective assessment would be key in terms of setting new standards.

New Jersey's [Star-Ledger](#) (9/14, Gibson) reports, "Talking about education initiatives for a second day, Gov. Chris Christie traveled to Cherry Hill today to highlight curriculum standards that have been implemented in New Jersey public schools." Christie noted "the importance of the Common Core Standards Initiative," and has also "outlined plans to do away with teacher tenure and set up a performance-based review system, create a merit pay system and allow private, for-profit companies to take over failing schools."

Michigan BOE Raises Testing Standards.

The [AP](#) (9/14, Martin) reports, "Students will have to score higher on Michigan's standardized tests this academic year in order to reach what's considered a proficient level after a vote Tuesday by the State Board of Education." Both the Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests and the Michigan Merit Exam will be impacted by the "tougher scoring requirements," which "follow up on the board's decision earlier this year to raise standards to better reflect students' preparedness for careers and college." State Superintendent Mike Flanagan said, "We've got to understand the truth about where our kids are, and that's what this will do."

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (9/14, Higgins) reports the State Board of Education voted 6-1, "with one member abstaining," to pass the new standards. Now, "students who previously only had to get a third of questions correct on the exams will now have to get as much as two thirds correct, State Superintendent Mike Flanagan said." According to the Free Press the impact "will be extreme," with more students failing, and more schools facing sanctions.

North Carolina STEM High School Targets Underrepresented Demographics.

[Education Week](#) (9/14, Robelen) profiles the Wake-N.C. State University STEM Early College High School, a new STEM-oriented high school on the campus of North Carolina State University in Raleigh, where students are focusing on "the Grand Challenges for Engineering-from making solar energy affordable to ensuring access to clean water. ... The set of 21st-century challenges, devised by the National Academy of Engineering, serves as a frame and inspiration for the curriculum at this school, one of a relatively small but rapidly growing number of STEM-focused schools cropping up across the country." The article describes the national push for more STEM education, noting that recently, such schools are increasingly "aimed especially at serving groups underrepresented in the STEM fields, such as African-American, Hispanic, female, and low-income students."

New Tablet Geared Towards Elementary-Aged Children.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/14, D2, Boehret, Subscription Publication) reports that there is a new tablet for children ages 4 to 9, the LeapPad Explorer from LeapFrog Enterprises, and the tablet includes a microphone, camera, video recorder and stylus, costs \$100, and has downloadable apps, all dedicated to introducing children to learning through new tablet technologies.

On the Job

Chicago Teachers Union Bases School Schedule Plan On Emanuel's Children's School.

In continuing coverage of the impasse between Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration and the Chicago Teachers Union over the length of the school day in the city, the [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (9/14, Rossi, 241K) reports that union officials have "crafted a proposed schedule that adds 75 minutes to the typical public elementary school student's day," basing the plan on the schedule at the "elite private school where...Emanuel now sends his kids." The plan "offers a well-rounded curriculum featuring far more art, music, physical education and other extras than most CPS kids now get. ... However, the schedule is 15 minutes shorter per day for kids than the one proposed by Emanuel and Schools CEO Jean-Claude Brizard for next school year." The Sun-Times suggests that the union's plan is more of a rhetorical device than an actual proposal.

Survey Finds Chicagoans Support Both Teachers, Longer School Days. The [Chicago Tribune](#) (9/14, Ahmed-Ullah) reports, "Chicago Teachers Union released results of a survey Tuesday that showed voters supported local teachers while also supporting the idea of a longer school day." CPS spokeswoman Becky Carroll said "that CPS embraces 'the poll's findings, including the belief that teachers deserve additional pay for a longer school day.'" The Tribune notes, "During negotiations over the elimination of the 4 percent annual raise, [Board of Education and CEO Jean-Claude Brizard] offered elementary school teachers a 2 percent raise if they would lengthen their school days in January. The union rejected that plan outright, but so far teachers at seven schools have voted to to ahead and extend their school day this year."

Chicago Teachers Union Criticized For Ineffective Communication. Eric Zorn writes in his "Change of Subject" blog for the [Chicago Tribune](#) (9/14) that "City Hall's message has been focused and comparatively simple," while "the Chicago Teachers Union response has been diffuse and inconsistent." Zorn argues that both sides have some legitimate points, but that the communications "ineptitude" on the part of the union makes it "appear as though [teachers] are being dragged into a longer school day instead of helping lead the way." Zorn concludes, "The union may not speak for the children - it's not their job, after all - but many teachers do. And their union must find a way to give them a better voice."

Washington State Teachers Remain On Strike.

[Reuters](#) (9/14, Myers) reports that Tacoma, Washington's 1,900 public school teachers began their first day of a strike on Tuesday, forcing the cancellation of Tuesday classes for the district's 28,000 students.

Teachers' Union To Challenge Florida Merit-Pay Bill.

The [Palm Beach Post \(FL\)](#) (9/14, Kennedy) reports that the Florida Education Association, the state's biggest teachers' union, is looking to sue Governor Rick Scott and the state Legislature over a bill signed this spring that "creates a new merit pay standard and ends teacher tenure." Although current teachers would have their current contracts honored, anyone hired as of July 1 would be "limited to one-year contracts and would draw raises only if rated 'effective' or 'highly effective.'"

Florida District Teachers Receive First Grades. The [St. Petersburg \(FL\) Times](#) (9/14, Sokol) reports that Hillsborough County, Florida, educators on Tuesday got their first grades "evaluating on how well they helped students boost test scores," in a partnership between the district and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to come up with "a national model to judge teacher quality." According to the "100 point rating system," there were 5.5 percent of the district's 11,753 teachers scoring a 75 or better, while 50 percent of the teachers had at least a 61.5 score, and around one percent scored below 36. The scores will eventually be used in the evaluations that will decide how to pay teachers.

More DC Public Schools Teachers Accepting Performance Bonuses.

[Huffington Post](#) (9/14) reports that "more highly rated teachers in DC Public Schools are accepting performance-based bonuses than" previously, finding that 70 percent of the 670 teachers who qualified for bonuses accepted them, an increase of 10 percent over 2010. However, "the less a teacher was offered for the bonus this year, the less likely the teacher was to accept" the one-time high-performance bonus. Under the plan, implemented by former DCPS Chancellor Michelle Rhee, if teachers earn "highly effective" rankings for two years in a row they can see "pay raises of up to \$26,000 annually."



"A fresh approach to infusing 21st century skills into the classroom" (*Kathy Schrock*). Make your teaching more relevant and real to today's kids. [Engaging the Eye Generation](#) shows you how to weave technology and visual literacy throughout your existing elementary curriculum. [Click here to browse Chapter 1 online!](#)

Special Needs

"Whole Classroom Instruction" On The Rise.

The [Deseret Morning News \(UT\)](#) (9/14, Lenz) reports that during the past decade, especially since No Child Left Behind, more attention has been paid to "whole classroom instruction" that helps low performing students in classes get caught up. Under this type of instruction, rather than letting more advanced students "read or work on their homework while the rest of the class catches up," leading to potential for boredom, teachers try "to help every child excel individually in one classroom."

Facilities

Obama, Duncan Push Public Support For Jobs Bill In Ohio.

President Obama's event in Columbus in support of his American Jobs Act is receiving mostly favorable coverage both nationally and in Ohio. While Obama is depicted as championing a plan that will improve School environments and create jobs, Republican opposition to the AJA is said to be based on a pronounced disinclination to raise taxes on even the wealthiest Americans. Nearly every article on the Columbus rally describes it as "campaign-like" or reminiscent of the President's 2008 events.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (9/13, story 4, 2:35, Williams, 8.37M), the only network to cover the President in Ohio yesterday, reported that he "was back on the road...calling on Congress to pass his jobs bill. He toured a high School which was recently renovated, giving construction workers needed jobs locally. He's also arguing that aid to state and local governments could help put thousands teachers back to work." NBC added, "It was an old School style campaign stop, literally," as the "renovated high School that served as the President's backdrop for his speech today embodied everything he wants out of his jobs bill." President Obama: "Tell Congress to pass the American Jobs Act so we can put our teachers back in the classroom where they belong."

The [New York Times](#) (9/14, Cooper, Subscription Publication, 950K) says, "In a high-octane performance that came with all of the bells and whistles of a campaign event -- right down to U2's "City of Blinding Lights" blaring across the field -- Mr. Obama said the \$25 billion for education construction and improvements in the plan would achieve two goals at once: modernizing American Schools and putting construction workers back on the job."

Similarly, [Bloomberg](#) (9/14, Talev) reports, "The event's staging, with loudspeakers blaring music by Stevie Wonder, evoked Obama's campaign rallies before the 2008 election," but Bloomberg adds, "except that Obama, seeking re-election, now faces a 9.1 percent unemployment rate and a Republican-led House of Representatives." Bloomberg notes Education Secretary Arne Duncan said Ohio "could get \$985 million for work at...Schools" via the AJA, "supporting an estimated 12,800 jobs." **Duncan** is quoted as saying, "This is not a partisan issue," it is "the right plan at the right time."

NEA in the News

Missouri District Mulls Collective Bargaining.

The [Columbia \(MO\) Missourian](#) (9/14, Evans) reports that the School board in Columbia, Missouri, is considering "whether to adopt a collective bargaining policy or to keep the 'meet and confer' system currently in place. The discussion began with a

report from Columbia branches of the Missouri National Education Association and the Missouri State Teachers Association, which each represent roughly one-third of the teachers in the district." The piece notes that under the plan, one of the unions would "speak for all teachers and district employees" in contract negotiations.

Rhode Island NEA Chief Calls For Boosted Teacher Training Regimen.

The [Providence Journal](#) (9/14, Dujardin) runs an article on the views expressed by a number of education stakeholders speaking at "a forum of educators" in Providence about how to improve teachers' quality, noting that Larry Purtill, president of the National Education Association of Rhode Island, "said he believes there is a need for a five-year program to educate teachers, with at least one of those years in the form of direct classroom experience."

Revision Of Facebook Law Advances In Missouri Senate.

The [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) (9/14, Hancock) reports that the Missouri state Senate gave "initial approval" to a bill "repealing most of a controversial new law limiting teacher-student conversations through social networking sites such as Facebook," noting that the "Senate needs to approve the bill one more time before it moves to the House." The piece notes that there are questions regarding the revision's constitutionality, notwithstanding the support for it from the Missouri NEA and from other associations.

NEA's Pringle Hails Indiana Districts Union-District Collaboration.

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The [Evansville \(IN\) Courier & Press](#) (9/14) reports that NEA Secretary-Treasurer Rebecca Pringle and Indiana State Teachers Association President Nate Schnellenberger on Monday said that "Evansville is a national model in teachers union-School district collaboration, ," and that "that initiatives crafted by the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp. and its teachers association are making a positive difference in Schools of high need." The article describes the officials visit to a local School.

Tuesday's Lead Stories

- [Following Federal Probe, Arizona Halting Teacher Accent Monitoring.](#)
- [USA Today Survey: Most States Don't Analyze Standardized Test Erasures.](#)
- [New Lobbying Groups Attempt To Offer Teachers Union Alternatives.](#)
- [New Jersey Governor Meets With Administrators About Funding, Accountability Reforms.](#)
- [Study Finds Many Michigan Teachers Need Autism Training.](#)
- [Number Of Lawsuits Over School Bullying Policies Rising.](#)
- [Political Pitfalls Threaten School Construction, Teacher Salary Funding In Jobs Plan.](#)