



Educator Update - May, 2018

Keeping Huron County Educators Informed

See a topic of interest? Ctrl + Click to jump directly to it.

This Educator Update includes:

1. [HISD Website Quick Tips](#) – Find us on Facebook – linked on our homepage or search for us.
 2. [Save the Date](#) – Countywide PD day, August 21, 2018 at Laker High School.
 3. [Mental Health in Schools](#)
 4. [The Scourge of Low-Quality Worksheets and How We Can Do Better](#)
 5. [Online Summer Resources for Students](#)
 6. [Two Behaviors Linked to Dropout Rates in High School](#)
 7. [Elementary Core Reading Program Review Process](#)
1. **HISD Website Quick Tips** – A link to the HISD Facebook page is on our homepage. A link to the Huron Area Tech Center Facebook page is on the Career and Technical Education page.

The screenshot shows the HISD website homepage. At the top is the HISD logo and the text "Huron Intermediate School District". A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Area Schools, About HISD, Area Directory, and Contact Us. The main content area features a large image of the Huron Learning Center building. To the right of the image is a "TRANSPARENCY REPORTING" logo. A callout box with a blue border and a white background points to the navigation menu. The callout box contains the text: "Did you know we have TWO Facebook accounts? Huron Intermediate School District is linked to the homepage AND Huron Area Tech Center is linked from the CTE page. Follow us on Facebook!". Below the callout box is a link that says "Unsubscribe to Notify Me". To the right of the callout box is a dark grey sidebar with a list of "Quick Links" including: Administrative Services, Career and Technical Education, Community Education, General Education, Huron Mathematics, Science and Technology Center, Parent Resources, Professional Development, and Special Education. Below the sidebar is a "Quick Links" section with links to: Find us on Facebook, HISD Strategic Plan, All Schools Calendar, County-Wide Generic School Calendar, HISD Staff Calendar, Huron County Educational Directory, and Safety Drills - HATC.

The screenshot shows the HISD Facebook page. On the left is the Facebook logo. The page header includes "Page", "Inbox", "Notifications", "Insights", "Publishing Tools", "Settings", and "Help". The main content area features a large image of the Huron Intermediate School District building. Below the image is the text: "Huron Intermediate School District @HuronIntermediateSchoolDistrict".

2. **Save the Date – Our Countywide PD day** will be on Tuesday, August 21, 2018 at Laker High School. The focus will be on understanding how adverse childhood experiences impact learning and what we as schools can do to build resilience in students. It's a VERY HEAVY topic for our first day back, so we will be ending the day with strategies for dealing with stress and we will enjoy a few laughs.
3. **School-based Mental Health Services for Elementary Children** from Best Evidence in Brief, Johns Hopkins University. March 20, 2018.

School-based services delivered by teachers and other school-based professionals can help reduce mental health problems in elementary-age children, reports a study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

The findings are based on a meta-analysis of 43 controlled trials involving almost 50,000 elementary children. The study examined the overall effectiveness of school-based mental health services, as well as the relative effectiveness of various school-based intervention models that differed according to treatment target, format, and intensity.

Overall, school-based services had a small to medium effect (effect size = +0.39) in reducing mental health problems. Interventions that targeted child behavior problems demonstrated the largest effect sizes (+0.76). Interventions that were implemented multiple times per week were found to be more than twice as effective as those that were only implemented on a weekly (or less) basis.

4. **The Scourge of Low-Quality Worksheets and How We Can Do Better** – From the Marshall Memo, 730.

In this *Cult of Pedagogy* article, Jennifer Gonzalez shares a video of an 18-year-old high-school sophomore going off on his teacher about the “packets” she has students doing. “Yes, this student was disrupting class and his behavior was disrespectful,” says Gonzalez. But she hears what he’s saying about packets of worksheets being one of the lowest forms of pedagogy. “I’ve seen classrooms where teachers deliver instruction overwhelmingly through worksheets, or packets of worksheets,” she says. “I have seen my own kids’ schoolwork come home, and I have asked friends, other parents with school-age kids, and colleagues who consult in lots of schools, and nearly all of them tell me that a lot of our students’ instructional time is being spent hunched over some kind of worksheet. That’s a problem.” Her observations:

- Not all worksheets are bad. There’s a continuum from what Gonzalez calls powersheets to busysheets. At the powersheet end of the spectrum are graphic organizers that serve as a tool for research, pre-writing, and note-taking. There are also original source documents for close study and annotation; data sheets for a lab; planning sheets for group projects; aids to data analysis and reflection; and helpful formative assessments. At the busysheet end are low-level filling in blanks, multiple-choice questions, labeling, word searches, word scrambles, and doing coloring where coloring doesn’t add to students’ understanding. Packets are a bunch of worksheets stapled together. “They could contain a lot of powersheets,” she says, “but when a student refers to them as frickin’ packets, it’s highly likely that they are mostly made up of busysheets.”
- Busysheets can be disguised in other formats. For example, they might be computer programs or apps that have students doing the same thing as busysheets.

- Busysheet teaching is not real teaching. That’s because a worksheet in which students answer several low-level multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank questions on a short reading passage on Maya Angelou is disconnected from anything meaningful, isolating skills and knowledge from a broader context and higher-level thinking. Reading comprehension exercises like these don’t make students better readers and are no substitute for getting them reading a real book in search of evidence that supports a particular idea. The same is true of busysheets that ask students to label or identify various grammatical constructions; we’ve known for a long time that teaching grammar outside of a meaningful context doesn’t make students better writers, or even improve their test scores. The worst of all, she says, are word searches, word scrambles, and crossword puzzles, which might as well be a list of definitions with blanks next to them. These are pure busywork, says Gonzalez, and have no instructional value. In addition, busysheets get students sitting still for too long and not interacting with each other or their teacher.
- Busysheets use a lot of paper and give teachers more stuff to correct. This is truly a double whammy! In addition, counting worksheet grades tells students that making mistakes and learning from classwork (assuming it’s meaningful) is not part of the learning process.

Why do teachers use busysheets? From her travels in schools, Gonzalez has a long list: We don’t have textbooks. Kids need skills practice. We have to differentiate. We’re required to do the same work across our grade. We need substitute packets. Crowd control. Some kids like worksheets. We need bell-ringers and morning work. Students need fine-motor practice.

What to do instead of packets? Gonzalez suggests doing a worksheet audit, asking hard questions about where material falls on the powersheet-to-busysheet spectrum: is it contributing to student learning or just something to keep them busy? If the latter, then consider these higher-level classroom activities:

- Class discussions: think-pair-shares, gallery walks, philosophical chairs;
- Interactive experiences: simulations, role-plays, labs, escape rooms;
- Thought-provoking lessons: concept attainment, inductive learning;
- Group learning: jigsaw, reciprocal learning, games, icebreakers, maker challenges;
- Reading and writing: self-selected reading, research projects, journal writing, short writing challenges, long-term writing;
- Long-term projects: genius hour, project-based learning, service learning;
- Personalized learning: hyperdocs, stations or centers, listening to podcasts, blended learning.

“Frickin’ Packets” by Jennifer Gonzalez in *Cult of Pedagogy*, March 26, 2018, <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/busysheets/>

5. **Online Summer Resources for Students**, from the Marshall Memo

“While unstructured time for fun and play is valuable,” says the AFT Share My Lesson Team in this *American Educator* article, “many students could also benefit from intellectual stimulation during the summer.” For students who may not be able to take part in structured programs, they suggest these free online resources produced by the AFT:

- “Summer Learning at Home” – <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml1>
- “Baseball” – <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml2>
- “Celebrate Science” – <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml3>
- “Teacher Resources Inspired by Films” – <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml4>
- Storyline Online - <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml5>
- “Tap, Click, Read: Growing Readers in a World of Screens” webinar: <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml6>
- “Math Homework Help for Parents” – <http://go.aft.org/AE118sml7>

“Spark Self-Directed Summer Learning” by the American Federation of Teachers Share My Lesson Team in *American Educator*, Spring 2018 (Vol. 42, #1, p. 12)

6. Two Behaviors Linked to Dropout Rates in High School – from Center for Research and Reform in Education

[A study](#) published in the Journal of School Health examines how two behaviors - aggression and poor study skills - may be a factor in why some students do not finish high school.

Pamela Orpinas and colleagues randomly selected 620 sixth-grade students from northeast Georgia schools. Teachers completed a behavior rating scale for these students every year from sixth to twelfth grade. Based on teacher ratings, the students were categorized into low, medium, and high aggression trajectories from middle to high school and into five study-skills groups (low, average-low, decreasing, increasing, and high). Examples of behaviors considered to be aggressive were threatening to hurt, hitting, bullying, and teasing others. Examples of study skills were doing extra credit work, being well-organized, completing homework, working hard, and reading assigned chapters. Participants in the study were classified as a dropout if they were not enrolled in school and had not obtained a high school diploma by the end of the spring term in twelfth grade.

Students who were identified in the high-aggression/low-study-skills group had a 50% dropout rate compared to students with low aggression and high study skills who had a dropout rate of less than 2%. The results highlight the importance of early interventions that combine academic enhancement and behavioral management for reducing school dropout rates.

7. Core Reading Program Review – At the request of our local schools, we have been reviewing Elementary Core Reading Programs and would like to take a few minutes of your time to share the process and invite you to participate in the next steps. Please click this link to view a four-minute video: <https://youtu.be/KdvzCDMbeHw>. Attached you will find an invitation to participate in the next steps.

This electronic newsletter is sent to all educators within the Huron ISD several times each year. If you have suggestions for future content or feedback, please contact us using the information below.

Check out our website at www.huronisd.org.
Submit suggestions and feedback to curriekm@huronisd.org