



-newsletter, December 2007

Dear Colleague,

Please share this e-newsletter with your peers and invite them to subscribe by e-mailing us at teacher_center@wsboces.org with their names and e-mail addresses. We wish you a joyous holiday season!

Jane, Carol and Elyse

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A Light Touch

Definitions Not Found in the Dictionary

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

BEAUTY PARLOR: A place where women curl up and dye.

CANNIBAL: Someone who is fed up with people.

CHICKENS: The only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

HANDKERCHIEF: Cold Storage.

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN: A grape with sunburn.

SECRET: Something you tell to one person at a time.

SKELETON: A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.

TOOTHACHE: The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labor-saving devices of today.

YAWN: An honest opinion openly expressed.

Some holiday humor....

This guy goes into his dentist's office, because something is wrong with his mouth. After a brief examination, the dentist exclaims, "Holy Smoke! That plate I installed in your mouth about six months ago has nearly completely corroded! What on earth have you been eating?" "Well... the only thing I can think of is this... my wife made me some asparagus about four months ago with this stuff on it... Hollandaise sauce she called it... and doctor, I'm talkin' DELICIOUS! I've never tasted anything like it, and ever since then I've been putting it on everything... meat, fish, toast, vegetables... you name it!" "That's probably it," replied the dentist "Hollandaise sauce is made with lemon juice, which is acidic and highly corrosive. It seems as though I'll have to install a new plate, but made out of chrome this time." "Why chrome?" the man asked. "Well, everyone knows that there's no plate like chrome for the Hollandaise!"

Just before Christmas, there were an honest politician, a kind lawyer and Santa Claus traveling in an elevator of an upscale hotel. Just before the doors opened they all noticed a \$100 bill lying on the floor. Which one picked it up?? Santa of course, the other two don't exist!

Entering Heaven. Three men died on Christmas Eve and were met by Saint Peter at the pearly gates.

"In honor of this holy season," Saint Peter said, "You must each possess something that symbolizes Christmas to get into heaven."

The first man fumbled through his pockets and pulled out a lighter. He flicked it on. "It represents a candle," he said. "You may pass through the pearly gates," Saint Peter said.

The second man reached into his pocket and pulled out a set of keys. He shook them and said, "They're bells." Saint Peter said, "You may pass through the pearly gates."

The third man started searching desperately through his pockets and finally pulled out a pair of women's glasses.

St. Peter looked at the man with a raised eyebrow and asked, "And just what do those symbolize?"

The man replied, "They're Carol's."

FYI

Courses and Workshops

Looking for a convenient Master's Degree Program? Here are 3 New Programs!

- **Master of Arts of Liberal Studies** (Stony Brook) with a concentration (not a certification) in Special Education Inclusion will meet on Wednesdays at the Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center in

Wheatley Heights.

- **Master of Arts of Liberal Studies** (Stony Brook) with a concentration (not a certification) in Literacy will meet on Tuesdays at the Commack Teacher Center in Commack.
- **Master of Science in Literacy Education** (starts January, 2008) Dowling College

Benefits of enrolling through SETC include reduced tuition, convenient location, and a schedule tailored to your working calendar. For registration and information, call Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center at 254-0107 or check our website: <http://www.seteachercenter.org/> Click on Professional Development.

NYS Teacher Center Online Academy

The Online Academy can be found at the Rockland Teacher Center website at <http://www.rockteach.org/>. Click on Online Courses, then Online Academy Catalog and follow the directions. Be sure to check with your district for course approval.

Events

December 11, 2007, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Nassau Tract Teacher Center and Adelphi University present "**Analyzing Test Data and Scores,**" at Ruth S. Harvey University Center, 2nd Floor, Adelphi University Garden City. Continental Breakfast and lunch are included in your \$10 registration fee, refundable upon attendance. Keynote Speaker: **Giselle O. Martin-Kniep**. Below is a sampling of morning and afternoon workshops.

- A. Exploring a Framework for Using State Test Data to Identify and Address Student Needs
- B. How Portfolios Can Help Teachers Document and Measure Student's Growth
- C. Diversified Assessment: Assessment to Produce Learning
- D. Beyond Tests to Multiple Measures of Student Performance
- E. Rubrics: Tools for Communicating Clear Expectations and Improving Student Learning

For more information, e-mail trish@nassautract.org, les@nassautract.org, info@nassautract.org

Announcements

Deadline: January 10, 2008 for your proposal for the 2008 NCTE Annual Convention. The shifts we currently face -- technological, political, social, and cultural -- have profound effects on the teaching we must do today to prepare our students for tomorrow. Join NCTE members and educators next fall for "Because Shift Happens: Teaching in the Twenty-First Century," the 2008 NCTE Annual Convention in San Antonio, November 20-25. Download [the proposal form](#) and join the discussion!

Deadline: January 31, 2008. Wheadon Scholarship Competition Announced. [Edwyna Wheadon Postgraduate Training Scholarships](#) provide funding for professional development experiences for English language arts teachers in public educational institutions. Submit your application by the deadline date above.

Deadline: February 1, 2008. Do You Know an Exemplary Leader? - Nominate One Today. The CEL

Exemplary Leader Award is given to an NCTE member who is an outstanding English language arts educator and leader. Members of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) may [nominate an exemplary leader](#) before the February 1 deadline.

TAP Grants:

Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Grants fund technical assistance to strengthen your arts-in-education partnerships in the following categories: Planning and Capacity Building, Curriculum Design, Assessment and Evaluation, and Professional Development. The grant is administered by Partners for Arts Education. More details on the program can be found on their website at www.arts4ed.org. TAP applications are reviewed in cycles; The 2008 deadlines are: **February 1, April 1, and June 1.**

Worthwhile Websites

<http://www.nysmsa.org/>. **Did you know?** In July of 2003 the New York State Board of Regents issued its policy statement on middle level education. The statement declared that the New York State Education Department's **Seven Essential Elements** must be in place in standards-focused schools with middle-level grades in New York State. What are the seven Essential Elements? Does your school meet the State's expectation declared in its policy and regulations? Click on this NYSMSA (New York State Middle School Association) website to find out all you need to know. Once on the NYSMSA site click on the **Middle Level Essentials** button.

<http://www.timiddlegrades.com/>. Texas Instruments has created a Web site of online resources specifically for middle grades educators to help students achieve success in the classroom. Check out this site complete with:


- Classroom-ready math activities for your lesson plans
- Professional development and TI technology training opportunities
- Helpful tutorials for the TI-73 Explorer™ and TI-84 Plus family of graphing calculators - and much more.

www.google.com/educators/weeklyreader.html. Do you find that your students work harder if their work is transparent to each other? If they can all see what one another is working on and show off just a teeny bit? We've heard that this is a trend and we've also heard that kids respond to assignments that seem fun. - who woulda thunk it? Google for Educators has buddied up with the good folks from the Weekly Reader to bring you a lesson on Revision Writing - With a Buddy.


www.google.com/educators/spectrum.html. Several years ago, Google was contacted by a number of parents, who told them that their children were having great fun and success with Google SketchUp, 3D modeling software. What makes this story special? The children using the tool were on the autism

spectrum. Since stumbling across this information, Google has worked with parents, educators and kids to learn how SketchUp plays to the visual and spatial strengths of autistic children. Thanks to the combined efforts of families, schools, the University of Colorado and a dedicated team, Google has launched Project Spectrum to "open the door into minds full of pictures." Visit the website to check out a video about these kids and to download the Project Spectrum Manual of Lesson Plans.


20 great websites for Elementary and Middle School Students


[Fact Monster.com](http://www.factmonster.com)  <http://www.factmonster.com>. Find information about a variety of subjects ranging from weather facts to homework help to quizzes and games.

[Fairbanks \(Ak.\) North Star Borough School District](http://www.northstar.k12.ak.us/index.php)  <http://www.northstar.k12.ak.us/index.php>. Fairbanks (AK.) North Star Borough School District.


[FCC Kidszone](http://www.fcc.gov/kidszone)  <http://www.fcc.gov/kidszone>. This site offers information for children on the FCC, as well as lots of interactive games and puzzles, surveys, telecom factoids and much more.


[Figure This! Math Challenges for Families](http://www.figurethis.org)  <http://www.figurethis.org>. Challenges families or classrooms to solve math and spatial problems; great for the "non-mathematician."


[Finding Data on the Internet](http://www.robertniles.com/data/)  <http://www.robertniles.com/data/>. You've cast your lines into the sea of sources, but still aren't finding the information you need. That's what happens when you don't know the right place to look.


[Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco](http://www.thinker.org/)  <http://www.thinker.org/>. Utterly fabulous site combining multiple museum holdings in an over 75,000-item database. Images are excellent, and you can send your comments and knowledge about the paintings to the museum.


[First Ladies of the United States of America](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/index.html)  <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/index.html>. Information about the First Ladies of the United States.


[FirstGov for Kids](http://www.kids.gov/)  <http://www.kids.gov/>. A kids' portal to the U.S. government, this site was developed and is maintained by the Federal Citizen Information Center. It provides links to Federal kids' sites along with kids' sites from other organizations all grouped by subject.


[Five Field Kono](http://www.darkfish.com/kono/FiveFieldKono.html)  <http://www.darkfish.com/kono/FiveFieldKono.html>. This beautifully designed strategy game is played on a Java board. It's worth the wait for the board to load up. Based on Chinese Checkers.

[Flashcards for Kids](http://www.edu4kids.com)  <http://www.edu4kids.com>. Online flashcards with a variety of mathematical puzzles to help build kids' skills.


The Food Timeline.  <http://www.foodtimeline.org>. From water and salt to tear-free onions, food has played a big role throughout history.


Fun Brain.com.  <http://www.funbrain.com>. Who ever thought learning math could be so much fun? Test your math skills with these fun and interesting games. Includes some teacher and parenting resources.

Future State.  <http://www.future.state.gov>. The goal of the "Future State" website is to provide students with the opportunity to explore the world of American diplomacy, look at aspects of U.S. foreign affairs, and where and why Foreign diplomacy is important. Sections include News and Events, Fun Activities, and Parents & Educators. This site was created by the US Department of State for Youth.

Galileo: Journey to Jupiter.  <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/galileo/>. This NASA site from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory describes the journey of space probe Galileo, which explored the planet Jupiter.


Gallery of Achievers.  <http://www.achievement.org/galleryachieve.html>. In the Gallery of Achievers, the focus is on individuals who have shaped the 20th century by their accomplishments.

Garfield Online.  <http://www.garfield.com/>. Heard the latest? Garfield's the greatest! Check out what's happenin' with everyone's favorite fat cat! Jim Davis's official fat-cat site!

Kristine O'Connell George  <http://www.kristinegeorge.com>. This site promotes poetry and activities involving poetry for children. George also includes information about her life and books.

Girls Incorporated.  <http://www.girlsinc.org>. Girls Incorporated is a national youth organization dedicated to helping every girl become strong, smart, and bold.

Go West Across America with Lewis and Clark.  <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/west/>. Join Lewis & Clark as a private on this interactive journey. "Did you know" and "Journal" icons can be clicked for additional information.

Guys Read.  <http://www.guysread.com>. Author Jon Scieszka makes suggestions for a literacy program that connects boys with books they want to read.

NCTE Inbox

News

Rekindling Reading? Amazon has released the Kindle, a \$400 "wireless reading device," in the hopes of cultivating millions of iPod users to become e-book readers. [CBS News, November 26, 2007](#)

Small School Libraries Aim to Make Reading Fun and Easy. Small classroom libraries are giving students the opportunity to grow their reading ability by having instant access to books of their own choosing. [Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 26, 2007](#)

Falling between Two Worlds. Many Hispanic students are "slipping away" from our educational system -- half don't graduate in 4 years. "These kids are more likely than ever before in the history of the United States to go to Harvard University. And they're also more likely to get involved in gangs and be involved in the criminal justice system," New York University professor [Marcelo Suarez-Orozco](#) said. [The News & Observer, November 26, 2007](#)

Computers Transform Classrooms. Teachers are finding many ways to incorporate technology into their teaching. [Detroit Free Press, November 26, 2007](#)

. . . **On Higher Education.** "House Committee Backs Renewal of Higher Education Act" (NCTE sent a letter to Representative George Miller's office supporting many of the Title II recommendations): [Education Week, November 15, 2007](#), "The Pendulum Swings on Accreditation": [Inside Higher Ed, November 19, 2007](#), "Students Less Engaged at Community College": [USA Today, November 13, 2007](#)

Study Links Drop in Test Scores to a Decline in Time Spent Reading. [To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence](#), from the National Endowment for the Arts, indicates that fewer adults and young people are reading for pleasure today and that reading scores of adults and adolescents have fallen. NCTE member Timothy Shanahan is quoted. [The New York Times, November 19, 2007](#)

. . . **On NCLB.** "Calculation of Graduation Rates Differ": [The Boston Globe, November 9, 2007](#), "NEA Leads Opposition to Law's Renewal": [Education Week, November 9, 2007](#), "Schools Face 3rd AYP Test": [The Salt Lake Tribune, November 10, 2007](#), "Teachers Applaud Congress for Taking Time To Reauthorize Flawed No Child Left Behind Act": [California Chronicle, November 10, 2007](#), "Limited English Kids Face a Tougher Test": [The Chicago Tribune, November 9, 2007](#), "Illinois Looking into Record-Low Test Scores": [The Chicago Tribune, November 9, 2007](#)

Literacies of the 21st Century. "Seminole School Mixes Technology, Tradition": [The Miami Herald, November 1, 2007](#), "Future Reading: Digitization and Its Discontents": [The New Yorker, November 5, 2007](#), "Classroom of the Future Is Virtually Anywhere": [The New York Times, October 31, 2007](#), "Study: Students Want to Learn Online": [T.H.E. Journal, October 2007](#)

Views

21st-Century Literacies Are Not About Technology Only. "[21st Century Learning: 'We're Not Even Close'](#)" points out that many schools are stuck in thinking that they've closed the digital divide by having technology on hand. This is one myth [21st-Century Literacies: A Policy Research Brief](#) produced by the National Council of Teachers of English debunks. Schools must do much more than have

technology on hand -- they need to integrate technological tools into all they do, using the tools to support innovation in teaching and learning.

Ideas

Honesty and Clarity in Advertising and the Media. Earlier this month at NCTE's Annual Convention in New York City, the NCTE Public Language Award Committee presented [the 2007 George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language and the 2007 Doublespeak Award](#). The Orwell Award recognizes writers who have made outstanding contributions to the critical analysis of public discourse; the Doublespeak Award is given to a glaring example of deceptive language by a public spokesperson. The ideas this week suggest ways to ask students to make similar explorations of the messages behind public language. The *English Journal* article "[Doublespeak Detection for the English Classroom](#)" (M-S-C) explores examples from literature, newspapers, and advertisements.

Advertisements are a fertile source for examples. Ask students to sift through and analyze simple advertisements with the ReadWriteThink lesson [Investigating Junk Mail: Negotiating Critical Literacy at the Mailbox](#) (E), which asks questions about what's in a text, what's not there, and who a text is for. For more activities for elementary level students, check out the *Language Arts* article "[Children's Everyday Literacies: Intersections of Popular Culture and Language Arts Instruction](#)" (E). The *Voices from the Middle* article "[Improving Reading Comprehension by Using Media Literacy Activities](#)" (M) challenges educators to find creative ways to build connections between kids' worlds and the work we do in classrooms. The article shares a sequence of classroom engagements that moves students from film to literature to writing.

Look for evidence of deceptive language and messages in historic contexts with the ReadWriteThink lesson [Argument, Persuasion, or Propaganda? Analyzing World War II Posters](#) (S). To explore advertising's use of doublespeak with older students, look to the analytical techniques outlined in the *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* article "[Advertising and Interpretive Analysis: Developing Reading, Thinking, and Writing Skills in the Composition Course](#)" (S-C).

Celebrate the many [teachers, authors, and researchers who received awards](#) last week during NCTE's Annual Convention. This week's INBOX features some of the award winners.

Orbis Pictus Award

Look to the [Orbis Pictus Award](#) to find the best nonfiction titles for your students. See "[The 2007 Orbis Pictus Award Winners: The Best in Nonfiction](#)" from *Language Arts* for details on this year's winners.

Paul and Kate Farmer Writing Awards for Articles in *English Journal* Written by Classroom Teachers

Raquel Cook's article "[Beyond Tolerance: Teaching English in a Post-9/11 Classroom](#)" and Kiran Subhani Qureshi's article "[Beyond Mirrored Worlds: Teaching World Literature to Challenge Students' Perception of 'Other.'](#)" both from the November 2006 issue, describe classroom activities that build unity and support diversity and cultural sensitivity.

Richard Ohmann Award for an article in *College English*

Read LuMing R. Mao's "[Studying the Chinese Rhetorical Tradition in the Present: Re-presenting the Native's Point of View](#)," from the January 2007 issue, which explores the limitations in various approaches that Westerners have taken to non-Western rhetorical traditions.

English Leadership Quarterly Best Article Award

Learn more about the needs and benefits of understanding research in Brent McKeown's winning article "[What Is Your Fascination with These Outcomes?](#)" from the April 2006 issue.

In the News

Eye on Curriculum

U.S. News ranks 100 best U.S. high schools. In its first-ever ranking of "[America's Best High Schools](#)," U.S. News & World Report has placed Virginia's Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology atop all others in the country. Rankings were based on student scores on state tests as well as AP participation and achievement. The U.S. News ranking is meant to rival Newsweek's annual "Best American High Schools" feature. [The Washington Post](#) (11/30), [U.S. News & World Report](#) (11/29), [Los Angeles Times](#) (free registration) (12/1)

U.S. ranks 14th among countries in literacy study. U.S. fourth-graders scored about the same on the Progress in International Reading Literacy test as they did in 2001. While the U.S. score, on average, remained above the international average, students in Russia, Hong Kong and Singapore, which were previously outranked by the U.S., are now the top-three scoring countries, respectively. [The Washington Post/Associated Press](#) (11/28), [Reuters](#) (11/28)

Author: Unstructured outdoor play key to childhood development. Some educators, parents and lawmakers are pushing for today's children to play outside as their parents and grandparents did before parents' fears drove children inside to TV, video games and structured activities. Free play outdoors is "fundamental to human development" and allows children to learn about nature firsthand and decrease stress, says author Richard Louv. [The News & Observer \(Raleigh, N.C.\)/The Charlotte Observer](#) (11/24)

House calls improve Ohio teacher-parent relationships. Growing numbers of Cleveland teachers are making house calls to low-income and struggling students to better engage parents. "People seemed very appreciative that we came," said Cleveland schools chief Eugene Sanders. "It went a long way toward solidifying the notion that the district values their children." [The Plain Dealer \(Cleveland\)](#) (11/25)

Growing preschool-tutoring market worries some development experts. Preschoolers and kindergartners are among the fastest-growing markets for after-school tutors as anxious parents hope the early assistance will help their children get into the best colleges. Some child-development experts worry the trend is age-inappropriate, but a recent study may bolster the movement: Entering kindergarten with elementary math and reading skills was the best predictor of later academic success among nearly 36,000 U.S., Canadian and British preschoolers, according to the researchers' findings. [TIME](#) (11/21)

Report: U.S. youth reading less than previous generation. Young Americans spend an average of 10 minutes or less of their daily leisure time on reading, according to a new National Endowment for the Arts [report](#), raising concerns about their academic performance, career prospects and civic engagement. Focusing on testable reading skills in classrooms does little to instill a love of books, according to Dana Gioia, the organization's chairman. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (11/19), [The New York Times](#) (11/19)

[Learning and Teaching](#)

Opinion: Let new teachers make mistakes. When we first attempt new skills, we never perform perfectly but that helps us learn, writes nationally certified math teacher Carolyn Guthrie. Teacher mentors must be careful not to take charge of their mentees' projects so that they can try things out and gain confidence in their own skills. [Teacher Magazine](#) (11/28)

Teens' work on breast cancer could break new ground. After several of their friends' mothers were diagnosed with breast cancer, Sarah Waliany and Shelina Kurwa sought to understand why some patients develop resistance to a common cancer drug. The pair will present their research as finalists in the national Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology. [Los Angeles Times](#) (free registration) (11/25)

[Professional Leadership](#)

Texas official allegedly forced out over intelligent design e-mail. Texas's director of science curriculum, Chris Comer, said she was forced to resign after she forwarded an e-mail about a book criticizing intelligent-design instruction. Department officials declined to comment, but documents obtained through the Texas Public Information Act said, "Ms. Comer's e-mail implies endorsement of the speaker and implies that TEA endorses the speaker's position on a subject on which the agency must remain neutral." [USA TODAY/Associated Press](#) (11/30)

Dallas school trustees approve \$10,000 teacher bonuses. Teachers at 59 Dallas schools next year may earn \$10,000 bonuses contingent on a complex statistical analysis designed to determine a teacher's contribution to student learning in the classroom. Some teachers spoke against the plan, saying it relies too heavily on student test scores. [The Dallas Morning News](#) (11/29)

Bill aims to enhance in-school training for student teachers. Colleges of education may be able to offer prospective teachers more field experiences under a U.S. House bill to renew the Higher Education Act that also would create greater scrutiny of tuition increases. The bill also would offer

increased support for new teacher graduates. The Senate unanimously voted to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (11/27)

Top scientists pair up with teachers to improve curriculum. Some 200 middle and high school science educators have attended a program that partners them with top U.S. scientists with the aim of developing better teaching skills. "The teachers feel like they're not as important as the scientists are. That's something we're trying to fix," said Jan Tyler, the science education manager at a facility where teachers learn and craft lessons they can bring home to their classrooms. "They need to hear that they're very important to the future of this country. They don't hear that enough." [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (11/16)

Technology Solutions

Lawsuit: Anti-bullying video posted online created conflict. A high-school video project meant to illustrate the harmful effects of bullying was edited and posted on YouTube, allegedly resulting in the student who played the victim in the video becoming a real victim, according to a lawsuit filed against the school district by the teenager's parent. [NJ.com/The Star-Ledger](#) (11/29)

Column: Can technology boost reading rates? [Amazon.com's](#) new wireless reading device, Kindle, may help improve young people's dismal reading rates, writes Daniel Henninger, The Wall Street Journal's editorial page deputy editor. [The Wall Street Journal](#) (subscription required) (11/29)

Cyberbullying studies quantify growing problem. As many as one in three U.S. children are bullied online, according to separate studies published in a special issue of the Journal of Adolescent Health. About 17% of early adolescents are still victims of in-person bullying, while 64% of cybervictims were not harassed in person. [The Sun \(Baltimore\)/Associated Press](#) 11/28)

Japanese university offers course to mobile-phone students. Japan's Cyber University has become the first college to offer an online course to mobile-phone users. "Our duty as educators is to respond to the needs of people who want to learn," university head Sakuji Yoshimura said. [The Boston Globe/Associated Press](#) (11/28)

Can online profiles sabotage college applications? Some 26% of college admissions departments are actively researching students via [Google](#) and 21% are casing social-networking profiles, according to a University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth study this fall of 453 college admissions departments. "Every college has raised the bar on what they want from our students academically, and now it's socially, as well. What ends up separating you from another student could be how you present yourself online," said Joan Place, a director of guidance counseling at an Ohio high school. [Dayton Daily News \(Ohio\)](#) (11/25)

Policy Watch

Research examines role that parents play in teens' development. An ongoing study from researchers at the University of Oklahoma is exploring which parenting techniques may result in well-adjusted teens and which may lead to risky teen behaviors. "We can say it over and over that one person can make a difference in the life of a child, but now we can provide it with numbers," said Anne Roberts, the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy's executive director. "We're trying to determine

if the protective factors in their lives as kids carry through to help them as adults." [Teacher Magazine/Associated Press](#) (11/27)

Study: Parents consider more than test scores when requesting teachers. Parents are more concerned about teachers' abilities to meet students' needs than to raise test scores, according to a new study. The study examined a U.S. school district where parents are allowed to request certain teachers. In more the half those requests, parents asked for teachers with high "satisfaction" ratings rather than teachers with high achievement ratings. "What parents want schools to produce is much broader than test score gains," said study co-author Lars Lefgren, a Brigham Young University associate professor. [The Salt Lake Tribune \(Utah\)](#) (11/26)

Editorial: Presidential hopefuls need to take substantive stand on NCLB. With Congress delaying action on NCLB, federal education policy could be left to the next president, writes The Washington Post editorial board. But so far, the presidential candidates are keeping to safe ground by refusing to engage in active, substantive debate over NCLB policy. [The Washington Post](#) (11/27)

Commission: Too much learning time spent on testing. A North Carolina blue-ribbon education commission recommended the state education board eliminate several statewide standardized exams, saying too much classroom time is devoted to testing. "We're testing more, but we're not seeing the results," said the commission's chairman, Sam Houston. "We're not seeing graduation rates increasing. We're not seeing remediation rates decreasing. Somewhere along the way testing isn't aligning with excellence." [The News & Observer \(Raleigh, N.C.\)](#) (11/19)

NCLB

Opinion: Private providers should be more accountable. Private firms that provide instructional services and products should not be exempt from NCLB accountability measures that cover all U.S. public schools, writes Patricia Burch, a University of Wisconsin-Madison assistant professor of educational policy. Such companies benefit financially from the law yet are held to much less rigorous standards than public schools, she says. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (11/28)

Nearly 100 California districts face most severe NCLB sanctions. The Los Angeles school district, along with 98 other districts, may be abolished or taken over for failing to improve student test scores, according to a notice from the California Department of Education. Such sanctions are unlikely, however, as state officials have not yet adopted such punishments and appear unwilling to do so now, according to this article. [Los Angeles Times](#) (free registration) (11/29)

Editorial: National standards needed for true accountability. Rather than encouraging states to system by creating weak tests, setting low passing standards or simplifying tests each year to give the appearance of annual growth, according to The New York Times editorial board. The editorial board recommends the administration of "a rigorous national test keyed to national standards" to accurately portray the true state of U.S. schools. [The New York Times](#) (11/26)

In the Field

Small changes help Boston parents and teachers battle kids' weight-gain. Concerned that pizza parties and Burger King coupons were encouraging childhood obesity as much as rewarding students for good academic performance, Boston parents and teachers worked together to stop the awarding of fattening prizes. In the process, they learned about the 2-year-old federal anti-obesity "We Can!" program that helps parents make changes to help combat obesity. [The Washington Post/Associated Press](#) (11/29)

Study: Rickets reemerges as children's bones weaken. Some children are receiving so little milk, sunshine and exercise that some specialists are speculating that millions of otherwise healthy children are developing with weak bones that may leave them more vulnerable to osteoporosis than their grandparents. A national study of 1,500 healthy 6- to 17-year-olds has resulted in the development of a bone-growth guide. [Forbes/Associated Press](#) (11/27)