

E-newsletter May 2007

Dear Colleague,

Click on [FYI](#) below for a comprehensive list of summer courses and workshops for you to attend. 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 will promptly add them to our subscription list.

Jane, Carol and Elyse

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A Light Touch

Children's Perception!

- 1) **Nudity.** I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, "Mom! That lady isn't wearing a seat belt!"
- 2) **Opinions.** On the first day of school, a first-grader handed his teacher a note from his mother. The note read, "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents."
- 3) **Ketchup.** A woman was trying hard to get the ketchup out of the jar. During her struggle

the phone rang so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone. "Mommy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle."

4) More Nudity. A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, "What's the matter, haven't you ever seen a little boy before?"

5) Police #1. While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, "Are you a cop?" Yes," I answered and continued writing the report. "My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?" "Yes, that's right," I told her. "Well, then," she said as she extended her foot toward me, "would you please tie my shoe?"

6) Police #2. It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my K-9 partner, Jake, was barking, and I saw a little boy staring in at me "Is that a dog you got back there?" he asked. "It sure is," I replied. Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally he said, "What'd he do?"

7) Elderly. While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

8) Dress-Up. A little girl was watching her parents dress for a party. When she saw her dad donning his tuxedo, she warned, "Daddy, you shouldn't wear that suit."

"And why not, darling?" "You know that it always gives you a headache the next morning"

9) Death. While walking along the sidewalk in front of his church, our minister heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cotton batting, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased. The minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: "Glory be unto the Faaaather, and unto the Sonnn, and into the hole he gooooes."

10) School. A little girl had just finished her first week of school. "I'm just wasting my

time," she said to her mother . "I can't read, I can't write and they won't let me talk!"

11) Bible. A little boy opened the big family bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked-up the object, it was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages "Mama, look what I found," the boy called out. "What have you got there, dear?" With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, "I think it's Adam's underwear. "

EYI

Spring-Summer Courses and Workshops at Home and Abroad

June 8, 2007 - Registration deadline for Summer Institutes for Advanced Placement Teachers at Hofstra University in July. Click on [Summer Institutes for Advanced Placement Teachers.doc](#)

June 24, 25, 26, 2007. YSMSA/CMoG Middle-Level Institute Summer Program

This top quality program is being brought to you through the collective efforts of the New York State Middle School Association/Corning Museum of Glass. The institute will be held at the ultra-modern facility of Corning Museum of Glass. Participants will participate in one of six instructional strands offered by practitioner experts. They are *The Teacher as Writer, Using Data to Inform Middle-Level students about their Academic Progress, Building Engaging Communities, Exploring the Possibilities: Creative Solutions to Middle School Challenges, Making Writing Manageable for Middle Level Students, Middle-Level Leadership that Works*. Please direct questions about the program to Dennis Tosetto at Tosetto@nysmsa.org. Please direct questions about registration to Julie Schwartz at Schwartz@nysmsa.org. Request that the 12 page brochure explaining the entire program, registration and costs be e-mailed to you.

June 25, 26, 27, and 28, 2007. Unraveling Racism Training at Eastern Suffolk

BOCES. [2007-6-25 and 6-26-ERASE racism flyer.doc](#),
[2007-6-25 and 6-26 Erase Racism reg form.doc](#)
[2007-6-27 and 6-28-ERASE racism flyer.doc](#)
[2007-6-27 and 6-28 Erase Racism reg form.doc](#)

June 29, 2007. Are you recently retired or contemplating retirement? Here's a

workshop for you. [Retirement-The Best Chapter of Your Life summer 07.doc.](#)

Continuing & Community Education Advanced Placement Summer Institute. Niagara University is delighted to offer their annual College Board endorsed Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) for teachers who would like to prepare themselves for AP teaching or advanced their skills in AP courses. Participants will have the opportunity to design or modify a course outline and curriculum that is organized around selected topics, concepts and themes.

Session I June 25-29, 2007, Psychology, Statistics

Session II July 16-20, 2007, Italian Language and Culture

Session III July 23-27, 2007, Biology, English Literature, Calculus AB, European History, Economics, US History. 30 hours of professional development credit. Early Bird Registration fee: \$795 (registration postmarked by May 24), Regular Fee: \$895. For more detailed information or to register, please contact Niagara University at (716) 286-8181 or at <http://www.niagara.edu/cce/>

July 17, 18, 19, 2007, Writing Retreat for National Board Candidates and Advanced Candidates, This retreat was created to give time for writing in a collegial environment. Working independently, with partners, or in writing groups, candidates read, write, review and reflect in congenial and supportive surroundings. Teacher Center at Rensselaerville. Registration required/No fee. **For more information and/or registration forms, please contact Ellen Sullivan. Phone 518-479-4083, email Ellen@teachercenter.org.**

July 30-August 3, 2007. College Board Advanced Placement Program Summer Institute 2007 at the Teacher Center at Rensselaerville. Institute subjects are Biology, Environmental science, Art, Spanish Language, English Literature and Composition , Calculus AB, US Government and Politics, Chinese Language and Culture, Economics, US History, Statistics, Physics. All participants will receive a certificate of attendance that indicates the contact hours (30) and subject. Registration Fee \$500, Lodging and meals: \$495. Teachers interested in enrolling can receive registration forms via fax, mail or email by contacting 518-384-1718 or abertino@nycap.rr.com.

Attention Stony Brook students in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program.

(MA/LS)! This August you will be eligible to study abroad in Florence, Italy! Students who wish to be part of this amazing opportunity will be registered for CEH 595 - Contemporary Italy. The 3 graduate credits earned through the course will be applied to your degree cluster area. Interested students, please contact, Lucinda Acquaye, Study Abroad Advisor, International Academic Programs, Phone 631-632-7030, Email lucinda.acquaye@stonybrook.edu.

Events

June 24-26, 2007 Make plans now to attend the [Literacy Leaders Institute](#), in Charleston, South Carolina, and join a community of learners and nationally acclaimed literacy leaders in an interactive institute for English district supervisors, literacy coaches, and department chairs focused on effective literacy instruction.

Announcements

Opportunity for science teachers. GlaxoSmithKline's Endowed Scholarship Fund is offering scholarships for science teachers seeking National Board Certification. Through a generous \$1 million endowment, GlaxoSmithKline provides scholarships to science teachers nationwide beginning with the 2007-2008 candidate cycle. Eligible teachers must be first-time candidates in the Early Adolescence/Science or Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science certificates. Scholarships will be awarded in late 2007. Interested candidates should e-mail the [program coordinator](#) to be placed on the scholarship waiting list. All scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

http://www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/fees_financial_support/scholarships

Humanitarian Opportunity - Summer Trip to Cuba! The U.S. government has issued a license to the *Bringing Hope Foundation* to bring volunteers to Cuba to participate in a humanitarian project. This project is the delivery of humanitarian supplies to an independent charity in Cuba. This program has been developed specifically for educators with seminars and educational events to enhance the program and your knowledge of Cuba's history, people and society, educational system, culture and the state of U.S. - Cuban relations during this rewarding humanitarian effort. Open the link below to find out more.

[NY Ed Summer 2007 flyer Cuba.pdf](#)

NCTE Program Recognizes Literary Magazines. Enter your senior high, junior high, or middle school student literary magazine in the [2007 NCTE Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines](#). The entry deadline is **July 2, 2007**.

Worthwhile Websites

<http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/events/warehouse/> Check out the Scholastic Books Community Book Sales offered at their warehouse locations twice a year. There is a warehouse in Deer Park.


<http://www.eol.org/home.html> Scientists are planning a massive, free Web site, called the Encyclopedia of Life, to compile data on the Earth's 1.8 million known species, including


descriptions, pictures, maps, videos and links to entire genomes and scientific journal papers! The site is up for demonstration/observation now, and is expected to be finished in mid 2008.


Twelve great websites for elementary and middle school kids.


[BookHive: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg Co.](#) 


A reader's advisory tool for infants through sixth graders that can be searched by topic or reading level; includes materials for parents and other adults.


[Braillebug.](#)  Learn all about this system of writing used by the blind through games, secret messages, a reading club and information about Louis Braille and Helen Keller.

[Brain Pop.](#)  Learn all about the world around you, from health, science, arts and music to mathematics, technology and even English grammar, by viewing the educational films on this site. Non-subscribers are limited to 30 films per day.

[Brain Teasers](#)  Test your wits each week with a new math puzzle ... check back the following week to see how smart you are!

[Jan Brett's Home Page](#)  You'll find everything from trolls to armadillos on this author/illustrator's page. She has created The Mitten, That Hat, Armadillo Rodeo, The Trouble with Trolls, and Berlioz the Bear.


[Brooklyn Expedition: Latin America.](#)  A collaborative project of the Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Children's Museum, this site is a springboard to discussions to ancient and modern Latin American cultures, history and animals.

[Building Big.](#)  Explore construction by type of structure, try labs and challenges, read biographical sketches of people working in a variety of engineering careers, and even nominate local structures. Based on David Macaulay's BUILDING BIG.


[Burlington Public Library for Kids and Tots](#)  Canadian children's literature emphasis with book reviews, lists, awards, plus games and homework help.

[The Caldecott Medal Home Page.](#)  Read about the award books and their illustrators in the Official site. This medal is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.


[Caleb Johnson's Mayflower Web Pages.](#)  **This site is the merging of two fields: genealogy and history. It includes detailed** information on history, passengers, and documents of the Mayflower. Also contains pictures and bibliographies.


[California's Untold Stories Gold Rush.](#)  Presented by the Oakland Museum of California, this site offers an interactive learning experience for elementary level

children through adults to experience and educate themselves about this important period in American history.


[Cartoonster.](#)  This site is a site worth visiting if you are interested in learning about the basics of cartoon animation. Created by a teenager, there are simple tutorials that help you understand the concepts of frame by frame animation.


Thirteen more sites geared primarily toward middle school students.


[Chetro Keti Great Kiva, Southwestern United States Project.](#)  This site presents a 3-D reconstruction of a Great Kiva, an architectural feature found in many prehistoric Anasazi communities in the Southwestern United States.


[Children's Literature Web Guide](#)  A collection of Internet sites which are related to books pertaining to resources for Children and Young Adults. Useful for students, professionals, parents and teachers.


[The Children's Museum of Indianapolis Kids Games \(Grades 6-8\)](#)  Provides games and activities for grades 6-8.


[Children's Literature Web Guide: Authors](#)  Information about children's authors and illustrators, and their books.


[Chinook.](#)  Computer generated Checkers. "A long-term objective of solving the game of checkers, i.e. determining the game-theoretic value of checkers." This is a very tough game.

[CIA World Factbook.](#)  Extensive data, maps, and flags of all the countries in the world. Current Web edition is 2003.

[Civil War Women.](#)  Opportunities to read diaries, documents, and letters revealing women's lives and experiences during the Civil War. Includes links to great historical photos.


[CivilWar@Smithsonian](#)  This site provides information about many aspects of the American Civil War based upon artifacts from the Smithsonian's collections. Clicking on the dotted square icon at the top of each subject area page allows access to images of selected items along with insights into the featured documents, photos, and artifacts of the era.


[The Classical Music Archives.](#)  Listen to classical music right on the Web in different midi levels. Includes Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, Handel, Haydn, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Scarlatti, and Schubert.

[Beverly Cleary](#)  Learn all about this author and the many characters from her books. Then take a quiz to see how well you know them!

[CNN Interactive.](#)  News from CNN organized in a clear, crisp fashion with

coverage in a wide number of areas.

[Colonial Williamsburg.](#)  Visit Colonial Williamsburg and see life in a Virginia colony of 250 years ago. Includes a large educational section on Colonial America.

[Comic Zone.](#)  Your very own newspaper comics section! Includes Dilbert, For Better or For Worse, Peanuts, Rose is Rose, and a lot more.

Sharing Success

Please click on the link to access research information.

[Co-Teaching / Teacher Collaboration \(K-12\)](#)

Please [click here](#) to access research information.

- **Beat the Hiring Frenzy [K-12]**
- **Effective Practices in Community Service [K-12]**
- **Success for New Teachers [K-12]**
- **Guidelines for Time Traveling to School [K-12]**

If you are having problems accessing this web page, cut and paste the following link to your browser:

<http://www.sharingsuccess.org/code/esweekly/2007/esweekly98b.htm>

NCTE Inbox

News

Online Anti-Plagiarism Service Sets Off Court Fight. While educators worry about plagiarism, some students are suing [Turnitin.com](#), a digital assessment service that scans papers for signs of plagiarism. The students say the service violates their rights by keeping their papers in its online archive. NCTE members Mary Christel and Keith Klein are quoted. [Education Week, May 4, 2007](#)

Sparta Teacher Fights Plague. Laura Hennessey DeSena, NCTE member and author of [Preventing Plagiarism: Tips and Techniques](#) (NCTE 2007), says that rather than being plagiarism detectives, teachers can design assignments that teach students how to research without plagiarizing. [Sparta Independent, May 10, 2007](#)

Journalism Advocates Decry Teacher's Ouster over Student's Article. Journalism teacher Amy Sorrell is on paid leave from her classroom and her journalism class at Woodlan Jr./Sr. High School in Woodburn, Indiana, because she failed to alert the principal about an opinion piece on gay rights in the school's newspaper, which she advises. 2002 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award Winner Mark Goodman is quoted. [USA Today, May 8, 2007](#)

New Figures Show High Dropout Rate; Federal Officials Say Problem Is Worst for Urban Schools, Minority Males, In 2003, only 70% of students nationwide earned their high school diplomas in four years. A new national online database will track student graduation rates across the nation. [Washington Post, May 10, 2007](#)

Why Educators Quit: Lack of Support, Too Much Paperwork. California State University's study "[A Possible Dream: Retaining California Teachers So All Students Can Learn](#)" examines the teacher shortage in the state, looks at why teachers are leaving, and discusses how to keep teachers in the classroom. [San Francisco Chronicle, April 26, 2007](#)

Ideas

Addressing Plagiarism Before It Happens. Highlighted in the [Sparta Independent article](#) in the News section above, the best way to address plagiarism is before it happens. These NCTE resources provide teacher-tested practices to guide students to successful research strategies that avoid plagiarism:

- [Research Building Blocks lesson plans](#) from ReadWriteThink (E)
- [Exploring Plagiarism, Copyright, and Paraphrasing](#) from ReadWriteThink (M)
- "[Spinning Straw into Gold: Transforming Information into Knowledge during Web-Based Research](#)" (S) from *English Journal*
- "[Beyond 'Gotcha!': Situating Plagiarism in Policy and Pedagogy](#)" (C) from *College Composition and Communication*
- "[Plagiarism in the Information Age](#)" (TE), August 2005 issue of *English Leadership Quarterly*

The Right Kind of Grammar Instruction. The *Sun-Sentinel* article "[FCAT Writing Scores Show Many Students Struggle with Grammar](#)" in the News section above implies teaching grammar for the test is the wrong way. What is the *right* way to help students understand the rich structures underlying language use? These resources explore ways to focus on grammar instruction in the context of meaningful literacy activities.

As mentioned in the *Sun-Sentinel* article, mini-lessons are an effective way to focus on

grammar in context. The ReadWriteThink lesson [Choosing Clear and Varied Dialogue Tags: A Mini-Lesson](#) (E) asks students to identify dialogue tags in stories, collaboratively revise a passage, and then apply the structure to stories that they have written. [Sentence Quest: Using Parts of Speech to Write Descriptive Sentences](#) (E), also from ReadWriteThink, outlines another option for exploring words in action in the elementary classroom.

[Cooking Up Descriptive Language: Designing Restaurant Menus](#) (M), from ReadWriteThink, invites students to explore parts of speech and the ways they work in the context of a writing activity. The ReadWriteThink lesson [Every Punctuation Mark Matters: A Mini-Lesson on Semicolons](#) (M-S) provides a strategy for teaching the semicolon to demonstrate to students that grammatical choices create style in writing.

With secondary students, begin a discussion of the grammatical choices writers make with the ReadWriteThink lesson [Choosing the Best Verb: An Active and Passive Voice Mini-Lesson](#) (S), which asks students to explore verb choice in a variety of online resources then draw conclusions they can apply to their own writing. Make grammar both the content and context of your classroom activities with the *English Journal* article "[Analyzing Grammar Rants: An Alternative to Traditional Grammar Instruction](#)" (S-C).

Check out the *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* article "[Why Our Students Need Instruction in Grammar, and How We Should Go about It](#)" (C) for a research-based theoretical underpinning for effective grammar instruction as well as several specific strategies -- based on experience and research -- for addressing grammar productively.

Teacher educators can use the journaling technique demonstrated in the NCTE book [Engaging Grammar: Practical Advice for Real Classrooms](#), which focuses on how to move beyond fixing surface errors to teaching how grammar can be used as the building blocks of sentences to create meaning. The book's [sample chapter](#) chronicles how co-author Tom Oliva, an experienced teacher inexperienced in teaching grammar, applies how the concepts in this book can work in a real classroom.

For even more resources on grammar in the writing classroom, take a look at the [Grammar Teaching Resource Collection](#) (G), which includes additional articles and links to NCTE position statements on grammar instruction.

Plan Now for Summer Reading. May is [Get Caught Reading Month](#) (G), and it's time to start making your plans to encourage students to keep reading once classes are over. Try these resources to get your students involved in independent reading all summer long. Check out the [Summer Reading Calendar Entry](#) (G) from ReadWriteThink for links to helpful web resources and printable resources to share with families.

Introduce book clubs to your students now with the ReadWriteThink lesson plan [Book Clubs: Reading for Fun](#) (E) -- then encourage your students to meet and read during the summer months. The *English Journal* article "[Reading Adolescents: Book Clubs for YA](#)

[Readers](#)" (S-TE) examines what happened when college students enrolled in an adolescent literature class met young readers encountering young adult literature in a book club setting. For another take on book clubs with older students, check out "[Watch Out, Oprah! A Book Club Assignment for Literature Courses](#)" (C) from *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. If face-to-face meetings aren't possible, suggest online discussion of the books students read.

To structure independent reading and support summer reading, have students complete a reading plan, a simple wish list of books they hope to read in the future. The ReadWriteThink lesson [Developing Reading Plans to Support Independent Reading](#) (M) invites students to reflect on the texts that they have read and then compile lists of books they want to read next.

Catch students' interest with collections such as "Beach Books" and "What I Read Last Summer: Great Suspense Novels." During your last weeks of school, promote summer reading by inviting students to create brochures and flyers that suggest books and genres to explore during the summer months with the ReadWriteThink lesson [Authentic Persuasive Writing to Promote Real Summer Reading](#) (S).

In the News

Eye on Curriculum

Study: Most students not well-served by college-prep courses. Only one in four high school students enrolled in a college-preparatory curriculum -- four years of English and three each of mathematics, science and social studies -- are well prepared for college, according to an [ACT study](#) of 1.2 million 2006 graduates. [The New York Times](#) (5/16), [The Detroit News](#) (5/16)

Spelling bees hot, but teaching spelling not. Despite the popularity of spelling bees, computer spell checks and standardized tests are degrading the teaching of spelling, experts say. "Do we want to teach our children to be lazy, or do we want to teach them that spelling matters?" asked first-grade teacher Sue Ann Gleason. [The Washington Post](#) (5/14)

Model middle school focuses on social, emotional development. As educators across the country struggle with middle-school achievement slumps, one New York school has emerged as a nationally recognized model of a school that gets it right. Briarcliff Middle School focuses on adolescents' social and emotional development and is rewarded with high academic achievement. [The New York Times](#) (5/12)

Texas seniors fail exit exam in record numbers. A record 40,000 Texas seniors -- including one in four black and Hispanics -- won't earn a high school diploma this month, after failing to pass all sections of the Texas exit exam, according to state data released Friday. The Texas legislature is considering replacing the graduation test with end-of-course exams, but such a move would take several years. [The Dallas Morning News](#) (5/12), [Houston Chronicle](#) (5/12)

- **California graduation rate takes a tumble:** California's high school graduation rate dropped to 67% -- a 10-year low -- in 2006, but not as low as a UCLA researcher had predicted. Some 21,000 fewer students graduated, a development that coincides with California's implementation of an exit exam as a requisite for graduation. [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (5/12)

Low graduation rates prompt action. Differing state definitions of graduation rates make national comparisons and research difficult, so Education Week has launched a [new tool](#) to more accurately assess graduation rates. Concern over increasing dropout rates has prompted the introduction of federal legislation, inspired MTV documentaries and been the impetus for some small Canadian towns to hold rodeos. [Education Week \(free to SmartBrief subscribers\)](#) (5/8), [The Washington Post](#) (5/10), [The Christian Science Monitor](#) (5/9), [The Globe and Mail \(Toronto\)/Canadian Press](#) (5/8)

Stressing the basics bores advanced readers. Zeroing in on the basics is helping low-income Portland elementary students learn to read, but parents whose children already read well wonder what their children are supposed to learn from repetitive phonics drills. [The Oregonian \(Portland\)](#) (5/10)

Children of immigrants increasingly study their parents' language. The children or grandchildren of immigrants are increasingly showing an interest in learning their family's native language. Even as nationwide foreign language study at the college level has decreased, these "heritage speakers" are now increasing demand for certain language classes. [The New York Times](#) (5/7)

Learning and Teaching

Math teachers let needs, not textbooks, drive class. Setting aside seven-year-old textbooks, some Texas teachers recently switched to an online math curriculum to get a better read on what students know and what needs to be targeted in terms of classroom instruction. "A big push is to get away from instruction being textbook-driven to needs-driven," said Joy H. Philpott, San Marcos High School academic dean. [Education Week \(free to SmartBrief subscribers\)](#) (5/8)

Teachers venture carefully into MySpace. Some teachers are cautiously beginning to use MySpace to issue class bulletins, connect with students or centralize course information; however, educators are being careful about what they post on their personal pages, knowing

that teachers are often held to a higher standard than are other professionals. [The News Journal \(Del.\)](#) (5/10)

Professional Leadership

"Highly qualified" teacher rule disappoints many. A looming NCLB deadline requiring most teachers be "highly qualified" holds little weight, as the law has failed to impel states to impose higher and more commonsense standards in terms of teacher licensing, critics say. [Education Week \(free to SmartBrief subscribers\)](#) (5/14)

Nevada principal bucks bureaucracy to improve her school. Theresa Douglass isn't waiting for politicians or bureaucrats to decide how to improve education: The 35-year veteran principal figured out how to lengthen the school day by nearly an hour, introduced special academies and increased teachers' professional development without costing her district any more money. "I seize every opportunity," Douglass said. "I hope -- no, I know -- this is going to increase student achievement." [Las Vegas Sun](#) (5/4)

Technology Solutions

Wireless calculators identify struggling math students. A new [Texas Instruments](#) calculator sends wireless signals from pupils' handheld calculators to a desktop PC that lets teachers analyze and correct student errors before they fall behind. The TI-Navigator system lets instructors "get answers from every student, not just the vocal ones," according to the Texas Instruments Web site. [USA TODAY/Reuters](#) (5/15)

Opinion: Student laptops are a teaching opportunity, not a challenge. As more professors and teachers ban student laptops from their classrooms, education expert Justin Reich believes it is better for teachers to adapt their methods than to keep students from accessing technology. [The Christian Science Monitor](#) (5/15)

Internet opens world of information to Chinese students. Emboldened by the Internet, Chinese teens are breaking centuries of tradition to question teachers and express their own opinions in class. "We have far more ways to get information," said Beijing high school student Tony Hu. "The generation before us knew nothing about anything except studying." [The Christian Science Monitor](#) (5/14)

Ruling: NYC schools may legally ban cellphones. A New York City rule prohibiting students from bringing cellphones into public schools is constitutional, a New York Supreme Court justice ruled this week. Some parents sought to overturn the ban, but the justice said in a 50-page decision that the rule was a reasonable way to prevent students from using cellphones in school; the parents' attorney said they are considering an appeal. [The New York Times](#) (5/8)

Policy Watch

Educator appeals free-speech case to U.S. Supreme Court. After a federal appeals court ruled in January that teachers essentially surrender their free speech rights to their employers in exchange for a salary, Indiana educator Deborah Mayer asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the ruling. Mayer told an elementary student who asked her whether she would participate in a peace rally that she would "honk for peace." She lost her job soon after making that comment. [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (5/14)

Students with disabilities must pass exit exam, board rules. Students with disabilities must pass California's high school exit exam beginning in 2008 to receive a high school diploma, the state board of education decided unanimously on Thursday, rejecting alternatives for students with special needs. "We were hopeful that they would take their responsibility seriously, but it looks like in the end the Board of Education decided to abandon special ed students," said Roger Heller, an attorney for Disability Rights Advocates, which sued the state on behalf of students in special education in 2001. [San Francisco Chronicle/Associated Press](#) (5/10), [The Sacramento Bee \(Calif.\)](#) (free registration) (5/10)

Report: Four Reading First officials pocketed significant sums. Four Reading First officials pocketed significant sums from textbook publishers, according to a Democratic congressional report released Wednesday. All four officials denied wrongdoing and vigorously disputed the report's findings. The Education Department is reviewing the report's findings, a top aide at the department said. [The Washington Post](#) (5/10), [Education Week \(free to SmartBrief subscribers\)](#) (5/9)

New York school allegedly tampered with state exit exams. Long Island's Uniondale school district is under investigation for alleged test fraud, including tampering with exams required for graduation, state and local officials said. School officials expressed anguish

about the situation; state officials said students would not be affected unless they were found culpable as well. [Newsday \(Long Island, N.Y.\)](#) (4/28)

NCLB

California teachers announce opposition to NCLB testing. Teachers throughout California are taking issue with the NCLB requirement that every student score at grade level by 2014, calling for graduation rates and attendance to be used alongside test scores when judging schools. The emphasis on testing has taken the joy out of learning and teaching, teachers said at news conferences this week. [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (5/10)

NCLB science tests worry some educators. For five years, U.S. elementary and middle schools' fate hinged on reading and math, which often left educators zealously stressing those subjects while time for others was greatly reduced. Now, with science tests being phased in during the 2007-08 school year, some educators fear those choices will come back to haunt them. [The Washington Post](#) (5/6)

"No Child" Law Gets Mixed Marks from Educators. Iowans note the good and the bad of the No Child Left Behind law. [Des Moines Register, May 13, 2007](#)

In the Field

Bullied Australian student awarded \$833,000. An Australian teenager whose life has "all but been destroyed" by bullying was awarded about \$833,000. School authorities "grossly failed" to protect him from repeated assaults, bullying and harassment by an older, disturbed student who throttled him until he lost consciousness and knocked out a tooth, the court said. [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) (5/15)

Study: Child abuse, neglect peaked as troops deployed to Iraq. Incidents of child abuse in military families rose during the initial wave of deployments of U.S. military personnel to Iraq, according to a study published in the May 15 issue of American Journal of Epidemiology. Reports of emotional, physical and sexual abuse and child neglect jumped from 5 in 1,000 children to 10 in 1,000. An Army spokesman said more support for families of deployed soldiers in place now than there was during the period covered by the study. [USA TODAY](#) (5/7)

Parents say questions and input often ignored. As schools nationwide call for more parent involvement, some parents are angry that they seem to get few answers about what happens in school and even less say in school decisions to dismiss popular teachers. School officials say privacy laws and potential lawsuits often limit what they can tell parents. [The Washington Post](#) (5/7)

Georgia anti-obesity class a big hit among students, educators. The success of a Georgia anti-obesity class introduced in 2005 has drawn some 200 students hoping to lose weight or increase strength, but now the "We Can!" program is garnering national attention from educators who are considering the program in their own schools. [Journal and Constitution \(Atlanta\)](#) (free registration) (5/4)

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts."

--[Daniel Patrick Moynihan](#),
former U.S. senator