



On Target

AFT Local #2569

October 2019



Clarence Teachers Make the Difference

Board strips Little Rock teachers' union bargaining power

By ANDREW DeMILLO October 10, 2019

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — The Arkansas Board of Education on Thursday stripped the collective bargaining power of the Little Rock teachers' union, sparking fears of a strike even as the panel backed off a plan that critics said would be a return to a racially divided system 62 years after the integration of Central High School.

A packed auditorium chanted “shame” at the board as it adjourned after abruptly passing a proposal to no longer recognize the Little Rock Education Association as the district's bargaining agent when the union's contract expires Oct. 31. The move came shortly after the panel voted to return local control of Little Rock's schools to a board that will be elected in November 2020.

The 23,000-student district has been under state control since January 2015, when it was taken over because of low test scores at several schools.

The head of the teachers' union said its membership will likely meet next week to discuss the next moves and didn't rule out the possibility of a strike. Little Rock's schools are out on Friday.

“I'm disappointed with the decisions they made today,” Little Rock Education Association President Teresa Knapp Gordon said after the votes. “They demonstrated their incompetence and they showed that they have not listened to the voices of the people who have told them over and over what they want.”

The new plan for the district's future control scraps categories the board approved last month, which would have put several predominantly minority schools under “different leadership” than the local board. Critics of the [state's plan](#) have compared it to the [1957 crisis](#) over Little Rock Central's integration, arguing that it effectively creates two school districts with several majority-minority schools still under some form of state control. Scores of people gathered Wednesday night at Central High for a vigil urging the state to return the full district to local control.

Many details remain unclear, as with the previous plan. The new proposal calls for a memorandum of understanding on the state's role in the schools.

“I don't think we're going to be able to accomplish the goals that we want, the goals we want to for students, under (the previous) framework,” said Chad Pekron, who proposed the new plan. “Therefore, I think the best thing we need to do under the

circumstances is return the district to unified, local control under a framework of significant and agreed-upon levels for state support for the schools that really need it.

Local control supporters said the union move undermines the effort to give Little Rock residents a say in their schools.

“Let candidates run on it and let the people have a say,” Ali Noland, a parent in the district, said after the vote.

Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott, the city’s first popularly elected black mayor, on Monday urged the state to return the district to local control and said any major decisions, including those pertaining to the union, should be left to the board elected next year. Scott proposed putting the district under a board appointed by the city and state from January until the new school board is elected in November 2020.

Little Rock is the only district in the state that has a collective bargaining agreement with a teachers’ union, and the association says 70 percent of teachers are members. Gov. Asa Hutchinson had not said whether he supported the push to no longer recognize the union, but the proposal came from a former adviser to the Republican governor. Hutchinson has appointed eight of the board’s nine members. Supporters of ending the union’s recognition have said more teachers will be represented by the district setting up a personnel policies committee made up of teachers that would officer advice on salaries and other issues.

After the meeting, Hutchinson praised the board for making “tough” decisions.

“I’m confident the action to keep the LRSD unified will unite our efforts and balance the local support with state support,” he said in a statement. “This is an opportunity to partner with the district in a way that will continue state support along with the efforts of a locally elected school board, the private sector partners and the city.”

The board also voted to reinstate employee protections for teachers in the district it had [waived](#) in December.

Gordon said it was unclear whether the union’s members could strike or take any other action before the current contract expires. Little Rock Superintendent Michael Poore this week warned teachers that any work stoppage or misuse of sick leave could result in their firing.

Follow Andrew DeMillo on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ademillo

October 15, 2019

Ransomware attacks on the rise

Author: Kara Smith Source: NYSUT Communications



It cost the Syracuse City School District \$50,000. Rockville Centre schools shelled out \$80,000. Monroe-Woodbury, Orange County's largest district, was forced to cancel its first day of classes.

Ransomware attacks are on the rise. And school districts are prime targets, due to the rich trove of personal information they house, and budget constraints that can hamper their ability to fend off digital intruders.

This year alone, hackers victimized at least four New York State school districts.

Syracuse City schools still haven't fully recovered from a July ransomware attack. Although restoring payroll was a priority, members who attended summer professional development workshops are still awaiting reimbursement due to system lags.

"We can only log into our employee self-service portal, to check paystubs, sick bank accruals and other information, while we're in the school building," said Bill Scott, president of the Syracuse Teachers Association. "Before we could access it from home."

The prevalence of ransomware attacks is making many school staffers ask themselves — what can we do to help keep our system safe?

Knowledge is power

One of the best defenses is knowing how ransomware attacks occur.

“It’s often a people problem rather than a tech problem,” said NYSUT’s Chief Information Officer Donna O’Leary, who heads the union’s Information Technology department.

A common cybercrime trick is visiting sites like LinkedIn, to identify organization leaders, and using their names to farm an entire organization. “They email staff pretending to be that person and try to get others to respond, a process called phishing,” she said noting that since the appeals come from a leader, and sound convincing, they sometimes are successful.

“By clicking on links or attachments in these messages a ‘back door’ can be opened that allows the attacker to place a ransomware on the local computer and beyond,” said O’Leary.

Once ransomware is installed, the software ties up the computer system forcing districts to either pay the ransom, or figure out how to recover their data using decryption keys. Since the ransom is often less than the fix, many victims choose to pay.

“Awareness is key when it comes to cybersecurity,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, whose office oversees the union’s IT department.

“If you get an email that sounds off, make a quick phone call to the sender to make sure it’s correct.”

You or your IT Department should also be vigilant about updating your computer’s software, Web browser and antivirus protection. And be wary of downloading information off the Web, opening unfamiliar attachments or clicking on certain advertisements.

“Just visiting certain websites can put your system at risk for a ransomware attack,” said O’Leary. “Nothing can replace vigilance.”

“These days, the question is not if — but when — an attack will occur,” said O’Leary.

At the federal level, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer recently announced his support for the DHS Cyber Hunt and Incident Response Teams Act, legislation that would create and fund specialized Department of Homeland Security teams to respond to, and prevent, ransomware attacks. The bill passed the House and Senate and awaits the president’s signature.

To learn more about protecting yourself, and your district, from ransomware attacks, visit the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/ransomware.

• Chicago Teachers' Strike

How did some CPS classrooms end up with more than 30 kids? Here's a breakdown of one of the central issues in the Chicago Teachers Union strike.

By KIM GEIGER

CHICAGO TRIBUNE |

OCT 25, 2019 | 8:01 PM



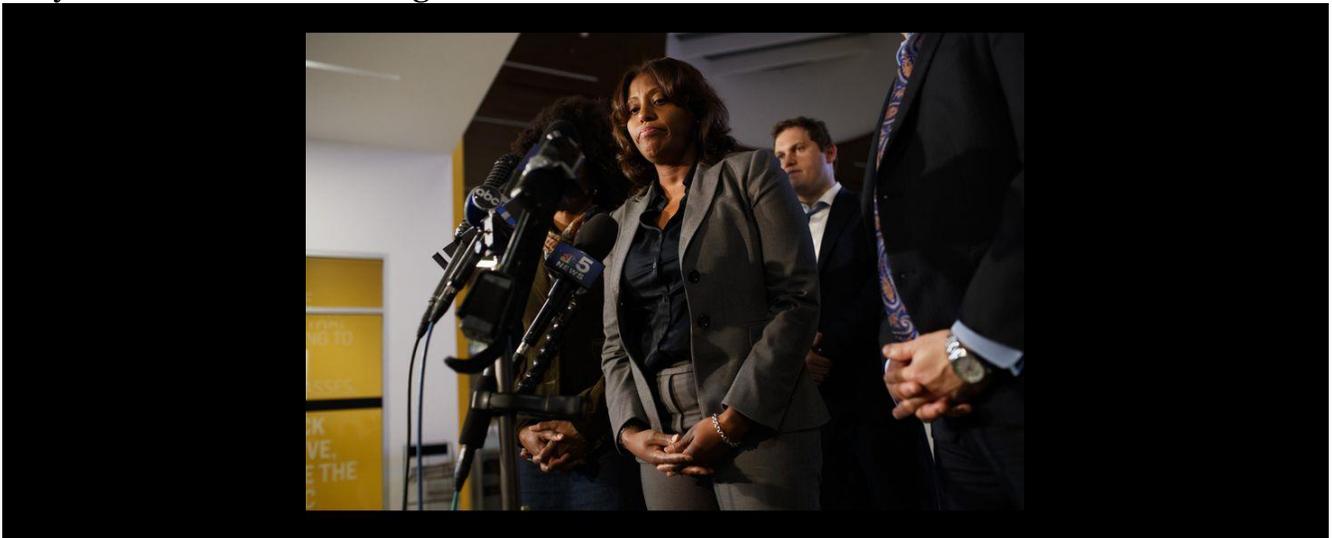
Teachers and supporters rally outside Simeon Career Academy in Chicago during the first day of a strike, on Oct. 17, 2019. A Tribune review of CPS data found there are 50 classes at Simeon with 37 students or more. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune)

Chicago Public Schools employs just over 21,000 teachers for a population of just under 300,000 kids at district-run schools, a ratio of about one teacher to every 14 students. So how did some schools end up with classrooms packed with 30, 35 or even 40 kids?

It's a question that's been swirling as the Chicago Teachers Union has put class sizes and staffing issues at the center of the teachers strike that's now on its second week. The union wants Mayor Lori Lightfoot to commit \$24 million to put teacher's assistants in crowded classrooms and it wants firm caps that would limit the number of kids in kindergarten classrooms to 20 and in primary classrooms to 24.

The union complains that current caps limiting class sizes to around 28 kids aren't enforceable and are routinely ignored. A union analysis of district data shows that enrollment exceeds the caps in roughly 1,300 elementary and more than 1,000 high school classes. The key to solving the problem, the union says, is to hire more teachers.

But what about all the teachers who are already employed by the district? Why can't they be shuffled around to give relief to the overcrowded classrooms?



Chicago Public Schools Chief Education Officer LaTanya McDade speaks with members of the press at Malcolm X College after bargaining stretched into the predawn hours on Oct. 29, 2019. (Armando L. Sanchez / Chicago Tribune)

Education policy experts say that simply dividing the number of students in a district by the number of teachers paints a misleading picture of a district's resources. That's because not all teachers are directly responsible for a class of students.

An elementary-level arts teacher, for example, may visit several classrooms in a single day, rather than being responsible for a distinct group of kids. And most staffing decisions aren't made by the district, which has decentralized its authority so that principals at individual schools can make decisions to fit the unique needs of their schools.

Getting a clear and accurate picture of overcrowded classes, where they're located and who is affected by them is such a challenge that lawmakers in Springfield passed a law earlier this year that will require all Illinois school districts to collect and publish class size data in the first two months of each school year.

Until **that law** takes effect in 2021, the class size information that's readily available to parents is merely a schoolwide average on each school's report card. The report cards don't provide a teacher count or class sizes for individual classes. And the schoolwide average can be misleading.

Take Simeon Career Academy in Chatham, for example. The school's **report card** lists the average class size as 29. But a Tribune review of CPS data found that there are also 50 classes at Simeon with 37 students or more.

While CPS has been reluctant to publicize the overcrowding issue, district officials acknowledge that there is a problem. Both the district and the union say drastic underfunding is the culprit.

The district's budget of \$6 billion is about \$2 billion shy of what it would need to reach "adequacy," according to the Illinois State Board of Education. The state's "adequacy" standard includes measures like capping class sizes at 15 or 20 students at schools with low-income populations. Three-quarters of the students at CPS are considered low-income.

And at CPS, dollars are distributed based on the number of kids in each school. That creates a financial incentive for schools to pack students into classes and makes it difficult for schools with declining enrollment to hire more teachers.

Those factors have combined to create an uneven distribution of resources where the kids who are most in need of more attention from teachers are often most likely to be in a crowded class. But even advocates of smaller class sizes say putting firm caps on classes won't solve the problem if the money isn't there.

"One of the issues with having hard caps is that if your system overall is underfunded, as soon as you set requirements in one area, then other stuff gets cut," said Cassie Creswell, whose advocacy group, Illinois Families for Public Schools, has pushed for better state funding of schools. "If you snapped your fingers and put class caps in place, the overall system is so underfunded still, you'd end up just pushing around the

dollars that you have. So you'd end up with people cutting arts or libraries. Some things (would) improve but other things won't."

Overcrowded classes typically fall into one of three categories. There are the neighborhood schools that cannot physically accommodate the number of students who've enrolled. These schools may have the money they'd need to hire additional teachers, but no classrooms to house additional classes. And there are the selective enrollment schools where principals have decided that having more students — and the dollars that come with them — is better for the school than keeping class sizes down. In both cases, the crowding is seen as a sign that parents value the quality of the schools enough to tolerate larger class sizes.

A CPS official told the Tribune that the district wants to focus its efforts on a third type of school: The under-enrolled neighborhood school where student-based budgeting has caused a downward financial spiral. As kids have left these schools, the schools have lost dollars, hurting their ability to attract new students. It's at these schools where principals struggle to balance resources. For example, splitting a kindergarten class of 35 into two wouldn't generate any new dollars from the district or the state, but it would require hiring a new teacher.

A committee of district and union officials exists to monitor class size issues and intervene when needed, but there's not enough money to hire new teachers or place teacher's assistants in all the overcrowded classes.

That's why the union and the district are pushing for targeted interventions at the neediest schools first. That's the right approach, said Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, director of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University.

"That's where I would put the marginal dollar," Schanzenbach told the Tribune.

"We know that class size matters more for disadvantaged children ... That doesn't mean that class size doesn't matter at (the other) schools. It just means that for most bang for the buck, you'd be better off investing in that (under-enrolled) school."

kgeiger@chicagotribune.com

• Message from the President

10/20/2019

'Kitchen Table' Democracy

by Randi Weingarten

President, American Federation of Teachers

Not since the Great Depression has the connection between “kitchen table” issues and democracy been more pronounced. For most Americans today, the current economic policies have led to declining wages; skyrocketing healthcare, college and living costs; and a fear that our children will be worse off than we are. Forty percent of adults say they aren't able to cover an unexpected \$400 expense. Meanwhile, the 400 richest Americans—the top 0.00025 percent of the population—now own more of the country's wealth than the bottom 60 percent of Americans—America's working class. And these wealthiest Americans now pay a lower total tax rate than any other income group. Such extreme inequality is anathema to our values and incompatible with democracy.



This inequity shows up in our classrooms big-time, which is why Chicago teachers and support personnel (members of the Chicago Teachers Union and the Service Employees International Union, Local 73) are striking to secure the personnel, resources and conditions their students need to flourish as individuals and as citizens. No teacher wants to go on strike, but the signs on the picket line make it clear why educators there are taking this action. One student's homemade sign said that his class of 40 students is just too big. Teachers held signs saying that their school hasn't had a counselor for 600 days or a librarian for more than 1,000 days.

Majority rule is foundational to democracy, but that principle has been upended in the United States. We have a president who received 3 million fewer votes than his opponent and who stonewalls any attempts by Congress—a coequal partner in government—to play the role the Constitution envisioned. Many state and local officials try to maintain minority rule by rigging elections through voter suppression and extreme partisan and racial gerrymandering. Since 2010, 25 states have put new voting restrictions in place. And, as journalist Dylan Matthews notes, the Supreme Court is “dismantling one party’s political economic base and helping preserve, even strengthen, the other party’s anti-majoritarian hold on power.”

With a diminishing middle class and a smaller labor movement, the political preferences of the economic elite take precedence over those of other Americans. Revitalizing America’s middle class requires restoring that basic social compact that if you work hard, you and your family will be OK. That means, in this period of globalization, increasing inequity, divisiveness and great technological change, we do things that level the playing field—like investing in public education and postsecondary opportunities that don’t require crushing student debt; protecting the freedom to form and join unions and the right to vote; lifting the minimum wage; and ensuring that paying for healthcare and child care, or retiring, are not pauperizing decisions.

How do we achieve this, with a ruling minority that resists it? While many of these issues are now front and center as we approach the 2020 election, the fact remains that only “we the people” can save our democracy. And that requires us to be engaged and not sit on the sidelines. None of us can do this alone, which is why it is so hopeful that today’s grass-roots movements are thriving and mobilizing—movements like the March for Our Lives, Black Lives Matter, Me Too, Indivisible, United We Dream, and If Not Now, as well as the activism seen from teachers and other workers.

We saw this on the picket lines last week in Chicago. Educators want what their students need, and students and parents are supporting them. They are asking Mayor Lori Lightfoot to make her campaign promises for equity real by translating them into schools with nurses, school counselors and social workers; class size caps; and the pathways and time needed to recruit, retain, prepare, diversify and support the educators Chicago’s students need and deserve. Striking educators are fighting to make schools safe and welcoming in a world that is increasingly full of trauma. They’re asking for wraparound services that

focus on social and emotional learning, and for nurses in schools every day—because kids don't decide what day they may get hurt or have an asthma attack.

What's happening in Chicago is just one example of why it's so important for educators and others to have a voice at work and in our democracy. Individuals need the means to achieve a better life and a better future. In a democracy, that happens through our economic and political systems. And because most Americans have so little individual voice now, our economy has become inequitable and our political system so toxic that we are perilously close to losing the checks and balances and rights embedded in our Constitution.

I'll return to where I started, with the Great Depression. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal served dual vital purposes: It lifted the country out of an economic abyss. And, just as important, it prevented a nation riven by economic anxiety and resentments from looking toward authoritarian rule. "True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence," Roosevelt said. "People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made."

Today we have a far different president in the White House than Roosevelt, one who shows more and more signs of maintaining power by any means. But as we are increasingly absorbed by the focus on impeachment and on the 2020 election, let's remember that it falls to us to defend democracy and to demand that its benefits extend to all.

Editor's Note

Each month the On Target will come out near the end of the month.

If you have something that you would like included, please send as a Word document by the 20th of the month to: lpunek@clarenceschools.org

Items that could be included are: Articles dealing with education/unions, Good ideas for teaching, something humorous/light dealing with education, Information for sharing, Opinion pieces on education, Advertisement for a service you provide.

Thank you,
Lisa Panek

AFT President Randi Weingarten on Supreme Court's Bostock v. Clayton County

For Release: Tuesday, October 8, 2019

Contact: Elena Temple 202-662-4801 etemple@aft.org <http://www.aft.org>

WASHINGTON—Statement of American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten as the Supreme Court begins hearing oral arguments in the *Bostock v. Clayton County* case:

"In the face of an administration that has relentlessly sowed hate, fear and division, America finds itself at a crossroads. Will we succumb to bigotry and cruelty, or will we choose to value diversity, tolerance, human dignity and equal rights?"

"Today, as the court hears the first arguments in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, it considers whether or not LGBTQ people are protected from discrimination at work, and if they can be fired simply for who they are and who they love. It is a moment that tests our democracy's allegiance to equality and whether we will uphold that constitutional commitment, or succumb to the abridgment of human rights in the shadow of President's Trump's ideological stacking of the Supreme Court.

"As the first union to publicly support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, the AFT's educators, healthcare professionals and public employees have fought for and cheered the civil rights victories over time that have enabled marriage equality, first based on race and then on sexuality, as well as many of the other protections now enshrined in law.

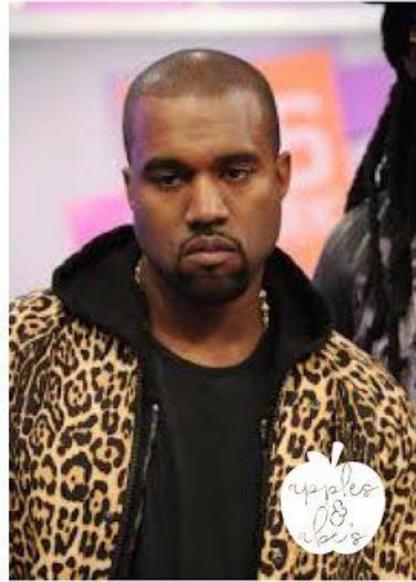
"We continue to stand against injustice and are proud that we have filed an amicus brief with the court in support of workers' rights. We hope the Supreme Court, no matter how divided it was during the argument, honors our country's commitment to all people's freedoms and rights, regardless of sexuality."

• The Lighter Side

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF TEACHERS
WHEN HALLOWEEN FALLS ON A
SCHOOL DAY.

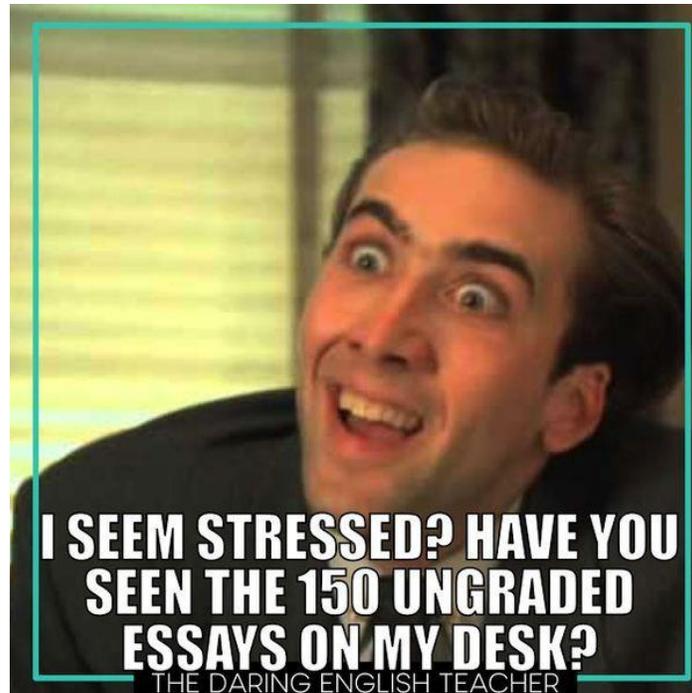


OR



I LOVE
HALLOWEEN!

NOPE.



OPINION

It's Time to End Timed Tests

—Getty

Why do we believe that speed reflects intelligence?

By Alden S. Blodget

September 30, 2019

The outrage this year over the attempts of the rich and infamous to rig the college admissions process in favor of their children has focused new attention on an old issue: purchasing a diagnosis to qualify for extended time on standardized tests. During my 18 years as an assistant head of school, from the late '80s to the early 2000s, the increasing number of students with psychologists' recommendations for extended time made me suspicious. While students with real learning difficulties are legally entitled to a number of "reasonable accommodations," others seemed solely interested in being allowed more time on tests—tests given by classroom teachers and, especially, the SAT and ACT.

A few conversations with a psychologist who offered families this diagnostic service confirmed my suspicions that not all of these diagnoses were legitimate. He explained the complexity and inexact science of arriving at a diagnosis and spoke of the pressure from parents whose goal was to obtain the recommendation for extended time. He recounted instances when he resisted the pressure, so the parents procured the recommendation from someone else.

"Our emphasis on speed in school is antithetical to stimulating meaningful learning."

I began to wonder about the system itself. Why do we bother with timed tests? Why do we believe that speed reflects intelligence? As teachers, we see all sorts of students who work at different speeds, which produce both intelligent and not-so-intelligent results.

I taught English, so my tests tended to require essays or short paragraphs. Annie always aced them. Ideas seemed to just flow from her pen as she hunched over her paper. She usually finished early. Bill also wrote quickly, but he was trying to list all his thoughts before he actually started organizing and writing his responses to the essay

questions. At the bell, he was often rushing to finish. Sally was slow. She tapped her pen on her palm and stared into space, thinking about what she wanted to say, searching for that first sentence that was always so important to get her launched. She produced wonderful essays written outside the classroom, but her results on timed tests were poor.

Circumstances play a significant role in performance. Harvard University researchers Kurt Fischer and Thomas R. Bidell noted in a **2006 paper**, "Children (and adults) show distinct levels of competence under different conditions." Their research suggests that learning involves a process of building, regressing, and rebuilding neural skills. Rather than memorizing facts and procedures, learning math requires that we build webs of interrelated skills for math. Understanding the Civil War means building a conceptual understanding of the Civil War. At first, these skills for thinking are fragile, requiring nurturing conditions of high support.

Typically, in less supportive circumstances (anxiety over a high-stakes test, being asked to tackle an unfamiliar problem), the skill collapses (regresses) and must be rebuilt. Regression actually plays an essential role in learning. Rebuilding these networks results in increasing stability. Our obsession with speed ignores the reality of learning.

Speed is less a sign of intelligence than a sign of the automaticity that many experts evince, and it seems nuts to expect young learners to be experts, let alone experts in the many different fields they are required to study in school: expert mathematicians, historians, scientists, writers, readers, linguists, artists. Experts have developed deep knowledge, understanding, and experience that can allow at least some of them to function quickly and intuitively, usually in a particular field and under certain circumstances. Why would we expect students to have developed this sort of intuitive ability?

Neuroscientists Mary Helen Immordino-Yang and Matthias Faeth explore the **development of "skilled intuition"** in young learners—the integration of "emotional with cognitive knowledge." They write, that while "students may be slower to build the full representation of the material, without the development of sound intuitions undergirding their representations, it is likely that the students will not remember the material in the long-term, and that even if they remember it in an abstract sense, they will have difficulty applying it to novel situations."

Many tests ask students to do exactly this: quickly apply to new situations skills and understanding that they have just begun to develop. They simply aren't ready. Our emphasis on speed in school is antithetical to stimulating meaningful learning, the sort of learning that we claim is the goal of education.

As we ask students to approach a problem, we need to understand the many factors that can affect the speed with which they might solve it: How complex will this student find the problem? How much experience has that student had with problems like this one? What's his skill level? How methodical does she tend to be when working through problems? How likely is this problem to initiate the collapse of his fragile understanding of the concept being tested? What is her stress level? The answers, even if we could know them, will vary for each student.

Researchers have helped us understand that all brains are different. A normal brain or an average brain is a myth. Yet school practices continue to reflect the myth. Some vague notion of an average brain sets the expectations for the speed with which students "ought" to complete a task. The results—the failures, the mediocre performances, the frustration felt by both students and teachers—suggest there is a problem with this approach. As the stakes go up, as grades and scores determine who will gain entry into the "best" colleges, desperate people opt to cheat.

In my own classroom, I found a simple solution: extended time for everyone. The results were gratifying. Less stress eliminated one major cause of skill collapse. Students could work at their own speed—read questions carefully, organize their thoughts, start again, *think*. All students could move through tests at whatever pace was comfortable, and more students performed well. Most still finished within the time for which I had designed the test, but a few stayed an hour or more later (though, interestingly, not most of the students who qualified for extended time).

Extending the time for all seems a more productive approach to establishing equity. Perhaps it's time for the SAT and ACT to take this small step—at least until we finally align our approach to assessment with our growing understanding of learning and the brain.

Alden S. Blodget was a high school teacher and administrator for 50 years. He is currently a volunteer tutor at the LEAP for Education program in Salem, Mass.

Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators

If you or someone you know is suicidal, get help immediately via 911, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or the Crisis Text Line (text "HOME" to 741741).

Suicide is preventable. Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs. Do not be afraid to ask about suicidal thoughts. Never take warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret.

Risk Factors



- Hopelessness
- Non-suicidal self injury (e.g., cutting)
- Mental illness, especially severe depression, but also post traumatic stress, ADHD, and substance abuse
- History of suicidal thinking and behavior
- Prior suicide among peers or family members
- Interpersonal conflict, family stress/dysfunction
- Presence of a firearm in the home

Warning Signs



- Suicidal threats in the form of direct (e.g., "I want to die") and indirect (e.g. "I wish I could go to sleep and not wake up") statements
- Suicide notes, plans, online postings
- Making final arrangements
- Preoccupation with death
- Giving away prized possessions
- Talking about death
- Sudden unexplained happiness
- Increased risk taking
- Heavy drug/alcohol use

What to Do



- Remain calm, nonjudgmental and listen.
- Ask directly about suicide (e.g., "Are you thinking about suicide").
- Focus on your concern for their well-being
- Avoid being accusatory (e.g., don't say, "You aren't going to do anything stupid are you?").
- Reassure them that there is help; they will not feel like this forever.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- Remove means for self-harm, especially firearms.
- **Get help!** Never agree to keep suicidal thoughts a secret. Tell an appropriate caregiving adult. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to a school-employed mental health professional.

Reminders for Parents



After a school notifies a parent of their child's risk for suicide and provides referral information, parents must:

- **Continue to take threats seriously.** Follow through is important even after the child calms down or informs the parent "they didn't mean it."
- **Access school supports.** If parents are uncomfortable with following through on referrals, they can give the school psychologist permission to contact the referral agency, provide referral information, and follow up on the visit.
- **Maintain communication with school.** After an intervention, the school will also provide follow-up supports. Your communication will be crucial to ensuring that the school is the safest, most comfortable place possible for your child.

TOPIC: Life Outside School

16 Secrets to Spotting a Teacher in Public

It's easier than you think!



Love Teach on October 28, 2019



Teachers are great at spotting other teachers. We share certain physical and behavioral characteristics that, although imperceptible to most of the outside world, act as a sort of secret handshake when we're out in public.

Not a teacher? With careful training, you too can spot a teacher just by observing their appearance and mannerisms. Here's how.

1. They have a large bag.

In general, you won't see them with a bag that won't fit a laptop, lunch, and 100 three-page packets.

2. You'll see stray pen, dry-erase, or chalk marks on their arms and clothes.

As I write this I have pink highlighter on the underside of my forearm, which I've mistaken for a rash 700 times today.

3. Look for the dark circles under their eyes.

All those late nights and early mornings are not kind to the eyes.

4. They have an alarmingly large coffee mug.

It might be the biggest thermos you've ever seen. You could even mistake it for a vase.

5. They're wearing flat shoes.

They might not be the cutest shoes, but you can be sure that they're comfy.

6. They have a no-nonsense gait.

It's somewhere between a military march and an Olympian's jog. But everyone nearby takes them very seriously.

7. They're most likely mumbling to themselves.

These are often verbalized drafts of future emails.

8. If eyes could speak, theirs would say, "I fear nothing."

Except maybe red exclamation point emails five minutes before the bell rings on a Friday afternoon.

9. They are most likely still wearing their ID lanyard.

Often you will be able to hear them before you see them, with all the keys dangling everywhere.

10. Look for the school spirit shirt.

Especially on jeans day, the shirts with school logos will be everywhere!

11. You may see them randomly pull out a Smart Board pen.

It looks like a weird stylus to you, but for them, it's a way of life. They'll likely pull it out when signing a receipt and say, "I've been looking for this all day!"

12. Listen for the phrase, "Do you offer a **teacher discount?"**

If the response is affirmative, watch for fist pumping.

13. You will never hear the phrase, "Can I get that decaf?"

Perhaps in the summer. Otherwise, bring on the caffeine.

14. If there's a dollar section nearby, they'll be in it.

They know they shouldn't spend more money on their classroom, but they can't resist.

15. If you see them turn around quickly, they've probably just spotted a student or parent.

You might see them widen their eyes, shrink down, and start walking backward slowly. Do not approach them at this point. They are highly vulnerable.

16. But then they're also the first one there to help.

Teachers are natural organizers, helpers, and just kind humans. If you see someone randomly helping out in public, then there's a good chance that person is a teacher.