

RE[ad]SEARCH, Vol. 4

April 2, 2014

CBE and Province Watch

1. [CBE Budget Update](#)

[Media Release](#), March 20.

"The CBE still faces an estimated funding gap of \$27 million and a decline in per-student funding. This is a challenging situation and the CBE will still need to make difficult decisions."

[Budget Backgrounder](#), March 27.

"Per student funding has declined by 3% over four years."

2. [CBE Trustees' Newsletter, March](#)

"The CBE has reached a point where we will have to make difficult decisions until more new schools spaces become available. The CBE will need to consider a range of options such as:

- capping alternative programs;
- increasing the use of lotteries to determine which students will attend a school and which will be overflowed to another location.
- changing the grade configurations of certain schools.

3. [Chief Superintendent Recruitment Survey Results](#)

Nearly 2,500 responses on the qualities the next superintendent should have and the challenges he or she faces.

4. [Experts Contradict Johnson's Positive Spin on International Test Results for Alberta Students](#), [Edmonton Journal](#), Mar. 28

John Rymer, one of Alberta's leading experts in student assessment, says the overall PISA results are evidence of something "fundamentally wrong" with the Alberta school system. "PISA is basically saying to us, in both Language Arts and in Mathematics, that as these marks drop, there's a systemic problem. PISA is not telling us the problem is in a particular school, it's across the province. There's something wrong generally with education in Alberta related to these basic skills in numeracy, literacy and science."

Doing the reading so
you don't have to can
read something else!

5. [10 Questions about Changes to Alberta's School Curriculum](#), **CBC.ca, Mar. 12**

"Just what is this 'discovery learning?'" is one of them.

6. [Opinion: Place Equity at Forefront in Education Debate](#), **Edmonton Journal, Mar. 26**

Dr. J-C Couture, researcher for the Alberta Teachers' Association, writes, "Rather than polarizing debates over content versus competencies or traditional versus progressive education, the greatest impact on student learning is support for students in the early years of development and provision for optimal conditions of learning throughout schooling."

Article Watch

7. [The Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches \[in schools\]](#), **The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (Ontario), 2007**

- Literacy coaches have positive effects on student achievement at both the classroom and district levels.
- Coaches work most effectively when using a variety of approaches (one size does not fit all).
- Teachers benefit most when they view coaches as collaborators and not as "external trainers" or "evaluators".
- Principals play an important role in nurturing collaborative relationships and monitoring achievement targets.

8. [The Guardian's quick guide to literacy research for teachers](#), **The Guardian (UK), Mar. 6.**

"To mark World Book Day, we've explained some of the key pieces of research on literacy from the last decade in a nutshell." The studies include:

- Parents need to get involved early in children's literacy
- Australian government backs phonics
- Reading for pleasure is given the limelight
- Literacy as a predictor of employment
- Children need reading role models
- Literacy as a route out of child poverty

9. [Trying to Close a Knowledge Gap, Word by Word](#), **The New York Times, Mar. 25.**

- Recent research shows that brain development is buoyed by continuous interaction with parents and caregivers from birth, and that even before age 2, the children of the wealthy know more words than do those of the poor.
- Many parents, especially among the poor and immigrants, do not know that talking, as well as reading, singing and playing with their young children, is important.
- "When Hillary Clinton runs around trying to close the word gap, it's like 'fine, vocabulary is good.' But there is a deeper commitment to literacy and conversation around the dinner table and talking to kids about ideas and political controversies that is the more colorful fabric of literacy and conversation."

10. [Promoting Literacy in the Physician's Office](#), *Paediatrics & Child Health Journal*, Jul.-Aug. 2002.

This position statement of the Canadian Paediatric Society is a resource for doctors to promote literacy to families. A terrific and accessible read.

- “Primary care physicians who have repeated contact with the family at an early stage have a unique opportunity to promote literacy. Because the foundations of literacy are laid down long before children enter school, physicians can help to prevent early reading failure.”

11. [Repeated Read Alouds May Lead to Reading Success for Young Children](#). *Frizzle, Scholastic's Education Blog (US)*, Mar. 24

“During most read aloud experiences, children sit next to their parents so that they can actually view the text itself and pictures as the parent reads. Through repeated readings and viewings the child begins to map the words that he or she hears with the words that he or she sees in the text. The sight and sound of the words eventually get locked into the child's brain. This is the beginning of sight vocabulary and reading itself.”

12. [How to Create a Knockout Summer Literacy Program](#), *School Library Journal*, Mar. 17

- The “summer slide” also accounts for about 80 percent of the reading gap between kids from low- and middle-income families—three years by the end of eighth grade. In part, the reason for this is lower-income kids' limited access to books—in their homes, libraries, or bookstores—during the summer, the scholars have found. By the end of high school, the gap is typically four years.
- Summer slide affects the littlest bibliophiles as well. “Young children enter kindergarten very excited about learning to read. Their motivation drops over the summer, so when they go back in September, they're not quite as excited.”

13. [James Patterson Talks About Upcoming Webcast and How Literacy Saves Lives](#), *School Library Journal*, Apr. 1

- **“What are we—as in the parents, the educators, the librarians, and the kids—not doing to create 100% literacy in the United States?”**

Starting from the top down, the government has to start treating this [illiteracy] epidemic in a serious way. We need to support libraries and schools. Give our teachers the budgets and supplies they need to do their jobs. Teachers need to realize that it doesn't need to always be the dry, boring classics—just get the kids reading, that is the first step. And parents need to take full responsibility. They cannot rely on teachers and librarians to get their kids reading. It is their job, in their homes, to make reading a habit.

- **Is it ever “too late” to cultivate a love of reading?**

I don't think it is ever too late to become a reader—I was always a top student, but I didn't start to love reading until I was almost 20-years-old. But, that doesn't mean there isn't an urgency to make kids readers. If they aren't reading competently by the end of middle school, everything will be harder for that child: school, activities, getting into college, and, someday, life and work.

Parents would never knowingly send their kids into the world with a handicap, yet they do it every single day. They do it when they don't prepare their kids to be readers."

Related Readings

14. [Don't Help Your Kids With Their Homework](#), *The Atlantic*, April

Insights from a ground-breaking study of how parents impact children's academic achievement.

- Most measurable forms of parental involvement seem to yield few academic dividends for kids, or even to backfire—regardless of a parent's race, class, or level of education.
- Researchers did find a handful of habits that make a difference, such as reading aloud to young kids (fewer than half of whom are read to daily) and talking with teenagers about college plans. But these interventions don't take place at school or in the presence of teachers, where policy makers exert the most influence—they take place at home.