



NEPC'S MOST POPULAR PUBLICATIONS OF THE YEAR



The human capital cost of racial discrimination. The political battle being waged against Critical Race Theory. Best practices in early literacy instruction.

These disparate topics have one thing in common: During a year packed with momentous and ignominious education-related events, reports covering these issues were among the most read National Education Policy Center publications in 2021, as measured by click-throughs from our newsletters.

The Center provides evidence-based research and context that helps readers better understand the complex and politically charged landscape of education. So as the new year begins, we take a look back at the content that NEPC's newsletter subscribers engaged with most during the past 12 months. The range of topics they represent is a testament to our audience's hunger for high-quality knowledge about a diverse set of education-related issues and challenges.

10. **Report From Federal Reserve Bank Comes Up Short** (June 22): NEPC publishes timely, accessible reviews of reports that have not undergone peer review prior to publication. In this review, **Bruce Baker of Rutgers** identifies serious flaws in a Federal Reserve report contending that amending the education clause in Minnesota's constitution would lead to higher quality schools and educational outcomes in that state.

9. ***Review Finds a Misguided Guide for Implementing Innovation Schools*** (January 21): So-called “innovation schools” are charter-like entities that draw upon district resources yet operate more autonomously than typical district schools. Here, Carrie Sampson of Arizona State University and Sarah Diem of the University of Missouri identify flaws in a Progressive Policy Institute report that advises charter management companies on developing these schools in urban areas.

8. ***Private and Public Goals of Charter Schools*** (September 9): In September, NEPC republished Henry Levin’s chapter in *Choosing Charters: Better Schools or More Segregation?*, (Teachers College Press, 2018), titled, *Charter Schools: Rending or Mending the Nation*. This chapter explores the tension between using charter schools to satisfy families’ and individuals’ immediate desires while also serving the public interest by preparing students for civic participation in our democracy.

7. ***Civic Reasoning and Discourse Skills Were Sorely Lacking Among the Perpetrators of Last Week’s Attack on the Capitol. What Can Schools Do to Help?*** (January 14): NEPC’s newsletters often draw upon research and expertise to help our audience make sense of current events. This one highlights an educational initiative on civic reasoning and discourse, which became particularly relevant in the wake of the shocking January 6th attack on our nation’s capital and the ongoing and false claims that the 2020 Presidential election was plagued by voter fraud.

6. ***Outdated Research and Ideas About Teacher Quality Render Report Useless*** (March 16): The third of three NEPC reviews to make this “top 10” list, this analysis by Jamy Stillman and Katherine Schultz of the University of Colorado Boulder finds that a NCTQ report on classroom management relied on flawed measurements, cherry-picked evidence, and questionable methodologies, rendering it unlikely to improve classroom practice.

4. & 5. ***Critical Race Theory: What It Is. And What It Is Not. A Q&A With Adrienne Dixson*** (August 26): This Q&A with Adrienne Dixson of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is one of two “top 10” pieces about the poorly understood topic of Critical Race Theory. Dixson succinctly explains CRT, providing an overview of the debate surrounding this academic framework that burst on the scene in 2021 as policymakers throughout the United States sought to remove historically accurate representations of race from school curricula.

AND [tie]

New Project Explores What It Would Cost to Create “the Great Equalizer” (October 5): This newsletter explores NEPC’s “Price of Opportunity” project, which addresses the true cost of creating a truly equitable society, alternatively via either a “great equalizer” option in which schools alone are the vehicles of equity, or through a “social and economic policies” approach in which schools are just one of multiple institutions charged with giving every member of every generation an equal chance in life.

3. ***The Promise and Peril of Third-Grade Literacy Policies*** (June 3): Amy Cummings of Michigan State University takes a critical look at evidence related to states’ early reading policies and concludes that while they may be effective at improving student achievement in

the short term, they do not include a full range of best practices in literacy instruction.

2. ***Understanding the Attacks on Critical Race Theory*** (September 23): In this second most-viewed report of 2021, Francesca López of Penn State, Alex Molnar of the University of Colorado Boulder, Royel Johnson of Penn State, Ashley Patterson of Penn State, LaWanda Ward of Penn State, and Kevin Kumashiro, an independent scholar, provide an in-depth yet approachable description and history of Critical Race Theory and the surrounding debate.

1. ***The Price Tag of Racial Inequality in Schools*** (June 10): In this most-read publication of 2021, Clive Belfield of Queens College, City University of New York, attaches a price tag to the racial discrimination faced by K-12 students. He conservatively estimates that discrimination results in a \$42 to \$92 billion lifetime loss for each cohort of our nation's 18-year-olds.

NEPC Resources on Diversity: Race, Ethnicity, Class, Culture, and/or Gender

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