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**Education Lab: Washington has a new education budget — what's next?**

2 messages

**The Seattle Times** <info@email.seattletimes.com>

Thu, Jul 13, 2017 at 10:01 AM

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Education Lab Newsletter Sponsored by

**TOP OF THE NEWS**

**Best of Both:** It's been two years since Seattle's Leschi Elementary [merged its Montessori program](#) — which drew mostly white students — with conventional classrooms that were once largely filled with children of color. Now, kids who may not have interacted before have sleepovers together, and [the school's average test scores are up](#).

**What happens next?** Washington state has a new education budget, but many questions remain: What effect will new rules have on local bargaining efforts for teachers? What's going to happen to local levies? And what about those class-size reductions? [Dig into our new FAQ here](#), and keep the questions coming.

**One thing that is known:** The Legislature plans to do away with “staff mix,” a state formula that tended to benefit affluent districts because it gave more money to districts that hired teachers with a lot of experience and education. Now some experts say the Legislature has [introduced a similar type of inequity](#) in its effort to boost teacher pay in areas with high housing costs.

**She came to Teach for America** with the optimism of many college graduates, but Michelle Kuo's new memoir, [“Reading with Patrick: A Teacher, A Student, and a Life-Changing Friendship,”](#) isn't a stereotypical teacher-savior narrative. Kuo, an Ivy League graduate, is frank about her challenges and failures in her Mississippi Delta classroom.

**PHOTO OF THE WEEK**



*First grader Stephen Baker, in orange, talks with classmates during an end-of-year celebration for the equity team at Leschi Elementary School in Seattle. [The school just finished its second year of a blended Montessori-contemporary program](#) supporting racial balance and a unified community. (Erika Schultz / The Seattle Times)*

## AROUND THE STATE

**Charter schools are slowly expanding** in Washington, with a total of eight operating around the state and two new ones scheduled to open this fall. Although the legality of charters remains in limbo, parents like Natalie Hester say [they're willing to take the risk](#). "We have to have some options for kids," Hester said.

**Three of Washington's public universities** earned high marks in a [new ranking from Money magazine](#) that compares the cost of attending with graduates' early-career earnings. The University of Washington was rated 13th among 711 public and private colleges and universities, and Washington State University and Western Washington University also appeared in the top 200.

**A big win for Mercer Island student journalists:** How often does a high-school student get to interview a sitting cabinet member? A sharp eye led Mercer Island junior Teddy Fischer to a private phone number for U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis — [so he decided to call him up and leave a message](#). To his surprise, Mattis called back.

**Parents who have invested** in the state's Guaranteed Education Tuition plan (GET) will soon benefit from a kind of stock split that will [recalculate the worth of each GET unit in August](#). GET officials also plan to open a 529 college savings plan late this year or in early 2018.

## NORTHWEST AND BEYOND

**Is conservative support** waning for America's colleges and universities? For the first time since at least 2010, the Pew Research Center reports a [steep bipartisan divide in how people perceive the value of higher education](#), with a 58 percent of Republicans saying it has a negative effect on the country.

**A woman in Portland, Ore.**, has joined the attorneys general of 18 states — [including Washington](#) — in suing Education Secretary Betsy DeVos over DeVos's plan to delay rules from the Obama administration that would protect student borrowers. Neisha Wright says the credits she earned from the now-defunct ITT Technical Institute [became worthless when the institution shuttered](#). The next controversy? [Whether DeVos will undo the Obama-era actions on campus sexual assault](#).

**More and more high-school students** are taking online courses to make up graduation credits, but are those courses as effective as their in-person counterparts? [A \\$3.26 million grant from the U.S. Education Department](#) will enable the Los Angeles Unified School District to study 3,000 students at 15 high schools who failed either Algebra 1 or English 9.

**Is "I'm bored" already a common phrase** in your household? Don't despair. [ParentMap has a list of 20 backyard play ideas](#) that will keep kids occupied until the Back to School sales start.

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