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REGION 10
EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

COMMUNICATING for RESULTS

Region 10's Online Strategic Communications Service

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Communication, Collaboration and Computer Science

Newsweaver and Ragan Communications are [offering a free whitepaper](#) – “*Auditing Your Internal Communications*” – which provides step-by-step lessons on assessing which communication channels work best for your organization. Whether you bring in a consultant or do it from within, an audit can reveal new ways to get your messages across and make your work more effective... The Institute for Higher Education Policy says that community sectors including education, business, policy, and nonprofits can work together to ensure that all students succeed in college and go on to high-quality employment. [They offer a guidebook](#) for learning more about how different communities target supports to underserved student populations... Washington state’s Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee and Republican Arkansas Gov. Asa Richardson are co-chairing [a bipartisan partnership to promote computer science education](#) across states. They want all high schools to offer at least one rigorous computer science course, more professional development opportunities for teachers and a set of strong computer science standards.

Spotlight on Region 10 Schools

Tom Bean ISD’s new Student Ambassador program has been getting recognition as students volunteer in the community. Tom Bean High School Principal Susan Foster created the program because she wanted to encourage students of all academic levels to participate in community service. Students are required to complete 100 hours of community service and earn four credits in each subject (math, science, history and English) before graduation. Because the program is being phased in, current requirements are 25 hours for seniors, 50 hours for juniors, 75 hours for sophomores and 100 hours for freshmen. Students who are able to complete their community service hours and classes will receive a Student Ambassador cord for the graduation ceremony. [A recent Herald Democrat article on the program](#) featured students Haley Ford and Amber Blasinggame, volunteers at an elementary school and therapeutic riding center, respectively.

A group of 29 Red Oak ISD staff members has presented school trustees with [a comprehensive plan to revolutionize education in the district's schools](#). The Red Oak Classroom Revolution Committee has been working since last summer to develop recommendations consisting of three fundamental shifts from a traditional school experience: (1) Increasing the amount and types of technology available; (2) Making the classroom setup and furniture more flexible and interactive; and (3) shifting to methods of instruction which can expand to online coursework and personalized learning opportunities for every child. The program calls for full implementation over the next 3-5 years for all grades, beginning this summer with transitioning Red Oak Middle School into a revolutionized learning space. [More here](#).

Irving ISD has announced plans to [offer full-day, tuition-based pre-kindergarten for residents at the district's three early childhood centers beginning next fall](#). Enrollment will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. School officials say the cost of the program -- \$100 weekly -- is competitive with local private schools and day care facilities. The Amadi Guess Foundation will provide an after-school program at no additional cost. "Our full-day Pre-K classes will give students a strong foundation for reading, writing and problem solving," said Irving ISD Superintendent Jose L. Parra. [The district will continue to operate its half-day Pre-K classes at no cost for students who qualify](#).

Scanning the News

Students at a Kentucky high school [were elated when parents and teachers on the advisory council recommended a more casual dress code on a trial basis](#). But not everyone was pleased with the decision to allow Anderson County High School students to wear a variety of clothing items that were previously banned, including pajama, yoga and stretch pants. [An area newspaper editorial noted](#) that while dress codes may or may not affect a student's ability to develop reading and math skills, they do help prepare them for the real world. "Regardless of how comfortable pajama pants may be, not many employers are going to be impressed with the job applicant—or even the job shadower or intern—who comes to work dressed like that," it added.

An Ohio teenager posing as a state senator toured a high school and spoke to a class, and [officials didn't realize they were fooled until weeks later](#). School officials said the 18-year-old from Marion visited Mohawk High School in December after claiming to be a lawmaker replacing another who was scheduled to appear later but was ill. They realized they'd been duped when the real state senator showed up to speak weeks later at the original appointed time. The imitator, who reportedly delivered a believable presentation, [said he did it to prove a point about school security in small communities](#). He was charged recently with felony counts of telecommunications fraud and impersonating a peace officer. The incident has prompted the superintendent to order more stringent security, including a phone call to the sponsoring agency of any visitors to verify their identity.

Around the nation: Florida lawmakers want to change how families are notified of their right to skip the daily Pledge of Allegiance. [Current law requires schools to post a notice telling students they don't have to recite the pledge if parents seek an excuse in writing](#). A proposal would allow the notice to be placed in a student handbook instead...Ohio legislation would broaden protections for students' religious expressions in public schools, [including homework or in the classroom](#). State law bars policies prohibiting students from such expressions, but the new measure would expand opportunities from the current limit of lunch periods and non-instructional time...A California district has settled a lawsuit brought by a student who was sent home for refusing to change out of a T-shirt that read, "Nobody Knows I'm a Lesbian." The deal requires the Manteca Unified School District [to adopt a policy clarifying that students may wear clothing with statements celebrating their or their classmates' cultural identities](#).

Items of Interest

The White House and Department of Education have announced two groundbreaking campaigns to address and eliminate chronic student absenteeism in the nation: the My Brother's Keeper Success

Mentors Initiative and a multi-million dollar Ad Council campaign to engage parents on this critical issue. The mentoring program aims to connect 1 million students over the next three to five years with role models in 10 cities—including Austin and San Antonio—that have already signed up for the program. The advertising campaign, with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, will target parents of students in kindergarten through eighth grade with billboards and posters put up at bus shelters, barbershops, doctors' offices and schools. Also planned is a website aimed at educating parents about how chronic absenteeism affects children in the short and long term, and offers them tips and resources to help curb the problem. [More here.](#)

[A series of new studies says students in Louisiana's private school voucher program scored significantly lower than their public school counterparts in math during their first year in the program.](#)

The complete report, released by researchers at Tulane University, noted that the students' math performance improved in their second year, but remained below their counterparts' performance. The voucher program provides tuition for some students from low- or moderate-income families who otherwise would attend low-performing public schools. It began as a pilot program in New Orleans and was expanded statewide in 2012. The studies said reading scores also were lower among voucher-school students than those of their public school counterparts, although not as drastically as math scores. [See the new research here.](#)

Online video now accounts for more than 50% of all mobile device traffic, so it makes sense for businesses and other organizations to produce more videos for their social media platforms. But as marketing experts warn, with popularity comes a crowd. The challenge is to create and distribute videos that stand out. To help those interested, graphic design agency Marstudio produced an infographic titled “*Video Tips & Tricks for Social Media Success.*” Among other things, it details five ingredients for video success—surprise, interest, intensity, positivity and action—and highlights two types of successful videos. [Check it out here.](#)

Looking Ahead

While a growing number of schools around the world are [using design thinking in classrooms](#) and empowering students to solve authentic challenges as part of an inquiry-based curriculum, many believe this powerful process can also be used to improve the overall school experience. Design thinking is a human-centered approach to problem solving that begins with developing empathy for those facing a particular challenge. Many successful businesses embrace it to improve their products and enhance their customers' experiences to great effect. Why, then, would we not do the same with our schools? That's a question posed by South Carolina educator [Thomas Riddle](#) in a recent blog for *Edutopia*. As a school administrator, Riddle says he's seen design thinking effectively used to improve daily operations as well as enhance both the in-class and out-of-class experiences for teachers, students, and parents. [Using the five main stages of the design thinking process, he shares some thoughts on creating better experiences for all stakeholders.](#)



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