

Tuesday, November 3, 2015



Beef Recall, Ad Blitz, and Election Day

So far there have been no reports of schools receiving any of the more than 167,000 pounds of ground beef [recalled by a Nebraska meat supplier](#) due to possible E. coli contamination. According to a press release [from the USDA](#), the meat was processed by All American Meats in Omaha and shipped nationwide. The problem was discovered on Friday when a sample tested positive for the bacteria. Fortunately there have been no confirmed reports of illness connected with the recall...Ten of the biggest education groups in the country—representing millions of educators, principals, school boards, superintendents, chief state school officers, parents and PTAs, and school business officials—are [running ads this week calling on Congress to finish its rewrite of the No Child Left Behind law](#). The digital ad campaign targets beltway insiders with ads on Twitter, Facebook and education news sites...Add [Savoy ISD to the list of Region 10 districts with money issues on the ballot today](#). SISD joins Grand Prairie as region districts with TREs. GPISD and six others—Allen, Collinsville, Dallas, Highland Park, Mabank and Rockwall—are seeking support for bond issues.

Spotlight on Region 10 Schools

Mesquite ISD is in the middle of [an online survey of parents](#) being conducted during a two-week window ending Nov. 10th. Officials say survey responses will provide valuable information that will be used to make positive changes for students, both at the campus and district level. MISD contracted with survey specialists [Panorama Education](#) to conduct the surveys. All families with an email address on file have received the survey information. In addition, elementary and middle school students received printed, take-home backpack letters, while high school students' families got their survey information by mail at their homes. More at [Survey FAQs](#).

Prosper ISD Supt. Drew Watkins uses a variety of communication tools to inform and involve constituents. His latest is a weekly video tagged the [2 Minute Drill](#). It succeeds a monthly video program—*Prosper Live*—that Watkins taped for several years. The new briefer, yet information

packed feature, allows the superintendent to keep viewers up to date more frequently on topical issues, rumors, and questions. The latter can be submitted via the district's online [Eagle Chat](#) link, which provides an open line of communication with key people within the district. [Here's an archive of Watkins' 2 Minute Drills to date.](#)

"Smash Evil, Read Books." That's the theme of Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD's 4th annual Literacy Night. Featured are eight guest authors, games, food, and books, books, books. The event is set for next Monday (Nov. 9) from 6 to 8 p.m. at R.L. Turner High School. [Check out this great video promotion.](#)

Scanning the News

The case of an El Paso family before the Texas Supreme Court [could have broad implications for growing home-school ranks in Texas and the nation.](#) At issue is the line between religious liberty and rights to educate one's own children, and obligations to ensure home-schooled students actually learn something. Laura and Michael McIntyre are accused of not teaching their nine home-schooled children anything because they were "waiting to be raptured." The family says the kids were educated and that the El Paso school district is anti-Christian. The district counters that it should be allowed to investigate complaints learning isn't taking place. An appeals court already ruled against the family. [Texas is said to have one-sixth of the nation's 1.7 million home-school students,](#) but no one knows for sure since it's one of 11 states that don't require families to register.

A flap is brewing over an interactive program—"Don't Be a Puppet"—the F.B.I. developed for teachers and students, [aimed at training them to prevent young people from being drawn into violent extremism.](#) Muslim, Arab and other religious and civil rights leaders who were invited to preview the program have raised strong objections, saying it focuses almost entirely on Islamic extremism, which they say has not been a factor in the epidemic of school shootings and attacks in the United States. The program, according to those who saw it, leads the viewer through a series of games and tips intended to teach how to identify someone who may be falling prey to radical extremists. The F.B.I. told the organizations that "Don't Be a Puppet" would be online this week, but a spokeswoman for the agency would only say it was still in development.

The Wyoming Department of Education is looking at [a new model for K-12 distance education that would provide greater support for both traditional students and students enrolled full time in online schools.](#) The department's Distance Education Task Force is recommending that traditional students in brick-and-mortar schools be allowed to take single courses online if the courses are not offered within the student's school. The new model also would allow students enrolled full time in online schools to take single courses offered only at brick-and-mortar schools, such as band, welding or art. [The recommendations](#) are scheduled to be presented to a legislative select committee this month.

Items of Interest

The Texas Education Agency and the [Military Child Education Coalition](#) issued a [joint news release](#) yesterday reminding all Texans that November is designated as [National Military Family Appreciation Month.](#) The observance provides a month-long opportunity to recognize the many contributions made by military families to the state and nation. Commissioner Michael Williams and MCEC CEO Mary Keller announced a collaborative effort to assure that military families moving to Texas and those already living in Texas have access to information regarding public education requirements and about programs designed to assist veterans seeking a post-military career in the classroom. To learn more about some of the education resources and programs available to members of the military and their families, visit the TEA web page [here.](#)

The number of employees in the U.S. who are satisfied with their jobs increased slightly in 2014 -- by less than 1% -- a measure experts say is a reflection of an economy still rebounding and one with diverse impacts across demographic sectors. While job satisfaction is making some gains in post-recession years, it remains below the 50% mark and has yet to reach the 60% plus levels reported in

the 1980s, according to a report by The Conference Board titled [Job Satisfaction: 2015 Edition: A lot More Jobs, A Little More Satisfaction](#). Based on a fall 2014 survey of 5,000 U.S. households, the report shows that 48.3% of Americans are satisfied with their jobs, up from 47.7% in 2013 and the all-time-low -- 42.6% in 2010. A related article from [Human Resource Executive](#) offers some thoughts on how to increase satisfaction for employees everywhere.

Adolescence is an important time for promoting health and preventing disease, one that is sometimes overlooked. That's why the Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is leading a national call to action to support adolescent health in the United States. The [Think, Act, Grow \(TAG\) initiative](#) is asking organizations and individuals working with teens to prioritize activities that can improve the physical, social, emotional and behavioral health and healthy development of all of America's 42 million adolescents. [Access a TAG toolkit here](#).

Looking Ahead

To paraphrase the old E.F. Hutton ad, when your CEO speaks, people listen. That's why school chiefs need to carefully craft their words, especially when talking to reporters. As Brad Phillips notes in the [Cision](#) blog, top executives make many of the same media interview mistakes others do—but their missteps are often magnified, becoming bigger headlines. Phillips, whose company specializes in media and presentation training, says while every chief is different, there are clear trend lines observed in his work with hundreds of top-tier leaders. He shares three of the mistakes executives commonly make in media interviews—and offers advice to help prevent them. [Check it out here](#).



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